

## Notice of Meeting and Agenda Education and Children's Services Policy Board

| Date                     | Time  | Venue  |
|--------------------------|-------|--|
| Thursday, 24 August 2023 | 13:00 | Council Chambers (Renfrewshire),<br>Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire<br>House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN |

MARK CONAGHAN  
Head of Corporate Governance

### Membership

Councillor Emma Rodden (Convener): Councillor Jim Paterson (Depute Convener):

Ms Mary Jane Bird: Mr Jack Nellaney: Mr Ravinder Singh: Councillor Jennifer Adam:  
Councillor Fiona Airlie-Nicolson: Provost Lorraine Cameron: Councillor Carolann Davidson:  
Councillor Audrey Doig: Councillor Edward Grady: Councillor Gillian Graham: Councillor Anne  
Hannigan: Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes: Councillor Alec Leishman: Councillor David  
McGonigle: Councillor Iain McMillan: Councillor Will Mylet: Councillor Iain Nicolson: Councillor  
Ben Smith:

### Hybrid Meeting

Please note that this meeting is scheduled to be held in the Council Chambers. However, it is a hybrid meeting and arrangements have been made for members to join the meeting remotely should they wish.

### Further Information

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

A copy of the agenda and reports for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the Customer Service Centre, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley and online at <http://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/CouncilandBoards.aspx>

For further information, please email  
[democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

## **Members of the Press and Public**

Members of the press and public wishing to attend the meeting should report to the customer service centre where they will be met and directed to the meeting.

## **Webcasting 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. To find the webcast please navigate to

<https://renfrewshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

## Items of business

### Apologies

Apologies from members.

### Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

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

- |          |  |                  |
|----------|--|------------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report</b>  | <b>5 - 14</b>    |
|          | Director of Finance and Resources, Interim Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Work Officer                               |                  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Education Provision Dargavel</b>  | <b>15 - 26</b>   |
|          | Report by Interim Chief Education Officer  |                  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Education Scotland Inspection of West Primary School</b>  | <b>27 - 32</b>   |
|          | Report by Interim Chief Education Officer  |                  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>ADES/Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement Review</b>  | <b>33 - 48</b>   |
|          | Report by Interim Chief Education Officer  |                  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy Update 2022/2023 - Children's Services Well Being Strategy 2023/2024</b> | <b>49 - 62</b>   |
|          | Report by Interim Chief Education Officer  |                  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Standard Circular 8 – Included, Engaged and Involved – A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions</b> | <b>63 - 92</b>   |
|          | Interim Chief Education Officer  |                  |
| <b>7</b> | <b>The Promise: Progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise)</b>   | <b>93 - 100</b>  |
|          | Report by Chief Social Work Officer  |                  |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Children's Looked After Statistics - 2022</b>   | <b>101 - 108</b> |
|          | Report by Chief Social Work Officer  |                  |

|           |  |                  |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Interagency Child Protection Update</b>           | <b>109 - 112</b> |
|           | Report by Chief Social Work Officer.                 |                  |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Hearings Systems Working Group – Final Report</b> | <b>113 - 116</b> |
|           | Report by Chief Social Work Officer                  |                  |




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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Director of Finance and Resources,  
Interim Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Work Officer

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**Heading:** Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 23 June 2023

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## 1. Summary of Financial Position

- 1.1. The projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services is an overspend of £2.623m (1.1%) against the revised budget for the year.
- 1.2. The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services is an underspend of £0.143m (1.9%).
- 1.3. This is summarised over the relevant service in the table below and further analysis is provided in the Appendices.

**Table 1: Revenue**

| Division            | Revised Annual Budget<br>£m | Projected Outturn<br>£m | Budget Variance<br>£m | Budget Variance<br>% |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Children's Services | 245.352                     | 247.975                 | (2.623)               | (1.1%)               |

**Table 2: Capital**

| Division            | Revised Annual Budget<br>£m | Projected Outturn<br>£m | Budget Variance<br>£m | Budget Variance<br>% |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Children's Services | 7.338                       | 7.195                   | 0.143                 | 1.9%                 |

## 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;

- 2.2. Note the 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 £2.623m (1.1% of total budget). Detailed service division reports can be found in Appendix 2, along with an explanation of each significant projected variance.
- 3.2. The main reasons for the projected outturn position are indicated below the table showing the objective analysis (which division is spending the budget).
- 3.3. A £2.651m overspend is anticipated within Children & Families related mainly to external specialised residential accommodation placements. An additional £2m was set aside in the 2023/24 budget, with an "expectation that up to a further £3m may be required to be funded from ringfenced balances in 2023/24". This position will be closely monitored as the year progresses.
- 3.4. All external placements are held under continual review by the service to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the individual children and young people. Options to mitigate cost pressures continue to be examined.
- 3.5. Further overspends are anticipated in relation to contracted mainstream and additional support needs transport costs.

### **4. Revenue Budget Adjustments**

- 4.1. Members are requested to note from Appendix 1 that budget adjustments totalling £6.317m have been processed since the budget was approved. These adjustments relate almost entirely to the increase in budget arising from the teachers' pay award, which had not been agreed at the time of the budget being approved in March 2023.

### **5. Children's Services Capital**

- 5.1. The Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 was approved by the Council on 2 March 2023.
- 5.2. The Capital Monitoring report at Appendix 3 indicates changes totalling £1.567m in the approved capital programme for Education and Children's Services. This largely relates to budget carried forward from 2022/23 to 2023/24 and budget carried from 2024/25 into 2023/24.
- 5.3. The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2024 for Children's Services is an underspend of £0.143m (1.9%). Further detail, including reasons for significant variances, can be found at Appendix 3.

## **6. Capital Budget Adjustments**

- 6.1. Since the last report there have been budget changes totalling £1.567m, comprising the following:

Budget that had been carried back from 2023/24 to 2022/23 to reflect updated cash flows in respect of payments made prior to 1 April 2023:

- Paisley Grammar School new campus £2.710m;
- Thorn Primary School new build investigation work £0.013m;
- ICT technology replacement strategy £0.074m;

Budget that has been brought forward from 2022/23 to 2023/24 to reflect updated cash flows in respect of payments made after 31 March 2023:

- Primary schools estate programme (SEMP) £0.203m;
- Other schools investment programmes £1.027m.

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## **Implications of this report**

### **1. Financial**

The projected budget outturn position for Children's Services' Revenue budget is an overspend of £2.623m. Income and expenditure will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year and steps will be taken to mitigate any overspend, including applying flexibility within specific grant funding as permitted by the Scottish Government, and potential use of earmarked reserves.

The projected outturn position for Children's Services' Capital budget is an underspend of £0.143m. The Capital programme will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year.

### **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.

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**List of Background Papers: None**

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**RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2023/24**  
**1 April 2023 to 23 June 2023**

**POLICY BOARD : EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

| Subjective Summary                 | Approved<br>Annual Budget | Budget<br>Adjustments | Revised Annual<br>Budget at<br>Period 3 | Projected<br>Outturn | Budget Variance<br>(Adverse) or Favourable |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------|--|---------------|
|                                    | £000                      | £000                  | £000                                    | £000                 | £000                                       | %             |
| Employees                          | 166,164                   | 5,040                 | 171,204                                 | 169,371              | 1,833                                      | 1.1%          |
| Premises Related                   | 9,041                     | (57)                  | 8,984                                   | 9,464                | (480)                                      | (5.3%)        |
| Transport Related                  | 4,590                     | 2                     | 4,592                                   | 6,077                | (1,485)                                    | (32.3%)       |
| Supplies and Services              | 31,776                    | 582                   | 32,358                                  | 32,071               | 287  | 0.9%          |
| Third Party Payments               | 15,198                    | 0                     | 15,198                                  | 18,150               | (2,952)                                    | (19.4%)       |
| Transfer Payments                  | 13,667                    | 752                   | 14,419                                  | 14,740               | (321)                                      | (2.2%)        |
| Support Services                   | 65                        | (1)                   | 64                                      | 112                  | (48)                                       | (75.0%)       |
| Depreciation and Impairment Losses | 0                         | 0                     | 0                                       | 0                    | 0  | 0.0%          |
| <b>GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>           | <b>240,501</b>            | <b>6,318</b>          | <b>246,819</b>                          | <b>249,985</b>       | <b>(3,166)</b>                             | <b>(1.3%)</b> |
| Income                             | (1,466)                   | (1)                   | (1,467)                                 | (2,010)              | 543  | 37.0%         |
| <b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>             | <b>239,035</b>            | <b>6,317</b>          | <b>245,352</b>                          | <b>247,975</b>       | <b>(2,623)</b>                             | <b>(1.1%)</b> |



**RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2023/24**  
**1 April 2023 to 23 June 2023**

**POLICY BOARD : EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

| Objective Summary                     | Approved<br>Annual Budget | Budget<br>Adjustments | Revised Annual<br>Budget at<br>Period 3 | Projected<br>Outturn | Budget Variance<br>(Adverse) or Favourable |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------|--|---------------|
|                                       | £000                      | £000                  | £000                                    | £000                 | £000                                       | %             |
| Directorate                           | 480                       | 0                     | 480                                     | 412                  | 68   | 14.2%         |
| Early learning and childcare          | 34,532                    | (24)                  | 34,508                                  | 33,235               | 1,273                                      | 3.7%          |
| Primary                               | 60,666                    | 2,918                 | 63,584                                  | 63,520               | 64   | 0.1%          |
| Secondary                             | 83,243                    | 2,835                 | 86,078                                  | 86,758               | (680)                                      | (0.8%)        |
| ASN (Special) Schools                 | 6,750                     | 299                   | 7,049                                   | 7,003                | 46   | 0.7%          |
| Additional support for learning (ASL) | 16,238                    | 223                   | 16,461                                  | 17,161               | (700)                                      | (4.3%)        |
| Psychological services                | 802                       | 34                    | 836                                     | 886                  | (50)                                       | (6.0%)        |
| Education development                 | 1,710                     | 16                    | 1,726                                   | 1,726                | 0  | 0.0%          |
| Attainment Challenge                  | 0                         | 0                     | 0                                       | 0                    | 1  | 0.0%          |
| Facilities management                 | 620                       | 4                     | 624                                     | 617                  | 7  | 1.1%          |
| Children & Families                   | 33,994                    | 12                    | 34,006                                  | 36,657               | (2,651)                                    | (7.8%)        |
| <b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>                | <b>239,035</b>            | <b>6,317</b>          | <b>245,352</b>                          | <b>247,975</b>       | <b>(2,623)</b>                             | <b>(1.1%)</b> |

| Objective Heading               | Key Reasons for Projected Variance   |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Early Learning and Childcare    | An underspend in Employee Costs is projected due to vacancies within the authority's Early Learning & Childcare Centres. This underspend is offset by a projected overspend in Transfer Payments in relation to an increase in the rate paid to funded providers (private and voluntary sector nurseries and childminders).  |
| Secondary Schools               | Overspends in Premises Costs and Transport Costs are projected. The overspend in Premises Costs is due to an expected increase in refuse collection and janitorial supplies costs. The overspend in Transport is due to an increase in the cost of the mainstream school transport contract. These overspends are partly offset by a projected underspend within Employee Costs mainly in relation to teachers' salary costs. These will be kept under review during the year. |
| Additional Support for Learning | An overspend in Transport Costs is projected. This is due to increases in the cost of transport contracts for pupils with additional support needs.  |
| Children & Families             | An overspend in Transfer Payments is projected, mainly in relation to external residential accommodation placements, where the number of complex, expensive packages has increased significantly. All external placements are held under continual review by the service, with options to mitigate cost pressure being examined on an ongoing basis.   |



RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL  
CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY - NON-HOUSING SERVICES  
1st April to 23rd June 2023  
POLICY BOARD: EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

|  |   | Current Year 2023-24                  |   |                                      |   |  |           | Full Programme - All years                       |  |  |           |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|-----------|--|--|--|-----------|
| Project Title  | Prior Years<br>Expenditure<br>to 31/03/2023<br>£000 | Approved<br>Budget<br>2023-24<br>£000 | Budget<br>Adjustments<br>in 2023-24<br>£000 | Revised<br>Budget<br>2023-24<br>£000 | Projected<br>Outturn<br>2023-24<br>£000 | Budget Variance (Adverse) or<br>Favourable |           | Total Approved<br>Budget<br>to 31-Mar-27<br>£000 | Projected<br>Outturn<br>to 31-Mar-27<br>£000 | Budget Variance (Adverse) or<br>Favourable |           |
| <b>EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN SERVICES</b>               |   |                                       |   |                                      |   |  |           |  |  |  |           |
| Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)                 | 42,695  | 0                                     | 203   | 203                                  | 60                                      | 143  | 70%       | 42,898   | 42,755                                       | 143  | 0%        |
| Paisley Grammar New Campus                             | 4,819   | 5,000                                 | (2,710)                                     | 2,290                                | 2,290                                   | 0  | 0%        | 75,100   | 75,100                                       | 0  | 0%        |
| Thorn PS New Build                                     | 13  | 1,000                                 | (13)  | 987                                  | 987                                     | 0  | 0%        | 10,000   | 10,000                                       | 0  | 0%        |
| Dargavel Extension (Modular Units)                     | 0   | 2,000                                 | 0   | 2,000                                | 2,000                                   | 0  | 0%        | 2,000  | 2,000  | 0  | 0%        |
| Other Schools Investment Programmes                    | 24,188  | 505                                   | 1,027                                       | 1,532                                | 1,532                                   | 0  | 0%        | 25,720   | 25,720                                       | 0  | 0%        |
| Technology Replacement Strategy ICT                    | 0   | 400                                   | (74)  | 326                                  | 326                                     | 0  | 0%        | 1,926  | 1,926  | 0  | 0%        |
| PPP Lifecycle  | 0   | 0                                     | 0   | 0                                    |   | 0  | 0%        | 0  |  | 0  | 0%        |
| <b>TOTAL EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD</b> | <b>71,715</b>                                       | <b>8,905</b>                          | <b>(1,567)</b>                              | <b>7,338</b>                         | <b>7,195</b>                            | <b>143</b>                                 | <b>2%</b> | <b>157,644</b>                                   | <b>157,501</b>                               | <b>143</b>                                 | <b>0%</b> |

\*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  |
|---|---|
| Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)      | Minor underspends relate to St Fergus new build and St Anthony refurbishment. |
| Paisley Grammar New Campus                  |   |
| Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP 2020) |   |
| Other Schools Investment Programmes         |   |
| Technology Replacement Strategy ICT         |   |






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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Interim Chief Education Officer

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**Heading:** Education Provision Dargavel

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a further update on education provision in Dargavel.
- 1.2 Work has progressed to ensure the six new modular classrooms previously agreed were installed at Dargavel Primary School for the beginning of the new school session, meeting its immediate capacity needs.
- 1.3 Discussions between BAE (Dargavel landowner) and Council officers to secure a site for the new primary school within the Dargavel masterplan development are at an advanced stage and will be subject to reports to both the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Board and Planning and Climate Policy Board.
- 1.4 As previously advised, Officers are developing options should additional future primary capacity be required over and above the second primary school in Dargavel. As detailed in the main body of the report, such options will need to be flexible and able to respond to a range of potential scenarios in terms of peaks in potential demand versus that potential demand levelling off. As part of progressing options, it is intended to engage with families in the early part of this school session, and using feedback to inform what is presented to a future Board.
- 1.5 The Board at its meeting in May, agreed an extension to Park Mains High School to increase its capacity up to 2000 pupils, informed by a roll projection exercise which was supported by the Council's data analytics consultants. Since then, key stakeholders have continued to seek further clarity on the rationale for this decision. This report provides additional background information and data upon which the recommendations in the previous Board report were based, and which will be used to inform further ongoing engagement with key stakeholder groups.

- 1.6 Beyond managing the immediate investment programme to meet the needs emerging from the impact of the Dargavel Village development, along with existing investment in a new Paisley Grammar School and planned investment in a new Thorn Primary, the Council is required to consider the long term learning needs of all communities in Renfrewshire and, in that context, the consequential long term future investment requirements in the overall learning estate. To that end, Officers have commenced a programme to develop a long-term Learning Estate Strategy and Management Plan. This programme of work will be a significantly more substantial and involved exercise in contrast to previous school estate planning and consequently is likely to take some time to complete over the course of the medium term. It will, however, provide a strategic foundation from which the Council will be better placed to understand the scale and timing of key investment needs and interventions that will be required across the learning estate over the very long term. The nature of this strategic long term programme will, by necessity, be required to be responsive to both the management of long term condition and suitability of the estate but also appropriately reflective of shifting long term demand profiles, influenced by demographic change and changes across the Renfrewshire area in relation to housing supply.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that Members note the content of the report.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 At the May meeting of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board a report was provided on education provision in Dargavel. That report is available [here](#).

The Board agreed:

- (a) To note that the six new modular classrooms continue to be expected to be in place at Dargavel Primary School for August 2023;
- (b) That the planning figure for the new primary school for 800 pupils be approved;
- (c) That planning for an extension to Park Mains High School to accommodate an additional 400 pupils be approved;
- (d) That any changes to the above planning assumptions that may be required as a result of ongoing discussions with BAE would be reported back to this Policy Board and that the planning figure of 400 be capped at total capacity for Park Mains High School of 2000; and



- (e) That modelling and planning of any possible future secondary capacity demand for the catchment area will be considered within the context of the wider Renfrewshire council school estate management plan.
- 3.2 This report provides an update following on from the above decision and further developments.

#### **4. Meeting immediate capacity needs**

- 4.1 The previously agreed six new modular classrooms at Dargavel Primary School are now in place and operational for the new school session and generally feedback has been positive.
- 4.2 The report to the Policy Board in May flagged the risk that the current increased demand for places at Dargavel Primary School could breach its increased capacity come August 2024. At this stage, and based on known data, that remains an expectation. It was also noted that in such circumstances there would be a requirement to apply the Council's admissions policy, and pupils who are not allocated a space through the process will be directed to another school. The most appropriate alternative is Bishopton Primary, which is the nearest primary school and currently has surplus capacity.
- 4.3 As previously reported, the associated ballot process for spaces will take place in January 2024 ahead of the August 2024 intake. Plans are in place to support that process and allow families appropriate time to make any necessary plans.

#### **5 Next steps for primary provision in Dargavel**

- 5.1 Discussions between BAE Systems (Dargavel landowner) and Council Officers to secure a site for the new primary school within the Dargavel masterplan development are at an advanced stage. In this respect, proposed heads of terms for the transfer of land to Council ownership will be subject to a report to the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board. The proposed land transfer comprises an 8.5 acre site to accommodate the new school and circa 1.5 acres of land adjacent to the existing Dargavel Primary School to provide scope for increased flexibility within the school site over the longer term. In addition, a report will also be presented to the Planning and Climate Policy Board to set out proposed changes to the Dargavel masterplan and section 75 agreement to reflect the revised land agreement. On the assumption recommendations associated with both reports are approved after consideration by the respective boards, this will allow appropriate conclusion of legal missives and provide certainty over land availability to support the Council to deliver the new school and have increased flexibility in respect to the existing school site.
- 5.2 To ensure a full understanding of space planning and utilisation requirements, a space planning package has been issued to tender and a preferred contractor has been identified with award pending, and this work will be progressed over the coming months to support the detailed design process.

- 5.3 A review of BAE System's land remediation scope has been undertaken and it has been identified that the optimal approach will be to defer full site ground investigation until BAE handover the site to Renfrewshire Council following the completion of certified remediation in December 2024.
- 5.4 In relation to the delivery route for the new school, officers have been assessing options to deliver through a traditional Council led procurement and delivery model, similar to that adopted for the new Paisley Grammar School and also utilising Hub West (Scotland) which the Council has most recently used to procure and deliver the Paisley Learning and Cultural Hub.
- 5.5 Officers have been in active dialogue with Hub West Scotland (HWS), in relation to indicative project cost and programme which may provide an accelerated route to market and potentially a tighter delivery timeline.
- 5.6 In parallel, officers are currently progressing arrangements to support the issue of tenders associated with appointment of multi disciplinary design team, consultant packages and Principal Contractor which is required as part of a traditional procurement route.
- 5.7 Identification of the preferred procurement and delivery route will take account of anticipated programme, interface implications with the BAE associated remediation and infrastructure programme, appropriate engagement timelines with the local community, as well as wider resourcing demands within the Council.
- 5.8 The draft programme for delivery of the new school is currently estimated to support an August 2027 school start date. As work progresses to refine the procurement and delivery programme, this anticipated delivery date will be increasingly firmed up and all opportunities will be explored where practicable and achievable to accelerate this operational date.

## **6. Planning for potential additional primary capacity demands**

- 6.1 The report to Board in May advised that an options appraisal had commenced to determine viable opportunities that would be available to the Council, should additional future capacity within Dargavel Village be required in the long-term.
- 6.2 This work is being progressed recognising the longer term risk presented through the projection work completed with Edge Analytics, which identified potential upper end scenarios where long term demand within Dargavel Village for the two primary schools could emerge as high as circa 1,500 pupils.
- 6.3 It is recognised that over the long term, large scale housing developments, such as Dargavel Village, will progress through a natural lifecycle in relation to associated education demand. This will result in a likely peak in demand with a gradual reduction towards a lower mature long term level as housing reaches circa 20 years in age. Given the scale of Dargavel Village and that it will take circa 20 years to fully complete the development itself, the period of the peak demand may plateau for a medium term period. Developing a greater understanding of the likely shape and timing of both the peak and mature demand profile within the village over the very long term will be

informed by both the longer term projection modelling being developed with Edge Analytics, along with actual data that will emerge over the coming years. This actual data will be very closely monitored and increasingly provide greater confidence of the scale and timing of any additional demand that may have to be addressed beyond that which can be provided once the second primary school is operational within Dargavel village.

- 6.4 In line with best practice and national guidance which exists in England, Developing additional capacity options will require to provide flexibility to respond to a range of potential scenarios. This includes scenarios both in terms of the scale of additional physical capacity required, but also recognising the need to manage efficiently and effectively the scale and likely period of a temporary peak or plateau of demand. It will be important that in positioning itself to respond, the Council does so with the best possible information and intelligence that will be available at the point in time and not plan to deliver interventions which would ultimately result in over-provision of permanent capacity over the long term.
- 6.5 In this context two broad options have been identified:
- *Extending capacity of the existing Dargavel Primary School (sufficient land supply through an extended school site is expected to be secured to future proof this option through the land agreement with BAE Systems).*
  - *Use of the surplus capacity at Bishopton Primary School on a permanent basis.*
- 6.6 As part of progressing this work it is intended to engage with families in the early part of this school session in advance of returning to Board with a more detailed options appraisal to be considered.

## **7. Secondary school provision**

- 7.1 At the Board meeting in May, members approved plans to deliver a 400 pupil extension to the capacity of Park Mains High School, and to cap that school's capacity at the new 2000 capacity figure provided by the extension.
- 7.2 Engagement with a range of stakeholders since that decision was taken, has flagged a strong desire for a greater understanding of the underlying data and projections that underpinned that recommendation. Information in this regard has been shared with a wide range of stakeholders and it is planned for further engagement sessions to be carried out-with parent councils and relevant community groups following the summer break period to reinforce, share and communicate the data underlying and supporting that decision.
- 7.3 As previously advised, Edge Analytics have modelled the projection of the school roll through until 2033-34 which is shown below (Table 1). The first model is based on their standard model output and the second is an updated version of their model based on the actual number of S1 registrations at the time of calculation.

- 7.4 Edge Analytics 'standard model' projections are currently running higher than confirmed live data. While Edge projections indicate an August 23 school roll of 1480, the actual pupil roll for August 23 is projected at 1455 (this will be confirmed when schools return), which is much closer to the revised model (S1 Adjusted). This demonstrates that continual review of live data will be required to fully assess future demand and to allow a continual process of updating the projection model.
- 7.5 Park Mains High School – like other secondary schools – accommodates pupils who arrived from 'non-feeder' primary schools (placing requests and those from denominational primary schools in the catchment area). Recent analysis has shown the average number of Park Mains pupils who have arrived from 'non-feeder schools' to be 160, accounting for around 10% of the recent total school roll.
- 7.6 There is potential to manage admission from 'non-feeder' schools to ensure capacity for feeder primary schools in the long term. Over time, this could reduce the proportion of pupils in receipt of discretionary provision at Park Mains High School.
- 7.7 The 'standard Edge model' and 'Adjusted Edge scenario' detailed in Table 1 assume a continuation of non-feeder pupils arriving into S1 in future years. The 'Adjusted Edge scenario' indicates that in 2033/34, demand is projected to be less than the 2000 capacity.
- 7.8 The remaining rows show the impact of excluding 'non-feeder' pupils from Park Mains projections. This will take several years to fully track through, with enrolled pupils from 'feeder' and 'non-feeder' schools leaving the school, replaced only by those attending 'feeder' primaries. Table 1 serves to illustrate an approximate number of pupils who would require places at Park Mains in the given years, should 'non-feeder' provision be removed from these calculations.

Table 1

| Scenario   | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30 | 2030-31 | 2031-32 | 2032-33 | 2033-34 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Standard Edge model  | 1,419   | 1,426   | 1,440   | 1,480   | 1,531   | 1,589   | 1,640   | 1,686   | 1,732   | 1,802   | 1,903   | 1,985   | 2,072   | 2,134   |
| Standard Edge model excluding placing requests/denominational placements                   | 1259    | 1266    | 1280    | 1320    | 1371    | 1429    | 1480    | 1526    | 1572    | 1642    | 1743    | 1825    | 1912    | 1974    |
| Adjusted Edge scenario   | 1,419   | 1,426   | 1,440   | 1,453   | 1,476   | 1,505   | 1,524   | 1,543   | 1,568   | 1,629   | 1,718   | 1,791   | 1,868   | 1,923   |
| Standard Edge model excluding placing requests/denominational placement(Approx 160 pupils) | 1259    | 1266    | 1280    | 1293    | 1316    | 1345    | 1364    | 1383    | 1408    | 1469    | 1558    | 1631    | 1708    | 1763    |

- 7.9 The underlying background data within Edge Analytics modelling demonstrates that while the future secondary yield from Dargavel will increase as the development progresses towards completion over the next 10 year period, the yield from the other towns and villages within the Park Mains High School catchment is forecast to decline, even after accounting for known and planned areas of new house development. This declining long term demand from other areas, along with the planned extended capacity, is projected to provide confidence of sufficient secondary capacity over this time period.

- 7.10 It is recognised that over the longer term, from the mid 2030s and heading towards 2040, the full impact on the secondary sector from Dargavel Village will become more evident in Park Mains High School. It is recognised that as this develops, there will remain a potential risk for the 2000 capacity at Park Mains High School to be insufficient over the much longer term.
- 7.11 Much greater certainty of the actual long term trajectory will be increasingly secured as the Council moves towards the end of this decade and actual primary data increasingly emerges. This reflects the fact that as the actual number of primary school pupils in the associated school system (including Dargavel) becomes increasingly certain, this provides a much clearer pipeline of primary school pupils that will arrive in secondary for up to seven years ahead.
- 7.12 Therefore, as the Council moves towards the end of this decade, careful monitoring of all the associated actual data will be critical to continue to inform and feed into longer term forecasts. This will provide a clearer indication at that point if the Council will potentially be required to plan for any additional requirement towards the middle to the end of the following decade.
- 7.13 Such a decision if required, would be incorporated into the Council's strategic longer term Learning Estate Planning and Investment programme which is discussed below. This strategic long term planning work will consider future demand profiles, school capacities and key investment requirements associated with secondary school provision across Renfrewshire. This will include secondary schools within the estate which have significant lifecycle investment requirements and/or potential replacement needs following mid-life refurbishments that commenced around 20 years ago including Gryffe High School, Renfrew High School, Trinity High School, Johnstone High School and Castlehead High School.
- 7.14 Members will be aware that over recent months there has been suggestion from members of the Dargavel & Bishopton community for the provision of a new secondary school in Bishopton/Dargavel to serve the western part of the existing Park Mains catchment area as an alternative to expanding Park Mains High School to meet future growth in demand. Such an option has not previously been presented to the Board for consideration on the basis it would create very significant inefficiencies in the school estate and have significant additional financial consequences for the Council.
- 7.15 A proposal to develop an additional secondary provision within the existing Park Mains catchment specifically for Dargavel, Bishopton, Langbank would leave the current [un-extended] Park Mains High School significantly under-occupied. This would create a significant imbalance in the overall school estate, leading to an overall inefficiency in the delivery of education (particularly within the context of the residual Park Mains High School roll), as well as significant additional financial costs for the Council.
- 7.16 To demonstrate this impact, the table below, outlines the projected occupancy of Park Mains High School if those pupils from the feeder primary schools in the Western part of the current catchment (Langbank PS, Dargavel PS, Bishopton PS) attended an alternative new secondary school.

Table 2

| <b>Capacity: 1591</b>  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Year   | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
| Other feeder schools   | 850  | 830  | 800  | 770  | 725  | 675  | 670  | 660  |
| Occupancy  | 53%  | 52%  | 50%  | 48%  | 45%  | 42%  | 42%  | 41%  |
| Placing requests and primary denominational children from area | 160  | 160  | 160  | 160  | 160  | 160  | 160  | 160  |
| Occupancy  | 63%  | 62%  | 60%  | 58%  | 56%  | 52%  | 52%  | 52%  |

- 7.17 In addition to creating significant unoccupied secondary school capacity at Park Mains High School, there would also be material direct financial consequences for the Council to address, of both a capital and a revenue nature.

### **Capital Costs**

- 7.18 As previously reported to members, it is estimated that the extension to Park Mains High School will cost in the region of £27 million - £30 million with BAE Systems obliged under the existing S.75 agreement to pay for in effect half of this cost (reflecting an obligation to pay for additional capacity requirements for up to a cap of 200 pupils). Utilising the recognised Scottish Futures Trust cost matrix the high level potential cost of a new secondary school is estimated to exceed £90 million.
- 7.19 It is also important to note that the Council does not own additional land in the area that would support delivery of a secondary school and therefore there would potentially be further costs associated with site acquisition.
- 7.20 Assuming BAE Systems would be agreeable to allow their established contribution to be directed towards a new school, the net additional capital costs for the Council to meet would potentially be in excess of £60 million (ie the Council would require to fund a net cost of £75 million as opposed to £15 million for the extension to Park Mains). This would potentially incur up to £4.0 million per year in prudential borrowing costs. Given the scale of investment requirement that exists across the Council's wider school estate, this additional cost would ultimately draw investment capacity away from other potential future projects which the Council may identify as being key priorities.

### **Revenue Costs**

- 7.21 From a revenue perspective, it is assessed that broadly the Council would incur additional net annual revenue costs from operating an additional secondary school.
- 7.22 Removing costs associated with providing school transport for children from Bishopton and Dargavel is estimated to save eventually in the region of £0.8 million. This, however, would be offset by additional net school management costs of £1.1 million that would be incurred from having both Park Mains High School and a new additional secondary school.

- 7.23 Further the operational running costs associated with Park Mains High School would continue to be incurred despite being significantly underoccupied with new running costs associated with the new secondary to be incurred. This net growth in running costs are estimated to be in the region of £1.2 million.
- 7.24 In total therefore, the estimated net additional annual costs, including borrowing costs, related to an additional high school in the Dargavel area would be in the region of £5.5 million.
- 7.25 Such a direction of travel would therefore cut directly across the Council's statutory obligation to deliver best value for Renfrewshire and directly contradict the obligation to achieve efficient use of existing capacity across the Council's wider school estate, as well as creating an inevitable consequential impact on the Council's capacity to invest in other priority areas of the school estate as outlined above.
- 7.26 Given the ongoing engagement with stakeholders and ongoing interest in this particular suggestion, it is anticipated that this background information will be shared and discussed with stakeholders.

## **8. Review of the school estate**

- 8.1 Beyond managing the immediate investment programme to meet the needs emerging from the impact of the Dargavel Village development along with the existing major investment programme in a new Paisley Grammar School and planned investment in a new Thorn Primary, the Council is required to consider the long term needs of all communities in Renfrewshire, and in that context, the consequential long term future investment priorities across the overall learning estate.
- 8.2 To that end, officers have commenced a programme to develop a long-term Learning Estate Strategy and Management Plan. This programme of work will be a significantly more substantial and involved exercise in contrast to previous school estate planning, seeking to develop a strategic view of what the potential phased investment requirements are for the learning estate over the next 20 – 25 years, the anticipated priorities and key changes and opportunities within the estate planning that may need to be considered and planned for as well as the potential cost and financial planning considerations that would be associated with delivering over the very long term a strategic programme of investment.
- 8.3 Consequently, it is recognised that from the current position, it is likely to take an extended period of time to develop this initial strategic outlook which will require to be invested in moving forward by the Council to ensure it remains current and valid.
- 8.4 Despite the challenging requirements to deliver a strategic outlook of this nature, it is recognised that it will provide the Council with effective foundations from which the Council will be better placed to understand and articulate the scale and timing of key strategic investment needs and interventions that will be required across the learning estate over the long term.

- 8.5 The nature of this strategic long term planning exercise will by necessity be required to be responsive to both the management of long term condition and suitability of the existing estate but also appropriately reflective of shifting long term demand profiles, influenced by demographic change and changes across the Renfrewshire area in relation to future housing supply – much of which over the long term is not at this stage visible even as potential development sites.
- 8.6 Consequently, this strategic planning programme requires to be underpinned by a range of foundation baseline datasets and information which at present the Council either does not have or which is not in an up to date position, and will therefore require to be developed and secured as the first priority. This will include:
- Up to date asset condition and sufficiency assessments associated with the existing school estate underpinned by updated surveys along with updated capacity and roll assessments.
  - A long term projection of the likely change in scale and shape of education demand across Renfrewshire, broken down to individual school catchment level. This is a substantial piece of long term projection work that will need to be informed by live data sets, the potential impact of projected long term demographic trends that are likely to impact on Renfrewshire as well as Scotland as a whole, as well as more local understanding of likely future housing development patterns and net migration growth anticipated as well as over the much longer term areas of potential housing growth that may yet emerge in the future strategic planning context.
  - Understanding over the long term the potential lifespan of existing schools and/or requirements for major lifecycle refurbishments taking into account likely planned cyclical lifecycle maintenance by the Council.
- 8.7 As outlined above, this represents a significant programme of work that will require significant officer resource, supplemented by commissioned expertise and capacity to support key workstreams as well as strong corporate collaboration and programme governance arrangements. It is anticipated that regular updates will be provided to the board as this work progresses over what is anticipated will be over the medium term period.

## **Implications of this report**

### **1. Financial**

This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.

### **2. HR and Organisational Development**

This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.

### **3. Legal**

This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.



- 4. Property/Assets**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 5. Information Technology**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 8. Health and Safety**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 9. Procurement**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 10. Risk**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 11. Privacy Impact**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 12. Cosla Policy Position**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.
- 13. Climate Risk**  
This report is for noting and as such there no implications which arise directly from this report.

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### List of Background Papers

- (a) None.

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*Children's Services*  
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**Author:** Julie Calder, Head of Education/Interim Chief Education Officer






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**To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On: Thursday 24 August 2023**

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**Report by: Interim Chief Education Officer**

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**Heading: Education Scotland Inspection of West Primary School**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 West Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland in February 2023 as part of a national sample of education. Education Scotland uses different models of inspection and at West Primary School the short model approach was deployed. Education Scotland also inspected the Gaelic Medium Education provision which is in West Primary School. Inspectors assessed the school and the GME provision with a focus on two quality indicators which are referenced in How Good is our School? 4

Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.  
Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement.

- 1.2 This was a positive inspection which evaluated all quality indicators as 'good'.

- 1.3 As part of the inspection model the following area was also reviewed:

Quality Indicator 2.1 Safeguarding

Education Scotland do not attach an evaluative grade to this. Instead in the Summary of Inspection Findings there are evaluative statements provided which are positive and contribute to the overall school ratings of good.

- 1.4 The inspection report in the form of a letter to parents, published by Education Scotland on 20 June 2023, is attached as an appendix to this report and is also available from the Director of Children's Services or from the Education

Scotland website [Link to Education Scotland Inspection Reports](#) The letter to parents identified four key strengths of the school.

- The headteacher and management team provide highly effective leadership. The headteacher is supported well by staff in creating and maintaining a nurturing and inclusive learning environment. Staff, work closely with families and a wide range of partners and agencies to improve outcomes for children.
- Children identify strongly with their school. Relationships are positive and children engage well with each other and staff. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their interests and talents.
- A strong feature of the school as a community is the promotion of equity. The emphasis staff place in addressing barriers to learning is helping children engage fully in the life of the school. This is having a positive impact on children's engagement and attainment.
- Gaelic Medium Education within West Primary School is becoming well established. Children are making good progress in talking Gaelic. For children learning through English, their curriculum is widening through their learning about Gaelic language and culture.

1.5 The inspection report also identified three areas for further improvement:

- Continue to refine approaches to learning and teaching. This will help to ensure appropriate pace and challenge to reflect the range of needs of all learners. Staff should increase the opportunities for children to assume greater responsibility for leading their own learning, building on the existing practice already in place.
- Continue to take forward the already identified school priorities and planned interventions to raise children's attainment further.
- Continue to liaise closely with the local authority to build Gaelic Medium Education from nursery across all stages of learning.

1.6 There is an agreed set of procedures for responding to inspection reports which will support the school and Children's Services to plan how the area for further improvement will be addressed. Actions are detailed within the school improvement plan which is shared with parents. In addition, the school will be supported in its improvement journey by Children's Services.

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## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board are asked to note and celebrate the key strengths and recognise the area for further improvement in the Education Scotland report on West Primary School and the Gaelic Medium Education Provision.

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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Following a pause to inspections due to the pandemic, Education Scotland's routine programme of inspection of schools and early years settings resumed in September 2022. Children's Services welcomes the process of audit undertaken by Education Scotland as supportive to continuous improvement in Renfrewshire's education establishments. The school team at West Primary School approached the inspection in a positive manner and embraced it as a professional learning opportunity in partnership with colleagues at Education Scotland.
  - 3.2 The report includes four areas for further improvement, and progress in addressing this will be monitored by Children's Services staff through the Quality Improvement Framework.
  - 3.3 The inspection report will inform planned improvement activity, and will enable the school, the flexible learning resource and wider service, to build on the recognised strengths and focus further development on areas for improvement to enable the school to continue to deliver a quality educational provision.
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### **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – engaging with, and learning from external inspection, ensures that our Renfrewshire is thriving: high standards of education provision ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society. It also ensures our Renfrewshire is well – by providing an environment which encourages care, welfare and development, establishments play a crucial role in developing children and young people so that they become responsible citizens.

The inspection process also supports delivery of the Council Plan cross-cutting theme of improving outcomes for children and families as well as other Council Plan key strategic outcomes, for example:

#### **Economy**

Equipping all children and young people to achieve success in life

#### **Fair**

- Creating inclusive and supportive learning environments for children and young people.
- Embedding children's rights in our decision-making processes

4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & 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. 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 & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** - None
11. **Privacy Impact** - None
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – N/A
13. **Climate Risk** – None

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**List of Background Papers** - None

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***Children's Services***

*T McGillivray*

**Author:** Tracy McGillivray, Head of Education (Inclusion and Quality Improvement)  
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20 June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited West Primary School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

West Primary School Early Learning and Childcare Class was inspected by Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months. Therefore we have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher and management team provide highly effective leadership. The headteacher is supported well by staff in creating and maintaining a nurturing and inclusive learning environment. Staff, work closely with families and a wide range of partners and agencies to improve outcomes for children.
- Children identify strongly with their school. Relationships are positive and children engage well with each other and staff. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their interests and talents.
- A strong feature of the school as a community is the promotion of equity. The emphasis staff place in addressing barriers to learning is helping children engage fully in the life of the school. This is having a positive impact on children's engagement and attainment.
- Gaelic Medium Education within West Primary School is becoming well established. Children are making good progress in talking Gaelic. For children learning through English, their curriculum is widening through their learning about Gaelic language and culture.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Renfrewshire Council.

- Continue to refine approaches to learning and teaching. This will help to ensure appropriate pace and challenge to reflect the range of needs of all learners. Staff should increase the opportunities for children to assume greater responsibility for leading their own learning, building on the existing practice already in place.
- Continue to take forward the already identified school priorities and planned interventions to raise children's attainment further.
- Continue to liaise closely with the local authority to build Gaelic Medium Education from nursery across all stages of learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for West Primary School

| Quality indicators   | Evaluation  |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>   | <b>good</b> |
| <b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>  | <b>good</b> |
| Descriptions of the evaluations are available from:<br><a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a> |             |

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

## What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Renfrewshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Charles Rooney  
HM Inspector






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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Interim Chief Education Officer

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**Heading:** ADES/Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement Review

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1. Renfrewshire's Children's Services undertook Collaborative Improvement (CI) activity in June 2023 where the focus was on the recent work that has been undertaken to improve how we meet the needs of our children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN).
- 1.2 The purpose of CI is to share what works well at a local authority level and to support improvement in identified areas of local authority activity. This model is part of a national approach developed by Association of Directors of Education in Scotland and Education Scotland, designed to support improvement, with an expectation that all Local Authorities will take part over a 3-year period.
- 1.3 CI visits involve staff from across Children's Services working with senior colleagues from a range of local council areas identified through the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and a number of colleagues from the national scrutiny body Education Scotland (ES).
- 1.4 In considering the theme for CI, the directorate wanted to better understand readiness and capacity to respond to the challenges and opportunities arising from the lessons learned from the Additional Support Needs review and the subsequent action plan that specifically considers outcomes for learners with additional support needs.
- 1.5 The ADES/ES model notes that ownership of the CI activity sits within the context of the local authority self-evaluation for self-improvement processes. As such, Renfrewshire Council's Children's Services led the design, planning and organisation of the activity.
- 1.6 Planning for the CI activity started in May 2023. Co-development with internal teams and ADES/ES enabled senior officers to scope the parameters of the exercise to ensure learning was appropriate, purposeful and related to existing priorities for Renfrewshire.
- 1.7 Through discussion and in consultation with ADES/ES colleagues a key 'question' was developed to frame the CI review:

*‘With the number of children and young people with additional support needs increasing, are we future proofing our universal services in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.’*

- 1.8 The purpose and value of the CI activity is to identify potential opportunities for improvement using a multi-lens/external review process drawing on the experience of CI team members, and those involved in the activities themselves. The universal approaches that were to be part of the review were:
- Flexible Learning Resource (FLR)
  - Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework
  - Renfrewshire’s Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) / Non-Violent Resistance (NVR)
  - Education Scotland National Model - Circle / Renfrewshire’s Inclusive Classroom Environments (RICE)
  - Integrated Children’s Services
- 1.9 Each of these approaches were explored by the CI team separately through scene setting, document analysis, school visits, focus groups and professional dialogue.
- 1.10 The schools which took part in these visits were identified through discussions with the Educational Psychology Team. The sample was created to ensure that ES/ADES members could see the above approaches in a variety of contexts. The visits involved colleagues from ADES and ES meeting with practitioners, pupils and parents to discuss the impact of the universal approaches on them.
- 1.11 The feedback session held at the end of the 3-day review was very positive about the current approaches and about the culture of trust and purposeful collaboration that exists between schools and the central services involved.
- 1.12 Examples of identified strengths are:
- The vision for inclusion was clear and well understood across agencies and within Education, in all the activities, practitioners demonstrated a clear understanding of what and how they would reach their ambition.
  - The local authority has demonstrated an empowered approach to building capacity within their educational estate by drawing on peer-led and motivated “early adopters” to shape improvements.
  - The local authority is making very effective use of relevant data sets to measure performance and impact.
  - The direction of travel in relation to the flexible learning resources is in line with national and international thinking.
  - Renfrewshire Nurturing Relationship Approaches (RNRA) is well understood across services/agencies and practitioners. There were clear examples of partnership working/multi-agency working.
- 1.13 As part of the collaboration, participants discuss the next steps to continue the improvement journey. These next steps include:
- The GIRFEC refresh now needs to be embedded in everyday practice resulting in a reduction in the current levels of exclusion.
  - Expanding the universal inclusion approaches into learning, teaching, assessment, and pedagogy to avoid inclusion being narrowly construed as health and wellbeing, relationships, and socio-emotional development.

- Continue to engage with the Early Year Sector and partners with a focus on early intervention and early years to improve outcomes for infants, children and young people.
- Continue to use the recommendations from the National Discussion, the Hayward and Withers report and OECD reports to inform further development in relation to inclusion.
- Continue to improve the quality assurance framework to ensure that there is rigour and consistency in approaches to inclusion.

1.14 It was stated that the other local authorities might benefit from the practice and approaches established in Renfrewshire. In particular the “Non-violent Resistance” approach could be shared through the ADES network.

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## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Members of the Education and Children’s Services Policy Board are asked to note and celebrate the key strengths and recognise the area for further improvement in the ADES Collaboration report.

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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Collaborative Improvement (CI) is an approach to bring about improvement through shared work involving staff from the Local Authority, Education Scotland (ES) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES).
- 3.2 Together, the group establishes the focus for the Collaborative Improvement Review and then undertakes activities in the Local Authority that will result in an evaluative summary of identified strengths and areas that may require further focus. All 32 Local Authorities in Scotland participate in this approach and Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services were selected to be involved in June 2023.
- 3.3. The approach to CI was outlined in the joint agreement<sup>1</sup> and is based on the call for a “strengthened” middle in the 2014 OECD report on Scottish Education<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.4 The approach is also intended to address the recommendation in Audit Scotland’s report on education that Councils should work with schools, Regional Improvement Collaboratives, other policy teams and partners including the third sector to reduce variability in outcomes<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.5 The successful impact of the CI process is based on a number of key principles which provide support and challenge for improvement:
- The process brings together knowledge from across the country to secure improvement and share good practice. There is effective sharing of what works well at a local authority level.
  - The increased strengthening of the networked learning system across Scotland as a significant number of officers from different local authorities take part as members of the core CI team who engage with the host LA team.
  - The identified area of focus is clearly rooted in the self-evaluation evidence of the local authority and confirmed as appropriate through robust discussion during the initial planning phase with the core CI team.

- Reporting on progress of identified action points is incorporated into existing improvement planning processes, ensuring that all resources remain focussed on maximising improved outcomes for learners.

1. [Education reform - Joint Agreement June 2018](#)
2. [Improving Schools in Scotland - An OECD Perspective](#)
3. [Improving Outcomes for Young People through School Education - Audit Scotland 2021](#)

## Implications of this report

1. **Financial**
2. **HR and Organisational Development**
3. **Council Planning**
4. **Legal**  
None.
5. **Property/Assets**  
None.
6. **Information Technology**  
None.
7. **Equality 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. If required, prior to 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

[Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

[The Promise Scotland](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[General Teaching Council Scotland - Professional Standards](#)

[Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004 - notes](#)

[Presumption to provide education in mainstream setting](#)

[Support for Learning: All our Children and all their Potential](#)

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### **Children's Services**

*T McGillivray*

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# Renfrewshire Council

## Children's Services

### ADES Collaborative Report

#### June 2023

## **Introduction and Background**

Collaborative Improvement (CI) is an approach to bring about improvement through shared work involving staff from the Local Authority, Education Scotland (ES) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES). Together, the members establish the focus for the Collaborative Improvement Review and then undertake activities in the Local Authority that will result in an evaluative summary of where there are identified strengths and areas that may require further focus.

The approach to CI was outlined in the joint agreement<sup>1</sup> and is based on the call for a “strengthened” middle in the 2014 OECD report on Scottish Education<sup>2</sup>. The approach is also intended to address the recommendation in Audit Scotland’s report on education that Councils should work with schools, Regional Improvement Collaboratives, other policy teams and partners including the third sector to reduce variability in outcomes<sup>3</sup>.

The successful impact of the CI process is based on a number of key principles which support and challenge for improvement:

- The process brings together knowledge from across the country to secure improvement and share good practice. There is effective sharing of what works well at a local authority level.
- The increased strengthening of the networked learning system across Scotland as a significant number of officers from different local authorities take part as members of the core CI team who engage with the host LA team.
- The identified area of focus is clearly rooted in the self-evaluation evidence of the local authority and confirmed as appropriate through robust discussion during the initial planning phase with the core CI team.
- Reporting on progress of identified action points is incorporated into existing improvement planning processes, ensuring that all resources remain focussed on maximising improved outcomes for learners.

1 [Education reform - Joint Agreement June 2018](#)

2 [Improving Schools in Scotland - An OECD Perspective](#)

3. [Improving Outcomes for Young People through School Education - Audit Scotland 2021](#)

All 32 Local Authorities in Scotland participate in this approach and Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services were selected to be involved in June 2023. The ADES/ES model notes that ownership of the CI activity sits within the context of the local authority self-evaluation for self-improvement processes. As such, Renfrewshire Council’s Children’s Services led the design, planning and organisation of the review.

In considering the theme for CI review, the Inclusion Team wanted to better understand readiness and capacity to respond to the challenges and opportunities arising from the lessons learned from the Additional Support Needs review and the subsequent action plan that was created and to specifically consider outcomes for learners with additional support needs. Therefore, planning for the CI activity started in May 2023. Regular meetings with internal teams and with ADES/ES allowed senior officers to scope the parameters of the exercise to ensure learning was appropriate, purposeful and related to existing priorities. The overarching theme for the review was agreed collectively and this was:

*“With the number of children with additional support needs increasing, are we future proofing our universal approaches in order to improve outcomes for children and young people,”*



The purpose of the Collaborative Improvement activity is to identify potential opportunities for improvement using a multi-lens/external review process drawing on the experience of the CI team members, and those involved in the CI activities themselves. The universal approaches that were to be part of the review were:

- Flexible Learning Resource (FLR)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework
- Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) / Non-Violent Resistance (NVR)
- Education Scotland National Model - Circle / Renfrewshire's Inclusive Classroom Environments (RICE)
- Integrated Services

Each of these approaches were explored separately through scene setting, document analysis, school visits, focus groups and professional dialogue.

The schools which took part in these visits were identified through discussions with the Educational Psychology Team. The sample was created to ensure that ES/ADES members could see the above approaches in a variety of contexts. The visits involved colleagues from ADES and ES meeting with practitioners, pupils and parents to discuss the impact of the universal approaches on them.

The review took place over two days and on day three colleagues from ADES and ES provided feedback to senior local authority colleagues as part of a professional dialogue session.

## **Strengths and Next Steps**

***"We welcomed the open, honest, and transparent discussion throughout the two days with the Renfrewshire core leads, 'early adopters and ELC Heads of Establishment/ school SLT representatives."***

**ADES member**

Through the analysis of the feedback gathered during the collaborative sessions and the subsequent school visits the following themes emerged:

- ethos and culture of inclusion
- messaging, monitoring, and reporting;
- empowering practitioners;
- thinking more flexibly; and
- expanding across the authority

It is recognised that within each theme there were strengths and next steps to continue to invest in professional learning and quality assurance to ensure the universal approaches are embedded consistently across the local authority.

## **Ethos and Culture of Inclusion**

This first theme highlights how Renfrewshire are adapting their services to ensure that children with additional support needs (ASN) can succeed in mainstream education. The CI team viewed this approach as beneficial not only for those with an identified disability or ASN, but for all pupils more broadly. It was noted from the offset, that there is an extensive well-grounded knowledge base of the demographics of the local authority and the children and communities it serves, and the local authority is well resourced in terms of ASN provision. Leadership of ASN centrally is strong with a positive initiative-taking Educational Psychology team who together with schools and early years

establishments are aiming to ensure that all children, young people (CYP), and families are at the heart of all considerations for multi-agency partnerships, processes, and enhanced practice.

As the number of CYP with complex or ASN continues to rise, participants spoke of a need to look at the bigger picture in terms of the impact of covid-19 and the ongoing cost of living crisis. During the strategic day one sessions, it was agreed that a universal approach to inclusion is essential due to how challenging the transition of moving back into school settings has been across the authority. The CI team recognised that the redesign of the corporate strategy is solution focussed and aspirational, leading to a vision that is clear and understood by all. It was also acknowledged that such an approach takes a significant amount of time, investment, and “change in culture and mindset” from all staff to see positive evidence or impact. The approach also requires ensuring that inclusion remains as inclusion and not seclusion, which one strategic group highlighted as potentially more damaging than exclusion entirely.

Examples of how schools and early years establishments apply the approaches such as RNRA, NVR, CIRCLE and RICE in relation to their unique contexts, were discussed in the focus groups by participants. These frameworks involve a universal approach that empowers practitioners to identify what would best suit their establishment, and better allow them to see changes in practice. The discussion groups and subsequent visits illustrated how these universal approaches can also successfully provide targeted support for CYP who need it. For example, participants spoke of specific strategies that they had identified for individual children they worked with, and how these could be developed to support all CYP long-term. Practice shared during this collaborative discussion highlighted the positive impact of the strong leadership of ASN demonstrated by the head teacher colleagues involved in the collaborative along with the skills and commitment of their staff supporting inclusion. It follows that to ensure a strong authority wide approach to inclusion there will be a requirement for all Head Teachers and Senior Leaders to “endorse” and “champion” the models of inclusion at school and early years level.

The GIRFEC refresh and overall inclusion strategy has moved towards a values based/rights-based approach. It was clear from the discussion that the refresh involved significant multi-agency working and has led to successful roll out and implementation of the policy. The approach taken to refresh GIRFEC within the education sector of Children’s Services was described as practitioner-led and this type of approach should continue in this next phase of embedding the approaches in all schools and early year establishments. There were many examples discussed during the focus groups and illustrated through the establishment visits, which demonstrates the impact of the GIRFEC refresh. For example, during the focus groups and visits ES and ADES colleagues met practitioners, parents and pupils who spoke strongly about the importance of the refresh. They spoke about the positive change to the use of language when discussing inclusion, shifting away from negative terms such as “challenging” or “disruptive” behaviour, to positive language that is grounded in the rights of the child and focusses on the strengths and strategies. This positive change allows for any policies or frameworks to be adopted across establishments, and not solely for those with ASN. A shift in language from behaviours to strategies is also ensuring that “solution-oriented conversations” take place, as practitioners move beyond diagnosis to better understand the context and ensure continuum of supports are available for CYP. Significant work has taken place across the authority to ensure this language is used and the quality improvement framework has been adapted to provide a vehicle for rigorous evaluation to ensure consistency of use.

As well as changing to more inclusive language, schools across Renfrewshire have made progress with altering classrooms to ensure they are inclusive learning environments for all CYP. FLR, Circle and RICE have all been particularly helpful for identifying what changes can be made so all pupils feel safe and included and some of the impact of these changes were seen during the school visits. Similar responses were also given within the Circle and RICE focus group, as both approaches

require staff to adapt their own classrooms to suit the environment and needs of the CYP they support. The use of these frameworks are starting to provide a clearer focus for the targetted use of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and other school resources which will ultimately improve outcomes for learners.

The GIRFEC refresh was also commended for supporting practitioners by providing a clear direction for these frameworks. By “ensuring that everything procedure-wise follows the GIRFEC framework,” pupils will receive better support throughout their education and this support will be reviewed and adapted regularly to meet the needs of the child as they grow and develop. Applying this alongside both Circle and RICE allows for more continuity to their support, as there is greater predictability for CYP of what the classroom environments will be like. The importance of Relationship approaches was also well understood across services/agencies and practitioners and there were good examples of strong, joined up thinking.

#### Next steps

- The GIRFEC refresh now needs to be embedded in everyday practice resulting in a reduction in the current levels of exclusion.
- Expand the universal approaches to inclusion into learning, teaching, assessment, and pedagogy to avoid inclusion being narrowly construed as health and wellbeing, relationships, and socio-emotional development. This will involve closer working with the other workstreams within Children’s Services namely Learning, Teaching and Assessment and Children and Families.
- Continue to engage and “ramp up” involvement with the Early Year Sector and partners with a focus on early intervention and early years to achieve the vision.
- Continue to use the recommendations from the National Discussion, the Hayward and Withers report and OECD reports to inform further development in relation to inclusion.
- Non-violent resistance (NVR) training is an approach worth sharing more widely through the ADES network.

#### Messaging, Monitoring and Reporting

The next theme, ‘Messaging, Monitoring and Reporting,’ relates to the use of consistent messaging across all services, children, and parents, as well as the importance of reliable and valid data that can assess need and impact across the authority. This theme also relates to the quality assurance programme both at central and local level.

Participants across the focus groups spoke of the need for consistent messaging at all levels of staff within all services and localities so that parents and pupils receive the same outcomes and advice no matter who they reach out to. An example of a consistent approach was illustrated through the authority wide roll out of RNRA. The RNRA discussion session and subsequent visits shared examples of how adopting the same principles of nurture and relationships across schools has allowed for a universal approach in speaking with and supporting CYP and their families. By having access to the same planning framework for all settings, means practitioners will apply the same language across sectors:

***“At local authority level, everyone in the council needs to buy into this – no matter where parents go, they will receive the same messages and support.”***

**Children’s Services CI participant**

It is recognised by all that these universal practices should not be limited to schools and early years establishments, there needs to be a shared understanding of what these practices look like and feel

for children across Children's Services including Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership. This will in turn provide a joined-up approach and a greater understanding for parents, and the wider community. It is hoped that within education that an increased awareness of supports available across the community, parents will have conversations with teachers about these approaches can improve wellbeing and support learning. Increased awareness across services will also mean there will be a better communication and joined-up working with children and families and will negate the need for families to have to tell their story numerous times. The newly created Parent Ambassador group will be a good way to improve communication with parents.

With universal practices in place, all sectors are responsible for reporting, monitoring, and providing feedback. With the use of skilful data analysis in areas such as emotional-based school avoidance, the wellbeing census, and attainment, practitioners can better gauge the level of support required in their own establishment as well as the impact. Further, regular monitoring can allow for easier communication between staff, which can be particularly useful for when children move between teachers. Any collection, analysis, and reporting of data however must be consistent:

***“Having a clear framework allows for easier monitoring and a clear alignment for support. Does the support need to go further? It also acknowledges that not every child will follow the same path.”***

***Children's Services CI Participant***

Consistent and reliable recording of data will also allow for practitioners to identify clear targets and indicators that meet the needs of their own establishment:

***“Action plans around quality improvement methods... schools gather individualised information and analyse their own data – each establishment will have a clear action plan with clear measure indicators.”***

***Children's Services CI Participant***

Moving forward, participants discussed a need to consider the long-term impact of these supports. The current evidence they have available was described as “incremental,” and so it was suggested that short period reviews in which they identify where they would like to be in one year versus three years would be helpful.

#### Next steps

- Continue to work with all schools and early year centres, parents, pupils and partners to ensure that consistent messages about approaches and expectations of inclusion are shared enabling children and young people to have the best opportunity to thrive regardless of where they attend school.
- Improve how we share the messages of the supports available from and the function of the Educational Psychology Team more widely.
- The quality assurance framework has recently been adapted to ensure that there is rigour and consistency in the roll out of the refreshed GIRFEC policy and practice. This will provide a vehicle to ensure that there is a consistency of approach to inclusion across all sectors. This will also allow for the measuring of the impact of initiatives on individuals, cohorts, whole school/early years centres and across the authority.
- Also, through these enhanced quality assurance procedures there are opportunities to further explore specific schools and early years settings and review how School Improvement Plans, knowledge of local community contexts/ school estates and data are being used effectively together. This will ensure that local authority engagement is targeted towards the right schools to ensure consistency of the universal approaches roll out.

## Empowering Practitioners

In all the CI activities, practitioners demonstrated a clear understanding of what and how they would reach Renfrewshire's ambition of fully inclusive schools. There has been a clear approach to the redesign of the corporate strategy which has as a solution-focused aspirational vision. Leaders have tackled and introduced wide scale operational change by establishing a shared and respectful baseline for improvement and enacted change through partnership agreement. They have demonstrated an empowered approach to building capacity within their educational estate, by drawing on peer led and motivated "early adopters" and more recently "parent ambassadors". This demonstrates a genuine feeling of collective ownership of the approach and evidence of organic growth. There is evidence of an active approach of "winning hearts and minds". There are also examples of the good links and relationships with other local authorities and the Regional Improvement Collaborative where challenges are explored, and practice shared through engagement and collaboration.

Within this theme 'empowering practitioners,' participants spoke of the importance of cascading training across all levels and sectors, to ensure practitioners have the responsibility and skillset needed to deliver an inclusive service. A major aspect participants discussed for empowering practitioners was the importance of leadership of all with central support. In the FLR focus group, members discussed how each locality has their own Inclusion Support Officer, and a senior Educational Psychologist. These leaders have been critical for staff to reach out to for support and provide a clear direction for staff on what they should work towards. Although leadership is needed, there was also a notion of collective responsibility shifting from individuals to across localities. For example, the FLR focus group discussed the changes made to the service and how these will allow for greater accountability at all levels. There is real potential that this new approach for allocating resources will enable a "joined-up" and "solution-focussed" approach to meeting the needs of our CYP, where practitioners gather as a team to identify the best support for the child:

***"It's making clearer for parents that every decision made for their child was not made by one person – they are made right across the service and importantly includes those who know the child the best."***

***Children's Services CI Participant***

Improving the resource allocation governance is commendable and empowering. It ensures that the people who know the resources best, can better meet the needs of individual children, families and mainstream schools.

It was recognised that there needs to be more empowerment from both the top and at a grassroots level, so that the universal approaches are kept at the forefront of people's minds.

Collaboration between services was also discussed across the focus groups. Within the Integrated Services focus group, participants discussed the links that have been formed between social work and education. For example, teachers have been provided with guidance in specific areas such as parent alcohol and drug abuse, to raise awareness and potentially allow for earlier intervention.

Empowering practitioners requires providing training to staff across settings, to allow for these universal approaches and interventions to move out of bases and into the classroom. Renfrewshire offers access to high quality professional learning for teaching and support staff. For example, in the Circle and RICE focus group, members spoke about the series of training sessions that are provided to staff to help them embed practice. With course accreditation often available, this gives them the confidence to deliver this practice, knowing they have the skillset to do so. Several teachers

who participated in each of the focus groups spoke about how these training opportunities have made them feel more assured in their role:

*“...initially [I was] overwhelmed by [my] new Depute Head Teacher role – early adopters has helped [my] confidence with things that are new... I felt confident knowing I knew what I was going to do.”*

*Children’s Service CI Participant*

Professional learning and training opportunities also provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice, and how this could be improved:

*“It (CIRCLE) allows teachers (especially those who are more experienced) to take a step back and look at how their practice or space could be adapted.”*

*Children’s Service CI Participant*

Although these supports have been beneficial for developing an inclusive environment, members of ADES and ES discussed the potential impact of managing multiple interventions, including how this may affect teacher workload. Practitioners were asked about the impact of managing between RNRA, RICE, and Circle simultaneously, which it felt could lead to confusion amongst staff. Through discussions practitioners shared that it is important to note that these interventions are complimentary and are not contradictory to each other and so they do not become diluted. Indeed, practitioners spoke about how they have been able to work across these interventions so that staff have a wider selection of supports available to fit within their establishment.

#### Next steps

- Continue to involve early adopters and skilled / committed senior staff in the delivery of professional development for colleagues.
- Ensure that all sectors, with particular reference to the secondary sector, are equally engaged in the implementation of the various approaches.
- Continue to be mindful of the change management process. There are a number of approaches in place or being developed. Continue to reflect on progress towards each development.
- Continue to explore ways to increase leadership (participation) of young people in strategic developments.

#### Thinking More Flexibly

In the FLR focus group, participants spoke of how this support follows a similar direction to other countries in Europe by changing to a “resource” that can be applied within schools as opposed to a “base” where children are separated from the classroom environment.

The direction of travel in relation to the flexible learning resources is in line with national and international thinking:

- [The Changing Role of Specialist Provision in Supporting Inclusive Education | EASNIE \(european-agency.org\)](https://european-agency.org/), and
- [Changing Role of Specialist Provision in Supporting Inclusive Education | European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education \(european-agency.org\)](https://european-agency.org/).

These links provide validation of the approach that Renfrewshire is taking, and reassurance that much of what the other European countries are still to consider, is incorporated into the approach and the ambition. The approach taken by Renfrewshire makes better use of specialist knowledge, allows for flexibility in the use of resource and provision, allowing the authority to make better use



of provision to build capacity across the authority and agencies. This is enabling the local authority to meet the needs of CYP more effectively. Previously the resources provided support for specific ASN, which prevented flexibility and due to the locations of the provisions, access was not equitable.

***“It is an approach to inclusion which leaders should drive forward with courage and tenacity.”***

***ADES/ES CI Participant***

To deliver universal inclusion, practitioners have had to think flexibly and creatively with the skills and resources they have available to them. This theme captures how the approaches in Renfrewshire have enabled staff to work towards supporting all CYP in an inclusive school/early years environment. Members in the strategic session discussed how in previous years, attitudes and models in schools were too insular. This has required services to come together to develop a new approach where they can be there for CYP at different times in their learning journey. It has also required schools to look within their own context with their school population and environment, to see how this could be changed:

***“Everything needs to be adaptable – particularly as children and staff continue to change, which we can see is supported in Renfrewshire through RICE, the assessment framework, etc.”***

***Children’s Service CI Participant***

As children transition, approaches such as RICE have been particularly helpful for ensuring any initial inductions are adapted to meet the needs of those who may need additional support.

Thinking flexibly also requires including children’s voices, to allow them to have a say in their education:

***“Involving children in what stage they are at... it’s not about getting children to sit and write in the classroom, but flexibility is the biggest bit for young people just to be involved in the day.”***

***Children’s Service CI Participant***

One example given in another focus group was the use of the Pupil Voice Box – which has helped with identifying any anxieties about transitions to see how these can be linked to their enhanced transition process.

## **Next Steps**

- To enhance the success of the new, more inclusive approach to supporting ASN through the FLR, will require strong leadership at officer level. This needs to support practitioners to establish effective joint planning across the FLR and mainstream placement.
- Through the improved quality assurance framework at authority level, the referral information related to CYP, their needs and the approaches used by the mainstream schools will be continually monitored as this is important data to enable support and challenge in the ‘mainstream sectors. For example, schools which are ‘over referring’ or paying ‘lip service to inclusion, will need support and challenge.

## **Expanding Across the Authority**

The final theme, ‘Expanding Across the Authority,’ covers what members of the CI hope to see moving forwards as these approaches continue to be applied throughout Renfrewshire. While significant progress has been made, they should continue to encourage Head Teachers from all schools to be involved and consider how these could be adapted to further support early years.

Overall, uptake for Renfrewshire's approaches to inclusion have been high across the authority. For example, 98% of schools have now implemented RNRA, and Circle is now available in all establishments. Although the vast majority have taken part in training, not all have done so fully, or have started at different times, leading to some inconsistencies in their progress and development. In the FLR focus group, members discussed the view that some partners, parents and young people have, that some schools are more inclusive than others. This means, for example, that parents make placing requests to schools they believe will have excellent inclusion, which puts a pressure on their systems and the resources they have available. It is hoped however that as the authority wide expectation and roll out of universal approaches continues, inclusion will be viewed as excellent across the authority as all schools and centres will have the tools necessary to provide an inclusive education for all CYP.

Lastly, several focus groups discussed the importance of early years, and that more focus needs to be given to this sector to ensure these approaches are suitable for their practice. In the Circle and RICE focus group, participants suggested that the authority would benefit from a Play Lead to support with the development of play pedagogy. This would help practitioners to identify what inclusive play would look like, as the current approach to play does not always align with this. Further, as some children might not have the communication skills needed for play, they will require more support to eventually move towards free play.

#### Next steps

- Continue to ensure that the work for inclusion spans infants as well as children and young people – this would include the policy implementations such as the Language policy.
- Continue to shape training and practices with partners to enhance delivery of the inclusion strategy.
- Continue to embed the work of the Inclusion strategy with robust quality assurance to ensure there is greater consistency in approach across the school and early year estate.

#### Conclusion

Overall, the themes generated from this Improvement Collaborative demonstrate the progress made in Renfrewshire. The roll out of these universal approaches are in the early stages of development however, they have the potential to ensure mainstream education is inclusive for all. Practitioners across services and sectors demonstrated that they have used these approaches to adapt individual plans and classrooms in ways that support all pupils, but particularly for those with ASN or who come from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Better collaboration between services has also allowed practitioners to share good practice and support one another with these approaches. Participants at the event agreed that they must continue to raise awareness of these throughout Renfrewshire to allow for greater consistency and ensure that all CYP benefit.

*“Individuals providing support for ASN, had a very clear vision of what needs to be achieved to ensure more impactful inclusion. With support from Senior Leaders and courage to continue this journey, this will make a difference to children, young people and their families.”*

*ADES CI Participant*





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**To:** Education and Children Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Interim Chief Education Officer

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**Heading:**

- Children's Services Health and Well Being Strategy Update 2022/2023
- Children's Services Well Being Strategy 2023/2024

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The council's health and safety strategy places a responsibility on each service to prepare an annual report evaluating the management of health and safety within the service.
  - 1.2. The Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy 2022/2023 update is attached as Appendix 1. This sets out the arrangements for the management of health and safety within the service and demonstrates the service's commitment to continuous improvement in health and safety performances summarising the achievements to March 2023 for Children's Services.
  - 1.3. Appendix 2 to this report contains the Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy for 2023/2024 and the key areas the plan is going to focus on during 2023/2024.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the education and children policy board approves the Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy completed actions for 2022/2023, attached at Appendix 1
- 2.2. It is recommended that the education and children policy board approves the Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy 2023/2024 attached at Appendix 2.

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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The council health and safety policy requires each council service to maintain its own health and safety policy.
- 3.2. In line with council policy, health and safety policies are required as a minimum, to be reviewed and updated every 3 years or following significant changes in a service.
- 3.3. Children's Services policy has been revised to reflect standard health and safety industry guidance on effective policies which set a clear direction for the service to follow.
- 3.4. The service health and safety policy sets out the organisation of, and responsibilities for, health and safety within the service and provides details of the arrangements made for the service to meet its legal obligations.

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### **Implications of this report**

#### **1. Financial Implications**

None.

#### **2. HR and Organisational Development Implications**

Improved health, safety and welfare of employees.

#### **3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Community Care, Health and Well-being | - Improved health, safety and welfare of users.  |
| Safer and Stronger                    | - The implementation of the council's health and safety policy will contribute to improvement of service delivery. |

#### **4. Legal Implications**

This report must allow and assist the department to meet its legal requirement under health and safety legislation.

#### **5. Property/Assets Implications**

Implementation of the council's health and safety policy will ensure sustainability in service delivery.

#### **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**

This policy reflects the commitment of the director, heads of service and managers to ensure that the main priorities for action are achieved within an environment, which is safe and is not harmful to the health of employees, clients and other users.

**9. Procurement Implications**

None.

**10. Risk Implications**

None.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. COSLA Policy Position**

None.

**13. Climate Risk**

None.

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**List of Background Papers**

- **Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Plan 2021/2022 Update and 2022/2023 Well Being Plan – 18 August 2022**

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**Children's Services**

JC/LB

25 July 2023

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## Appendix 1

### Children's Services Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy Update 2022/2023

| Health and Safety Focused Themes | Description  | Planned Start Date  | Date Completed                                | Notes   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 1.Violence and Aggression        | <p><u>1.1 Violence and Aggression Policy</u></p> <p>Re-establish the Educational Establishments V&amp;A working group to finalise the Violence and Aggression policy for implementation across Education establishments.</p>   | <p>April 2022</p> <p>Head of Service (Inclusion and Quality improvement) took over this task in November 2022</p> | <p>Revised completion date September 2023</p> | <p>Head of Service (Inclusion and Quality Improvement) is taking revised policy on Violence and Aggression to policy board in November 2023.</p> <p>Work has been ongoing within the service to review the existing policy. This review is involving trade union representatives from the JNC and the JCB, head teachers from primary and secondary, heads of establishments (Early Years). The agreed draft policy will then be further developed with both the management and union sides with focus groups of practitioners. Once this has been completed it will be brought to members. There will also be access to training throughout 2023/24 for staff members.</p> |
|                                  | <p>The Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy within Children's Services (SW) will be reviewed and monitored by the Clyde Valley Social Care sub group when any updates are available.</p>  |   | <p>March 2023</p>                             | <p>This area for Children's Services SW continues to be monitored and training delivered to staff.</p>  |
|                                  | <p><u>1.2 Monitor Violence and Aggression Incidents</u></p> <p>Review the process of supporting staff and young people following a violence and aggression incident across. Education Estate. Ensuring trade unions representations are kept informed and updated.</p> | <p>April 2022</p> <p>Head of Service (Inclusion and Quality improvement) took over this task in November 2022</p> | <p>July 2023</p>                              | <p>As part of the review, there has been training available to all staff on de-escalation techniques/promoting positive behaviour and this will continue throughout session 23/24. There is a rolling schools programme of training on Non-violent resistance techniques led by the Educational Psychology team. This training will help to support practitioners who work with our most distressed children and young people.</p> <p>The Promoting Positive Relationships Policy has been refreshed and from August 2023 it will be reviewed by key members of staff both teaching and support, pupils and our parent ambassador group.</p>                                |

|  |  |            |               |  |
|--|--|------------|---------------|--|
|  | A review of business world reporting across Children's Services (SW) is currently underway.  | April 2022 | January 2023  | <p>This will be brought to members in the November board.</p> <p>There is support available for all practitioners who are subject to violent behaviour as a result of violent incident including those incidents where distressed children have caused harm.</p> <p>From August 2023 there will be training delivered to all education staff on how to complete the V&amp;A form on business world which will allow for more accurate reporting.</p> <p>New incident reporting form available on Business World from 5 January 2023. Corporate Email circulated to all staff advising details of the new form.</p> |
| 2. Mental Health Addressing Stress (Work and Non Work related) | 2.1 Occupational Health<br>Staff are informed by management that they can access the council's occupational health services and counselling service "time for talking" and other relevant services. Corporate stress risk assessment template revised and issued January 2022. Mental Health first aiders contact list published on the staff info section of the website. | April 2022 | December 2022 | Resources Support Manager circulated an HR communication on 20 December 2022, providing line managers with details of the update Employee Counselling Services New Employee App for "Time for Talking"   |
|  | 2.2 Health Awareness Events<br>The department will continue to support and promote council wide health awareness events and circulate information to staff.  | April 2022 | November 2022 | All children's services staff are made aware of corporate health initiatives. Staff were invited along to the One Ren Event in November 2022.  |
| 3.Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)                           | 3.1 Information Awareness<br>Education Support/Managers are asked to remind staff who work with this type of risk to look out for symptoms and ensure annual risk assessments are completed. Referrals should be made to occupational health referral if required.   | April 2022 |               | Email sent to Education Support Managers / Senior Service Delivery Officers in schools to advise that council policy / risk assessment should be reviewed for staff who carry out these duties..   |
| 4.Fire Safety Management                                       | 4.1 Fire Risk Assessment<br>In accordance with   | April 2022 | October 2022  | All educational establishments / children houses were asked to submit the date in which their  |

|                                       |  |            |               |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|---------------|---|
|                                       | legislation fire risk assessments will be reviewed and revised as necessary to include assessment of PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plans) for staff, clients or frequent users of the service. 2 templates in existence (residential and non-residential).   |            |               | fire risk assessment was last updated. A return was received from all establishments. Including Children's Houses.  |
|                                       | Education Support Managers / Senior Service Delivery Officers/Social Work Managers are asked to save their updated Fire Risk Assessment on an annual basis to the Teams page for HQ review.  | April 2022 | October 2022  | An email sent to ESMs/SSDOs. House Managers to request their updated fire risk assessment is saved to the Teams page.   |
|                                       | The monitoring of fire training within education and children's services is the responsibility of establishment managers.  | April 2022 | November 2022 | The corporate fire warden course dates were circulated to heads of all establishments on 13 October 2022.<br><br>Fire Extinguisher Videos circulated to all head teachers to share with staff 03/11/22  |
| 5.Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders | 5.1 Manual Handling<br>Ensure manual handling activities across education and children's services have been identified and suitably risk assessed.   | April 2022 |               | Email sent to Education Support Managers / Senior Service Delivery Officers in schools to advise that council policy / risk assessment should be reviewed for staff who carry out these duties.   |
| 6. Managing Contractors               | 6.1 Disruption Management Plan<br><br>Resources Support Manager/Social Work Manager to work with project manager for any school/building adaptations / new builds to ensure that an adequate disruption management plan is in place.   | April 2022 |               | Managers from the Resources Team meet on a 6 weekly basis with colleagues from Hard FM / Property Services at a service liaison meeting. All projects that require a disruption management plan are discussed and all necessary actions followed up on. |
|                                       | Working at Heights<br><br>Ensure Senior Facilities Operative informs contractors of working at height regulations when carrying out works within establishments.<br><br>Education staff should be reminded of requesting assistance when working from height is required to display information on walls | April 2022 |               | Email sent to Education Support Managers / Senior Service Delivery Officers in schools to advise that council policy / risk assessment should be reviewed for staff who carry out these duties.   |

|                |  |            |                |  |
|----------------|--|------------|----------------|--|
|                | to ensure proper equipment is used.  |            |                |  |
| 7. Audits      | <p>7.1 Statutory Compliance</p> <p>Continue to have maintenance checks and remedial works carried out as per the Corporate Guidance on Statutory Inspections and maintenance.</p> <p>Establishments to record requests within electronic CAMIS system.</p> | April 2022 | January 2023   | <p>An audit was carried out in September 2022 in relation to the inspection of PE / Outdoor play equipment in educational establishments. All establishments completed a short survey to give up update on their inspection dates. Results discussed with Corporate Health and Safety.</p> <p>The Playground Risk Assessment was updated to include visual checks should be carried out by establishments.</p> <p>An outdoor equipment risk assessment was prepared and circulated to heads of establishments on 5 January 2023.</p> <p>All establishments have been reminded of the procedure for logging repairs on CAMIS.</p> |
|                | <p>7.2 General Risk Assessment</p> <p>Remind educational establishments/children's services of the of risk assessments they have which require to be reviewed on annual basis</p>  | April 2022 | September 2022 | A reminder was sent to HTs/HoS September to remind them of the requirement to ensure playground RA, Security RA and flight risk paperwork is all up to date.   |
|                | <p>7.3 Display Screen Assessments</p> <p>Monitor the implementation and management of display screen equipment self assessments for employees.</p>   | April 2022 |                | Email sent to Education Support Managers / Senior Service Delivery Officers/Social Work Manager to ask that all staff are reminded of the need to review their DSE assessment.   |
| 8. Inspections | <p>8.1 Establishment WOIR Inspections</p> <p>WOIR inspections in establishments to include education establishments joint inspection with trade union representatives. Ongoing - annual programme in place.</p>  | April 2022 | January 2023   | Establishments Heads along with ESM/SSDO and SFO carry out an annual H&S walk round of the building and any issues are raised on CAMIS for repair. Trade Union representatives are given the opportunity to attend this walk round. A reminder was sent to ESMs/SSDOs January 2023.  |

|                |   |            |            |   |
|----------------|---|------------|------------|---|
|                | WOIR to Include COVID Considerations  |            |            |   |
|                | <p>8.2 Audit of Children's Services establishments by corporate health and safety team</p> <p>Audit of establishments by Health and Safety team to ensure safe working practices and compliance.</p>  | April 2022 | April 2023 | <p>The corporate health and safety team have supporting visits to various educational establishments over the year 2022/2023.</p> <p>Pre Audit Visits were carried out to establishments before Scottish Fire and Rescue Visits.</p> <p>Pre Audit Visits were carried out before HSE Asbestos visits undertaken.</p>  |
|                | <p>8.3 Audit of Children's Services establishments by CS HQ</p> <p>The Resources Support Manager/ Quality Assurance &amp; Practice Development Officer audit a selection of establishments risk assessments to ensure they are updated.</p> | April 2022 |            | <p>The resources support manager has visited the following establishments to assist with health and safety concerns:</p> <p>St Mary's PS – General Health and Safety concerns</p> <p>Glenfield ELCC – Fire Service Visit</p> <p>Kirklandneuk ELCC – Pre Audit in relation to Fire Service Visit</p> <p>Cochrane Castle PS – H&amp;S visit prior Education Scotland Visit</p> <p>Trinity HS – Fire Service Visit</p> <p>Ralston – Fire Service / HSE Visit</p> <p>Lochfield PS – HSE Visit</p> <p>Renfrew HS – Fire Service Visit</p> <p>St Peter's ELCC – Flight Risk Visit</p> <p>A selection of fire risk Assessments are audited by the Resources Support Manager.</p> |
| 9. Flight Risk | <p>9.1 Supporting Establishments with Flight Risk Protocols</p> <p>The resources support manager will provide support to the Early Years Team to ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place for the risk of flight.</p>               | April 2022 |            | <p>All establishments who have requested support over the year have received this. Site visits have been carried out by corporate health and safety officers where required also.</p>   |



|   |   |            |               |  |
|---|---|------------|---------------|--|
|   | Children's Services (SW) will follow the agreed process with Police Scotland – "Looked After and Accommodated Children Who Go Missing From Residential & Foster Care in Scotland" | April 2022 |               |  |
| 10. Review of Health and Safety Standard Circulars      | <p><u>10.1 H&amp;S Standard Circulars</u></p> <p>Weapons in Schools and Children's policy document to be updated and include Children's Services.</p>                             | April 2022 | Ongoing       | This policy is still under review. This action will be carried forward onto the 2023/2024 plan.        |
| 11. Annual Update Children's Services Incident Guidance | <p>11.1 CS Incident Guidance</p> <p>Ensure an annual review is carried out to the CS Incident Guidance and re issued to all educational/children's establishments.</p>            | April 2022 | August 2022   | Updated CS Incident Guidance was issued to all educational establishment at start of term August 2022. |
| 12. Business Continuity                                 | <p>12.1 Business Continuity</p> <p>Ensure the CS business continuity plan is updated to capture any health and safety events.</p>   | April 2022 | November 2022 | CS business continuity plan updated and passed to civil contingencies                                  |

## Appendix 2

### Children's Service's Health, Safety and Well Being Strategy Update 2023/2024

| Health and Safety Focused Themes                               | Description  | Planned Start Date                     | Date Completed | Notes |
|--|--|--|----------------|-------|
| 1.Violence and Aggression                                      | <p><u>1.1 Violence and Aggression Policy</u></p> <p>Re-establish the Educational Establishments V&amp;A working group to finalise the Violence and Aggression policy for implementation across Education establishments.</p> <p>The Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy within Children's Services (SW) will be reviewed and monitored by the Clyde Valley Social Care sub group when any updates are available.</p> | <p>November 2022</p> <p>April 2023</p> |                |       |
| 2. Mental Health Addressing Stress (Work and Non Work related) | <p><u>2.1 Occupational Health</u></p> <p>Staff are informed by management that they can access the council's occupational health services and counselling service "time for talking" and other relevant services. Corporate stress risk assessment template revised and issued January 2022. Mental Health first aiders contact list published on the staff info section of the website.</p>                         | April 2023                             |                |       |
|  | <p><u>2.2 Health Awareness Events</u></p> <p>The department will continue to support and promote council wide health awareness events and circulate information to staff.</p>  | April 2023                             |                |       |
| 3.Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)                           | <p><u>3.1 Information Awareness</u></p> <p>Education Support/ Managers are asked to remind staff who work with this type of risk to look out for symptoms and ensure annual risk assessments are completed. Referrals should be made to occupational health referral if required.</p>  | April 2023                             |                |       |

|                                       |   |            |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------|--|--|
| 4.Fire Safety Management              | <p><u>4.1 Fire Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>In accordance with legislation fire risk assessments will be reviewed and revised as necessary to include assessment of PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plans) for staff, clients or frequent users of the service. 2 templates in existence (residential and non-residential).</p> | April 2023 |  |  |
|                                       | <p><u>4.1 Fire Risk Assessment (cont)</u></p> <p>Education Support Managers / Senior Service Delivery Officers/Social Work Managers are asked to save their updated Fire Risk Assessment on an annual basis to the Teams page for HQ review.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |
|                                       | <p><u>4.1 Fire Risk Assessment (cont)</u></p> <p>The monitoring of fire training within education and children's services is the responsibility of establishment managers.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |
| 5.Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders | <p><u>5.1 Manual Handling</u><br/><u>Ensure manual handling</u></p> <p>activities across education and children's services have been identified and suitably risk assessed.</p>   | April 2023 |  |  |
| 6. Managing Contractors               | <p><u>6.1 Disruption Management Plan</u></p> <p>Resources Support Manager/Social Work Manager to work with project manager for any school/building adaptations / new builds to ensure that an adequate disruption management plan is in place.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |
|                                       | <p><u>Working at Heights</u></p> <p>Ensure Senior Facilities Operative informs contractors of working at height regulations when carrying out works within establishments.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |

|                |  |            |  |  |
|----------------|--|------------|--|--|
|                | Education staff should be reminded of requesting assistance when working from height is required to display information on walls to ensure proper equipment is used.   |            |  |  |
| 7. Audits      | <p><u>7.1 Statutory Compliance</u></p> <p>Continue to have maintenance checks and remedial works carried out as per the Corporate Guidance on Statutory Inspections and maintenance.</p> <p>Establishments to record requests within electronic CAMIS system.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |
|                | <p><u>7.2 General Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>Remind educational establishments/children's services of the of risk assessments they have which require to be reviewed on annual basis</p>   | April 2023 |  |  |
|                | <p><u>7.3 Display Screen Assessments</u></p> <p>Monitor the implementation and management of display screen equipment self assessments for employees.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |
| 8. Inspections | <p><u>8.1 Establishment WOIR Inspections</u></p> <p>WOIR inspections in establishments to include education establishments joint inspection with trade union representatives. Ongoing - annual programme in place.</p> <p>WOIR to Include COVID Considerations</p> | April 2023 |  |  |
|                | <p><u>8.2 Audit of Children's Services establishments by corporate health and safety team</u></p> <p>Audit of establishments by Health and Safety team to ensure safe working practices and compliance.</p>  | April 2023 |  |  |

|   |  |                              |  |  |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|--|
|   | <u>8.3 Audit of Children's Services establishments by CS HQ</u><br><br>The Resources Support Manager/ Quality Assurance & Practice Development Officer audit a selection of establishments risk assessments to ensure they are updated.  | April 2022                   |  |  |
| 9. Flight Risk  | <u>9.1 Supporting Establishments with Flight Risk Protocols</u><br><br>The resources support manager will provide support to the Early Years Team to ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place for the risk of flight.<br><br>Children's Services (SW) will follow the agreed process with Police Scotland – "Looked After and Accommodated Children Who Go Missing From Residential & Foster Care in Scotland" | April 2023<br><br>April 2023 |  |  |
| 10. Review of Health and Safety Standard Circulars      | <u>10.1 H&amp;S Standard Circulars</u><br><br>Weapons in Schools and Children's policy document to be updated and include Children's Services.   | April 2023                   |  |  |
| 11. Annual Update Children's Services Incident Guidance | <u>11.1 CS Incident Guidance</u><br><br>Ensure an annual review is carried out to the CS Incident Guidance and re issued to all educational/children's establishments.   | April 2023                   |  |  |
| 12. Business Continuity                                 | <u>12.1 Business Continuity</u><br><br>Ensure the CS business continuity plan is updated to capture any health and safety events.  | April 2023                   |  |  |
| 13. Staff Training                                      | <u>13.1 Staff Training</u><br><br>Organise a programme of technical refresher training for Technical Teachers and Technicians  | April 2023                   |  |  |
| 14. Health Care In schools – Emergency                  | <u>14.1 Emergency Salbutamol Inhalers</u>  | April 2023                   |  |  |

|                     |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Salbutamol Inhalers | Work with colleagues in NHS to establish a policy for educational establishments on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers |  |  |  |
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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Director of Children's Services

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**Heading:** Standard Circular 8 – Included, Engaged and Involved – A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek elected member approval for the revised Standard Circular 8: Included, Engaged and Involved – A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions which will replace Standard Circular 8: Exclusions of Pupils from Schools.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Since the Scottish Government published the national guidance on managing exclusions in schools in June 2017 (Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing Exclusions from School) there have been a number of changes to the policy landscape including the implementation of The Promise, the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) local and national refresh, and the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 2.2 The overarching aim of Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions was to support schools, communities and their partners to keep all children and young people fully included, engaged and involved in their education; and, to improve outcomes for all Scotland's children and young people with a particular risk of exclusion.
- 2.3 The attached standard circular (see Appendix 1) updates and refreshes the previous policy statement and includes a refreshed focus on prevention, early intervention and response to individual need in line with the principles of GIRFEC.
- 2.4 Our schools and early learning and childcare settings already place a greater importance on inclusion through.
- effective learning and teaching;
  - promoting positive relationships and behaviour; and

- employment of preventative approaches which reduce the need to consider exclusion.

2.5 Exclusion is always used as a last resort. Where it is used it is used proportionately and is a short-term measure with the aim of improving outcomes.

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### **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Elected members are asked to:
- a) approve Standard Circular 8; and,
  - b) instruct the Director of Children's Services to take appropriate steps to ensure its implementation in all schools and early learning and childcare settings.
- 

### **Implications of this report**

- 1. Financial**
- 2. HR and Organisational Development**
- 3. Council Planning**
- 4. Legal**  
It is confirmed that Legal Services have been consulted in relation to this revised policy statement.
- 5. Property/Assets**  
None.
- 6. Information Technology**  
None.
- 7. Equality 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. If required, prior to 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.

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**List of Background Papers**

[Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

[The Promise Scotland](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[Support for Learning: All our Children and all their Potential](#)

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***Children's Services***

*T McGillivray*

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## Standard Circular 8

### Update June 2023

## **Included, Engaged and Involved – A positive approach to preventing and managing school exclusions.**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### 1.1 This policy reflects the following:

Scottish Government national guidance [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions \(2017\)](#) This national guidance provided a renewed focus for local authorities and schools on prevention, early intervention and a greater emphasis on inclusion through effective learning and teaching and promoting positive relationships and behaviour. **Head Teachers and others considering making a decision to exclude a child or young person from school should refer to this Scottish Government guidance.**

The United Nation Convention on the rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)):

- Article 12 – respect for the views of the child
- Article 28 – right to education
- Article 29 – goals of education

The Promise 21-24 Plan and in particular the Right to Education actions which is a call to action for education authorities to ensure:

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|--|
| Care Experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their Care Experienced pupils. |
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| School improvement plans will value and recognise the needs of their Care Experienced pupils with robust tracking of attendance and attainment so that support can be given early. |
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| Care Experienced young people will be actively participating in all subjects and extra-curricular activities in schools. |
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| The formal and informal exclusion of Care Experienced children from education will end. |
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| Schools will support and ensure Care Experienced young people go on to genuinely positive destinations, such as further education or employment. |
|--|

#### 1.2 Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, 'looked after children' are defined as those in the care of their local authority – sometimes referred to as a 'corporate parent'.

There are many reasons children may become looked after, including:

- they face abuse or neglect at home.
- they have disabilities that require special care.

- they are unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, or who have been illegally trafficked into the UK.
- they have been involved in the youth justice system.

We aim to ensure that all looked after children receive the support they need, whether they are:

- in [residential care](#)
- looked after by [kinship carers](#)
- looked after by [foster carers](#)
- [looked after at home](#)
- [adopted](#), from either Scotland or abroad.
- [leaving care](#)

### **1.3 As this document has a legal bearing, we will use the term “looked after” as defined by law to describe our care experienced children and young people.**

## **2.0 Corporate Parenting**

- 2.1 This policy therefore reflects our role as Corporate Parents. As Corporate Parents we have specific duties and responsibilities towards looked after children and young people up to the age of 26. When the state takes on a parental role for a child or young person, we all have a part to play in their wellbeing. Corporate Parents have a vital role to play in ensuring the rights of looked after children and young people are upheld, and that they have the best chances and outcomes in life.
- 2.2 This policy should be followed by all education establishments and should be made available to all relevant stakeholders in order that there is a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of exclusion from school in the context of legislative requirements. The policy also reflects on the impact of exclusion on children and young people and provides guidance to education establishments regarding the management of exclusions.

## **3.0 What is exclusion?**

- 3.1 Exclusion is when an establishment sends a child or a young person home and does not allow them to return for a certain number of days. Sometimes schools might use a different name for this, for example ‘suspension’ — this is still an exclusion. If a school permanently excludes a child/young person, this means their name will be removed from the school register and they will not be allowed to return to that school. Schools must keep a record of all exclusions and must follow set procedures when they exclude a pupil.
- 3.2 The power to exclude rests with the education authority under Regulation 4 of the Schools (General) Regulations 1975 as amended. Section 14 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty on education authorities to make appropriate education provision when a child or young person is excluded. This duty is devolved to Head Teachers however the education authority retains responsibility for the education of all children and young people.
- 3.3 The guiding principles of Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions are set out below:

- The foundation for schools, learning establishments and education authorities is a whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support against a background which promotes positive relationships, learning and behaviour;
- Everyone in a learning community should feel they are in a safe and nurturing environment;
- All children and young people have a right to education; and education authorities have a duty to provide this education;
- All children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning;
- All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential;
- Exclusion should be the last resort;
- Where exclusion is used, it should be as a proportionate response where there is no appropriate alternative and the wellbeing of the child or young person should be the key consideration; and
- Exclusion must be for as short a period as possible with the aim of improving outcomes for the child or young person. The time during and after the exclusion period should be used constructively to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place for all.

3.4 In all circumstances where exclusions are considered to be necessary, they should be undertaken with due sensitivity for the wellbeing of the individual concerned and his/her peers. Before a child or young person with a coordinated support plan or who is considered disabled in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is excluded, permission and advice should be sought from the Head of Education (Inclusion and Quality Improvement). Similarly, there should be additional sensitivity to children who are looked after by the authority, at home or away from home. Advice should be sought from the link Education Manager for the establishment prior to any exclusion.

3.5 Through use of Renfrewshire's updated Staged Intervention Framework each school should identify children or young people at risk of exclusion and support them in a planned way. The child/young person's single and multi-agency child's plan is the key document in which to record planned approaches to meeting need.

#### **4.0 Communication**

4.1 Communication with parents and the child or young person is extremely important, and the involvement and support of parents should be integral to the management of an exclusion from school. Where behaviour has previously given rise to concern this should be reflected in the child/young person's single and multi-agency child's plan. In almost all cases it is expected that parents would have been involved in previous discussion about this and would understand that certain behaviours can lead to exclusion.

4.2 The views of parents, and the child or young person should be sought, listened to and recorded throughout the exclusion process. There is an obligation to have due regard, so far as is reasonably possible, to the views (if there is a wish to express them) of children or young people in decisions that significantly affect them, taking account of their age and maturity.

#### **5.0 Using Periods of Exclusion**

5.1 Regulation 4 of the Schools General (Scotland) regulations provides that an education authority shall not exclude a pupil from school unless the authority:

1. is of the opinion that the parent of the child or young person refuses or fails to comply, with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school;
  2. considers that in all the circumstances to allow the child or young person to continue attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational wellbeing of the children or young people there.
- 5.2 The two grounds are distinct from each other, one applying to the parents / carers and the other to the child or young person. The regulations allow the authority and its schools to take a broad approach, consider all the circumstances and to take account of the educational wellbeing of other pupils. They also introduce the threshold that the child or young person's behaviour must be 'seriously detrimental'.
- 5.3 Exclusion from school is rarely an acceptable sanction. It is therefore very important to identify what the purpose of the exclusion is and what positive outcomes can be achieved.
- 5.4 Exclusion can be used by Head teachers to:
- Emphasise the limits set and help the child or young person (and parents / carers) to recognise the consequences of misbehaviour. This will illustrate the seriousness of the issue;
  - Give opportunity for the learner to be involved in or take responsibility for resolving the situation;
  - Maintain order / safety and prevent continued disruption to the learning of others. This will illustrate standards and acceptable behaviour to the rest of the school. It will ensure the rights of all pupils to learn and staff to work without fear or disruption;
  - Signal strong disapproval of unacceptable behaviour and to bring about a positive change in the learners' behaviour;
  - Engage and involve parents / carers with the school and help them recognise their responsibilities in maintaining positive behaviour in schools;
  - Provide a cooling off period, offer opportunity for reflection or to defuse situations;
  - Support victims of anti-social or violent behaviour;
  - Carry out a risk assessment; Instigate or review support plans.
- 5.5 Review of checklist 1 and 2 should be used to inform decisions to exclude (Appendix 2)
- 5.6 A written record must be kept of all procedures mentioned above and all information, including the reasons why a Head teacher decided on a particular course of action, should be recorded in the child or young person's pastoral notes. Comments should be specific, including the names of teachers and initials of other children or young people who may be involved, dates, times and any other information that may be deemed to be relevant. This information, in certain circumstances, may be required to substantiate the authority's case in an appeal against the decision to exclude.
- 5.7 The person who investigates the circumstances surrounding a possible exclusion from school should, where possible, not be the person who adjudicates on the decision. The Head teacher should be in a position to hear all the evidence including that of teaching staff, child or young person and/or parents. Given the differences in staff pupil ratios across sectors, this practice may not always be possible.
- 5.8 It is recognised that in extreme circumstances a head teacher may require to take the decision to exclude a child or young person without the prior involvement of parents.

- 5.9 If the decision to exclude has been made inform parent / carer orally of the decision to exclude and invite them to the school to escort their son / daughter home. If this is not possible pupils should not be sent home until their parents have been advised and a check made that they will be at home when the child or young person arrives. If parents / carers cannot confirm that they will be at home, schools should make arrangements for the child or young person to remain in school, supervised outwith the classroom situation, until the end of the normal school day. When the decision to exclude has been taken because of violence towards members of staff, all reasonable steps should be taken to remove the child or young person from the school situation.
- 5.10 Intimation orally or in writing on the day of the exclusion should include information on why the decision to exclude was taken and a date, time and place where the Head teacher or their representative will be available to discuss the decision to exclude.
- 5.11 Confirm the exclusion in writing, including the reasons and the date, time and place where the head teacher and, as appropriate, the Head of Education or their representative, shall be available to meet to discuss the exclusion; this must be within 7 calendar days from the first day of the exclusion. If parents / carers have not been able to be contacted to be informed of the exclusion orally, the letter should be delivered to the parent / carer by the head teacher, other member of staff of the school, or official of the education authority.
- 5.12 A copy of the letter given in Appendix 4(a) should be sent to the parents / carers / young person by recorded delivery within 8 days of the decision to exclude. The letter may also include what options were considered, what support could be offered and what alternative education will be provided during the exclusion period. For children or young people who are looked after by the local authority, Social Work should be informed who in turn should liaise with the child/young person's parents / carers.
- 5.13 The notice of exclusion should be made to the child/young person, if over 12 years of age. Irrespective of the age, they should attend the meeting with the parents / carers.
- 5.14 If the young person is 16 years or over, intimation should be made directly to them. There is no requirement to involve parents / carers in such circumstances.
- 5.15 The exclusion should be for as short a period as possible as continuity of education is paramount. The Head teacher may exercise judgement in relation to the length of exclusion. They may impose single temporary exclusions of up to four school days at any time. The maximum length of any single exclusion may be increased following discussion with the Head of Education or Director of Children's Services.
- 5.16 The period of exclusion should reflect the breach of discipline which resulted in the exclusion and the child or young person's past disciplinary record. It is recommended that first exclusion or exclusions for other than the most serious offences should not exceed two school days.
- 5.17 It is essential that a record of a single exclusion, an incident report, is completed and a copy retained in the child/young person's file; all exclusions should be recorded electronically using Click and Go. There should be no periods of informal exclusion or mechanisms of exclusion other than the properly recorded incident report pertaining to exclusion.

## **6.0 Education During Exclusion**

- 6.1 All children and young people have the right to education when excluded. If a child or young person is excluded for only a few days they may not receive any teaching, but the school may send them work to complete at home and return for marking. If a child or young person is excluded for a longer period, the school or local authority must make alternative arrangements for them to continue learning without undue delay. It is reasonable to expect alternative education provision to be in place after three days of exclusion.
- 6.2 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 provides that the child or young person has a right to an education. When a child or young person is excluded for a period of up to four days relevant, appropriate learning tasks should be provided to minimise the potential negative impact of the child or young person missing school-based education.
- 6.3 Any existing involvement in non-school based learning should continue. These include attendance at alternative provision; therapeutic support, or college course. Schools should communicate with other providers to ensure that relevant support can continue.

## **7.0 Return following exclusion.**

- 7.1 Prior to a child or young person returning to school, an update to the assessment and single and multi-agency child's plan should take place to ensure the right support is provided. Appropriate approaches and strategies should be developed to prepare the child or young person, parent(s), staff and peers to enable them to return to school in a positive way.
- 7.2 Readmission to school following exclusion should take place at a meeting with the child or young person and their parents. Checklist 3 Appendix 2 is a useful checklist for this process. One of the main purpose of exclusion is to ensure appropriate support for the child or young person enables them to re-engage in education. The return from exclusion meeting should reflect this. The purpose of the return from exclusion meeting could also be:
- to update the young person's support plan
  - a solution focussed discussion about the circumstances giving rise to exclusion and planning for desirable outcomes in the future, an understanding of future behaviour, expectations and responsibilities could be agreed in the context of the wellbeing plan.
- 7.3 However, it is not a legal requirement that guarantees or contracts of behaviour are put in place in order for a child or young person to be readmitted to school.
- 7.4 The meeting where appropriate should focus on the updated assessment and single and multi-agency child's plan and agreement on the expectations outlined during discussions in this should be recorded in pastoral notes. A note of the meeting will be produced and by agreeing to this, those involved are agreeing to the conditions for return to school. (Note of return from exclusion meeting appendix 5)
- 7.5 There may be occasions when the school feel that they require to undertake a risk assessment to minimise current or future risks and therefore allow the learner to return to school supported through this risk assessment. The risk assessment should be informed by the information gathered using the [GIRFEC National Practice Model](#) and should be shared with the child, their parent/carers and all staff involved with the child. The risk assessment should identify the priorities and needs of the pupil balanced against the strategies required to ensure the safety of all children and staff.



## **8.0 Monitoring**

- 8.1 Schools record exclusions using the SEEMIS system. Exclusions will be monitored regularly by Education Managers. Exclusion data will be used to identify good practice and highlight concerns. Pastoral notes and chronologies should be updated when appropriate.

## **9.0 Checklists**

- 9.1 Throughout the policy we refer to the national document Included and Engaged Part 2 and the associated checklists. The checklists from the national guidance Included, Engaged and Involved, (appendix 2) are not legal requirements. However, as implementation of this policy is dependent on this guidance being followed, it is an expectation that all of the questions in the checklists have been considered and can be evidenced if required in an appeal against exclusion.

## **10.0 The impact of exclusion on children and young people**

- 10.1 The national guidance Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017) highlights that it is important to recognise the impact that exclusion can have, particularly within those groups of children where exclusions are more prevalent: those with an assessed or declared disability; looked after children and young people; children and young people from the most deprived areas; and those with an additional support need (particularly if that support need is social, emotional and/or behavioural). Having an understanding of the evidence that highlights the impact that exclusion can have will support informed decision-making about the appropriateness of an exclusion; but will also recognise that exclusion when used in a proportionate and supportive way can have a positive outcome for the child or young person and the wider school community.
- 10.2 There is a correlation between exclusion, poor attainment and anti-social/offending behaviour. Recognising that the negative impact of exclusion is cumulative, children and young people can often become involved in a negative cycle of exclusion and non-attendance which can reduce social capital and significantly impact on later life chances.

## **11.0 A Preventative Approach**

- 11.1 Whole school culture and ethos

All Renfrewshire schools should focus on universal approaches that work towards preventing the need for exclusion. The focus is on creating a positive whole school ethos which promotes positive relationships and behaviour.

A school's culture, ethos and values are fundamental to promoting positive relationships and behaviour. An inclusive ethos where everyone's contribution is valued and encouraged should be promoted. A positive ethos has been identified in school improvement studies as being fundamental to raising attainment.

All Renfrewshire learning establishments should build a positive ethos which promotes pupil and staff participation; encourages achievement; celebrates success and has high expectations of every child and young person.

All Renfrewshire learning establishments therefore must have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure a consistent approach to improving relationships and behaviour across the

whole community and also to consider children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In creating and promoting a positive whole school ethos, leadership is recognised as one of the most important aspects of the success of any school. Highly effective leadership is key to ensuring the highest possible standards and expectations are shared across learning establishments to achieve excellence and equity for all.

The professional values and personal commitments core to being a teacher in Scotland are social justice, integrity, trust & respect and professional commitment: this includes respecting the rights of all children or young persons as outlined in the UNCRC and their entitlement to be included in decisions regarding their learning experiences and have all aspects of their wellbeing developed and supported. They should also ensure a safe and secure environment for all children and young people within a caring and compassionate ethos and with an understanding of wellbeing.

There are some key approaches which schools use to improve relationships and behaviour. These are centred around the principle that all behaviour is a form of communication. The effective implementation of these approaches can often prevent the need for exclusion. These include:

- restorative and solution-oriented approaches as part of a whole school approach;
- whole school nurturing approaches (Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach) based on nurturing principles, including nurture groups in early years, primary, and secondary and specialist provision;
- anti-bullying policies and practice which contribute to social and emotional wellbeing including the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Programme and respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service; and
- effective learning and teaching which contributes to developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider school community

## 11.2 Early intervention

Early intervention and prevention are key elements of the staged intervention framework focused on ensuring we get it right for all our children and young people. Early intervention is crucial in reducing the need for exclusion whilst recognising that all support should be appropriate, proportionate and timely.

A key aspect of this framework is the emphasis on robust planning and assessment which places the wellbeing of children and young people at the centre. The wellbeing of children and young people is at the heart of GIRFEC. It is particularly important that professionals engaging with children and young people seek to develop a shared understanding of the child's overall wellbeing and agree what approaches are to be used and how to assess their impact.

All practitioners should use the [GIRFEC National Practice Model](#) as a framework for assessing, planning and reviewing the support of a child or young person. This model also emphasises the key part that relationships play in

- building up resilience,
- providing a protective environment,
- supporting vulnerability and

- managing adversity.

Joined-up partnership working is a fundamental aspect of the whole system approach; where children and young people, parents, and the services they need all work together in a co-ordinated way to meet specific needs and improve the child or young person's wellbeing.

There is a new staged intervention framework in operation across Renfrewshire education establishments which describes the continuum of support in place to meet the needs of children and young people within the GIRFEC context.

The refreshed GIRFEC Policy sets out the staged intervention framework and processes when a child or young person's needs cannot be met by the universal supports and strategies available to all children.

### 11.3 De-escalation and seclusion

De-escalation refers to the process of defusing conflicts as they begin to prevent them from getting worse or potentially violent.

In regard to classroom management, there are strategies staff can use to de-escalate conflicts in their earliest stages and stop small behavioural issues before they get out of hand. These usually involve identifying a risk and intervening as quickly as possible in a calm and controlled manner. There is access to de-escalation training and school leaders can discuss any professional learning requirements with their Education Manager to ensure staff are confident and capable.

Seclusion is the supervised confinement of a child alone in a room and is a form of physical intervention. The practice of seclusion in educational settings gives rise to a number of legal issues, including whether the use of seclusion might be interpreted to constitute a deprivation of liberty with implications for the human rights of the child.

Seclusion should not be used as a strategy in Renfrewshire schools/early years establishments as a form of behaviour management, discipline or punishment. This statement should not be confused with approaches that might be required to ensure the safety of children or adults in a conflict situation or fight, where two parties might need to be kept apart and there is a duty of care to prevent harm.

### 11.4 Use of part time timetables

As a result of an appropriate assessment, establishments may consider the use of individualised, planned packages of support that may include time in onsite school support and offsite support centres, in order to prevent exclusion. Focussed, creative and individualised tailored approaches to learning for some children and young people could help build relationships and school-connectedness.

Partners from within and out with the education authority should, where possible, support schools in providing packages of support to engage children and young people across all sectors. In such cases, team around the child may consider the use of college and vocational placements; community learning and development programmes; social work and third sector interventions. However, schools should seek to ensure that children and young people attend school or another learning environment for the recommended 25 hours per week in primary schools and 27.5 hours per week for secondary schools.

In order to support the child or young person to attend school or to support a return from exclusion, it may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to implement a package of support that could be achieved using a flexible or part time timetable with an agreed timescale for review.

Children and Young People have a right to be provided with a school education (Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000) and in accordance with the wishes of their parents (Education (Scotland) Act 1980). Therefore, no part-time arrangement can be considered if it is against the wishes of parents or carers. When considering a part-timetable it must be made clear to parents or carers that they have the right to refuse however, the benefits of consideration of the part-time timetable to support transition back to school or support a child appropriately for an agreed period of time should be clearly explained. The child or young person's views should also be taken into consideration. Arrangements of this kind should be clearly recorded in the child or young person's support plan. A copy of the timetable and review date should be sent to the Education Manager for Inclusion and Additional Support Needs.

Children and young people who are looked after, whose names are on the Child Protection Register or who access support from other agencies will have a single and multi-agency child's plan and consideration needs to be given to new actions and updates that are required.

It is not considered appropriate for pupils to be denied their entitlement to education by placing them on part-time timetables for an extended period of time.

Schools should record information on part-time timetables through SEEMIS under the appropriate code. This will differentiate children and young people on part-time timetables from those who have unauthorised absences.

## 11.5 Individual Circumstances

For very vulnerable children, exclusion can have a particularly disruptive and negative effect on their domestic or family life which may already be under significant strain and may not bring any significant benefits in terms of modified behaviour. Exclusion from school may simply reinforce alienation among children already excluded from a normal family life. In these cases, it may be necessary for the school / authority to balance the case for exclusion with the need to take all reasonable steps to ensure appropriate provision is made for a vulnerable individual's social and emotional development, security and wellbeing, while also taking into consideration the rights of all children, young persons and staff to work within a safe and appropriate environment. Individual circumstances should be taken into account when considering excluding a child or young person from school, particularly with regard to those children or young people who have additional support needs, a disability, are looked after, or where there are child protection concerns.

Prior to the decision to exclude any child or young person in the above categories, being made, discussions with the child or young person, their parent(s), and any involved professionals should take place, where possible through a multi-agency child's planning meeting.

Where the decision is taken to exclude, other professionals involved, such as social workers, family support workers etc, should be made aware of the situation.

### Looked after Children and Young People

Understanding the specific needs of looked after children and young people is crucial in order to ensure that any exclusion of a looked after child or young person is managed appropriately. School life can be a protective factor in the lives of looked after children and good relationships both within the educational establishment and beyond, are fundamental to ensuring that all appropriate steps are taken when considering and managing exclusion. It is likely that an exclusion from school will have a significant impact upon the life chances of a looked after child, if not mitigated for.

The **Education (Additional Support for Learning Act) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended)**, states that all looked after children and young people will be deemed to have additional support needs, unless assessed otherwise, and appropriate consideration should be given to how to support these needs during any period of exclusion.

Head teachers, or their representative, must consider very carefully the decision to exclude a looked after child and if at all possible, should avoid taking the decision to exclude them. Head teachers should discuss any potential decision to exclude a looked after child with the designated social worker as well as the child's parent/carer and those with parental rights for the looked after child. prior to the exclusion taking place. The same considerations should apply to children whose names are on the child protection register and children about whom there are child protection concerns. All views should be considered carefully and taken into account. A summary of the discussion should be recorded on pastoral notes. As noted early in the document these exclusions must also be discussed with the Education Manager/Head of Education link for the school.

On the rare occasion where there is disagreement between agencies regarding the decision of a school to exclude, this should not affect the decision of a head teacher where he/she believes this is the only course of action. In such circumstances representation should be made to the Head of Education to consider the situation.

Any exclusion of a looked after child can only happen following consideration of the matters noted in Checklists 1a and 1b in the Scottish Government guidance, Included, Engaged and Involved. The checklists are attached to this circular as Appendix 6 Thereafter, any such exclusion of a looked after child must be discussed with the link education manager/Head of Service.

## **12.0 Alternative provision**

- 12.1 It is expected that children and young people will not be excluded from alternative provision except under exceptional circumstances. Where this happens, the mainstream school where the child or young person is registered must be informed of any decision to exclude and should record the exclusion.

## **13.0 Incidents outwith school**

- 13.1 Where an incident occurs out of school it does not prohibit a child or young person being excluded from school. The determining factor for schools is to establish that either of the statutory grounds for exclusion is fulfilled, regardless of whether an incident occurs in or out of school. This is supported by case law. This could include incidents within the immediate vicinity of the school or beyond the school and occurring prior to the school day or after school. In this context, there may be occasions when schools require to liaise with Police Scotland, and this may result ultimately in the matter being reported to the Procurator Fiscal or to the Reporter.

## **14.0 Sending home without excluding**

- 14.1 As been previously mentioned - All exclusions from school must be formally recorded. Children and young people must not be sent home on an 'informal exclusion' or sent home to 'cool off'.
- 14.2 Following an incident where the decision is made that the child or young person cannot remain in school, for one of the reasons specified, this must be formally recorded as an exclusion. This will ensure transparency, allow for appropriate monitoring and enable support to be put in place.

## **15.0 The Legal Basis of Exclusion**

- 15.1 The power to exclude, and therefore legal responsibility for exclusion, lies with an education authority. It is, however, open to an education authority to devolve the power to exclude to senior management level in schools.
- 15.2 The length of an exclusion is not defined in the legislation and accordingly is a matter for the discretion of the education authority. The length of an exclusion should be as short as possible, and determined by the time required to put in place the required supports for the reintegration of the child or young person.
- 15.3 In Renfrewshire the power to exclude is devolved to heads of establishment to a maximum of 4 days. Any exclusion beyond this maximum period would be due to exceptional circumstances and would require to be approved by the Head of Service with responsibility for Inclusion.
- 15.4 The power to exclude a child or young person from a school and the circumstances under which a child or young person may be excluded are set out in Regulations 4 and 4A of the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 ("the 1975 Regulations"), as amended and the Schools General (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1982 (S.I. 1982/1735).
- 15.5 Under Regulation 4 there are only two legal grounds for exclusion: an education authority shall not exclude a child or young person from school unless the authority:
- "are of the opinion that the parent of the pupil refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the pupil to comply, with the rules, regulations, or disciplinary requirements of the school";
- or
- "consider that in all the circumstances to allow the pupil to continue his attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there".
- 15.6 Exclusion from school of a child or young person other than in conformity with the terms of the 1975 Regulations as amended has no statutory authority. Failure to comply with the 1975 Regulations as amended in such circumstances may render the authority open to legal challenge by the parent(s), or the pupil (where the pupil is a young person or is a child with legal capacity in terms of the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act (1991) or to action by the Scottish Ministers under section 70 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended.
- 15.7 Further consideration should also be given by the local authority to the following legislation:
- The Equality Act (2010) provides that it is unlawful to exclude a pupil because of a protected characteristic. Section 85 (2) provides that:
- The responsible body of such a school must not discriminate against a pupil.
- (a) in the way it provides education for the pupil
  - (b) in the way it affords the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service;
  - (c) by not providing education for the pupil
  - (d) by not affording the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service
  - (e) by excluding the pupil from the school
  - (f) by subjecting the pupil to any other detriment.

Section 85(5) provides that:

The responsible body of such a school must not victimise a pupil –

- (a) in the way it provides education for the pupil
- (b) in the way it affords the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service
- (c) by not providing education for the pupil
- (d) by not affording the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service
- (e) by excluding the pupil from the school
- (f) by subjecting the pupil to any other detriment.

In reaching a decision to exclude, education authorities have to consider whether they could comply with section 4 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended) which requires that every education authority must:

- (1) (a) in relation to each child and young person having additional support needs for whose school education the authority are responsible, make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by that child or young person, and
  - (b) make appropriate arrangements for keeping under consideration -
    - (i) the additional support needs of, and
    - (ii) the adequacy of the additional support provided for, each such child and young person.
- (2) Subsection (1)(a) does not require an education authority to do anything which –
  - (a) they do not otherwise have power to do, or
  - (b) would result in unreasonable public expenditure being incurred.”

## **16.0 Legislative and Policy Context**

16.1 The refreshed national guidance ‘Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: a positive approach to preventing and managing school exclusions’ (2017) updated the national policy and legislative context which is now reflected in this standard circular. The specific legislative context in relation to the prevention and management of school exclusions is outlined in more detail in other sections of this document.

16.2 The following legislation sets the context for this circular:

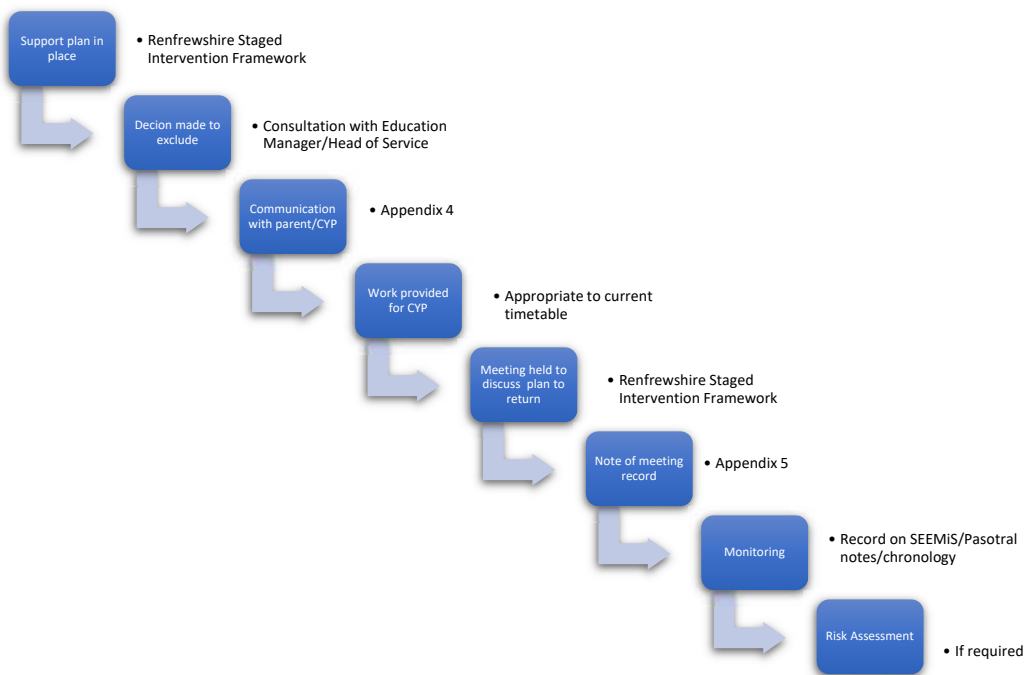
- the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000 which creates a presumption that a child of 12 years or older has an independent right to appeal his or her own exclusion. This Act also sets out the presumption in favour of mainstream schooling for all children and young people;
- the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended 2009) which places specific duties on education authorities and other appropriate agencies to provide adequate and efficient additional support to ensure that all children or young persons are able to benefit from school education; and
- the Equality Act 2010 which makes it unlawful to exclude a child or young person because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic, or because they are associated with

someone who has a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy or maternity; race, religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Schools also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusion process for disabled child or young persons.

- 16.3 One of the key legislative changes which has taken place since 2011 when the national guidance was first published is **the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**. The Act sets out new statutory responsibilities for local authorities in relation to the wellbeing of children and young people deemed to be at risk of becoming looked after, as well as setting out the eight aspects of wellbeing which should be considered when assessing needs. It also sets out additional statutory responsibilities for Corporate Parents, as specified, in relation to those who are looked after. This policy takes cognisance of this legislation, particularly with regard to promoting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.
- 16.4 Since 2008, **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** has been the national approach to improving outcomes for children and young people. GIRFEC takes a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the child or young person. The eight wellbeing indicators are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respected and included. GIRFEC advocates preventative work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families through the provision of strong universal services, and partnership working with other services when needed. The approach supports children and young people's rights and involves children and young people in any decisions that affect them in line with the core principles of UNCRC.
- 16.5 Some of the other key drivers upon which the current national guidance is set are outlined below:
- Learning in health and wellbeing as part of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Responsibility of All emphasises that some aspects of health and wellbeing are the responsibility of all adults in schools, working together to support the learning and development of children and young people.
  - One of the most important aims of the **National Improvement Framework** for Scottish Education is to drive improvements in learning for individual children and to ensure that there is a purpose to assessment and information gathering. More robust and transparent assessment and information gathering should help schools and local authorities to support children and young people more appropriately. As well as a focus on literacy and numeracy, it will also bring greater focus to improvements in the health and wellbeing of children and young people.



**Process to Exclude**



<https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approach-preventing-managing-school/pages/12/>

| Key consideration questions   | Consideration given | Comment |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| Has the child or young person been excluded before? What was impact of this?  |                     |         |
| Have the following been engaged to help prevent exclusion? Child or young person; Parents/carers; Key education staff; and other professionals (e.g., Social work, Educational Psychologist). |                     |         |
| Has there been clear assessment of the child or young person and their needs?   |                     |         |
| Have additional support/interventions been provided for the child or young person?  |                     |         |
| Have alternative arrangements been made for the child or young person prior to the exclusion? e.g., curriculum alternatives, temporary placement in base, use of virtual learning             |                     |         |
| How can the staged intervention process and school partnerships be utilised to further support this child or young person?  |                     |         |
| Has the incident that precipitated the consideration of exclusion been reviewed with all staff who were present to explore fully what happened?   |                     |         |
| Has another professional from within the school who is not directly involved, been consulted on the situation in order to provide a different perspective?                                    |                     |         |
| Has the child or young person been consulted on their views of the situation?   |                     |         |
| Has Pupil Support/Guidance/Key worker, or if available, has the lead professional been consulted on how to move forward?  |                     |         |
| Has the possible impact of exclusion on the child or young person been considered in light of individual circumstances?   |                     |         |
| Does the child or young person's recent presentation constitute a wellbeing concern?  |                     |         |
| What might the impact of an exclusion be on a child or young person's wider circumstances?  |                     |         |
| What impact might an exclusion have on the planning processes?  |                     |         |
| Has a risk assessment been completed for the child or young person where appropriate?   |                     |         |
| What are the hoped for outcomes of an exclusion? Are there other alternatives that might achieve this?  |                     |         |
| Has there been consideration given to length of exclusion to ensure it is proportionate and in best interests of child/young person?  |                     |         |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Does the exclusion comply with the regulation 4 of the 1975 regulations as amended?             |  |  |
| Have the rights of the child or young person been considered, with regard to articles of UNCRC? |  |  |
| Have all other options been considered before deciding on exclusion as a necessary step?        |  |  |

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**Checklist 1b (to be used alongside checklist 1a if appropriate) - Individual Circumstances**

| <b>Individual circumstance</b>   | <b>Additional consideration</b>  | <b>Consideration given</b> | <b>Comments</b> |
|--|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Looked After child   | Social worker consulted prior to decision  |                            |                 |
|  | Education manager or lead professional (where one exists) consulted on plan regarding particular issues        |                            |                 |
|  | Appropriate arrangements made with regard to support/care and wellbeing at home                                |                            |                 |
|  | Decision made as to whether exclusion to go ahead  |                            |                 |
| Child on Child Protection Register/child protection concerns previously raised | Child Protection Designated Officer and Social Worker consulted  |                            |                 |
|  | SEEMiS checked for child protection message  |                            |                 |
|  | Education authority consulted about appropriate provision  |                            |                 |
|  | Appropriate arrangements for return into school considered   |                            |                 |
| Child with additional support needs  | Other professionals involved with child consulted on continuation of any additional input                      |                            |                 |
|  | Confirmation sought that child or young person is not being excluded for reasons associated with disability    |                            |                 |
|  | Ensure that child or young person is not being excluded for reasons associated with a protected characteristic |                            |                 |
|  | Account is taken of impact of exclusion on child or young person's learning and support provision              |                            |                 |
|  | Consideration is given to review of any Child's plan or Coordinated Support Plan                               |                            |                 |
|  | Transition planning is taken into account with regard to return to school                                      |                            |                 |
| Children from an area of socioeconomic deprivation                             | Consideration should be given to the impact on child's wellbeing, e.g., free school meals                      |                            |                 |

## Checklist 2

**Decision to exclude has been made (this checklist should be used after completion of Checklist 1a (and 1b where appropriate))**

| Action to be taken   | Action taken | Comment |
|--|--------------|---------|
| Child or young person is informed he/she is to be excluded   |              |         |
| Immediately inform parents/carers verbally   |              |         |
| Looked after children and children or young people on Child Protection Register/child protection concerns - communication with all potential carers as well as any person who may have parental rights and responsibilities                    |              |         |
| Looked after children and children or young people on Child Protection Register/child protection concerns - decision communicated to lead professional, Social Worker, Key Worker, Foster Carer, Educational Psychologists and Head of Service |              |         |
| Make arrangements for child or young person to be sent or taken home. Child or young person not to leave school until safety, health and wellbeing assured and appropriate arrangements are in place   |              |         |
| If parents/carers cannot be contacted child or young person must be supervised at school until suitable arrangements can be made   |              |         |
| If verbal contact made, follow up by written confirmation of exclusion on same day exclusion takes place. Include reason for exclusion and information on Right of Appeal  |              |         |
| Inform of date, time and place where Head Teacher or official of authority is available to discuss the exclusion   |              |         |
| If child or young person is of legal capacity inform them in writing of exclusion and right of appeal  |              |         |
| Record of exclusion filled out - incident report form  |              |         |
| Ensure exclusion is recorded accurately on SEEMiS  |              |         |
| All documents relating to exclusion to be retained in Pupil's Progress Record  |              |         |
| Appropriate educational provision to be provided and monitored, e.g., course work, access to library, online learning  |              |         |
| Arrangements for the child or young person to access any existing support made (outwith school if necessary)   |              |         |
| A contact person should be allocated for parent/carer/young person to liaise with re. educational provision  |              |         |
| Parent/carer should be informed of their responsibility to ensure child or young person is provided with appropriate education throughout the period of exclusion  |              |         |
| Parent/carer should be provided with information on support to assist them or advocate on behalf of child or young person  |              |         |
| Notify local authority   |              |         |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| If exclusion is lengthy or multiple, refer to local authority for support in decision making  |  |  |
| If parent/carer and/or child or young person exercise their right of appeal, meet with parent/carer and child or/young person and/or an advocate for the child to discuss |  |  |
| Referral to Scottish Children's Reporter if appropriate   |  |  |

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**Checklist 3 - Return to school after exclusion.**

| <b>Action to be taken</b>  | <b>Action taken</b> | <b>Comment</b> |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| School meet or discuss with parent/carer and child or young person - re-admission to school not dependant on this taking place       |                     |                |
| Appropriate planning takes place to ensure support is provided   |                     |                |
| Risk assessment is completed where appropriate   |                     |                |
| Needs of staff and other children and/or young people taken into account - solution oriented/restorative meeting held if appropriate |                     |                |
| Flexible package of support agreed and implemented where appropriate   |                     |                |
| Any changes to timetable for limited period recorded on SEEMiS   |                     |                |
| Staged intervention processes continued and adapted in light of exclusion  |                     |                |
| Consideration given to discussion at multi-agency forum  |                     |                |
| Pupil Support/Guidance/Key worker or lead professional (where one exists) updated  |                     |                |
| Monitoring and review arrangement put in place to ensure continued support   |                     |                |

**Definitions**

The length of exclusion will be based on days where attendance at school was possible.

- Weekends and holiday periods will not be taken account of as a result; exclusion is used when a child or young person is excluded from a school but remains on the register of that school.
- The child or young person will return to that school when the period of exclusion is over; removal from register is used when a child or young person is excluded from a school and the child or young person's name is removed from the school register, the education authority having decided that the child or young person should not return to that school;
- parent/s as defined in section 135 (1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 includes a guardian or any other person who is liable to maintain, or has parental responsibilities in relation to, or has care of, the child or young person;
- a child is a person under the age of 18, as defined in section 97 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act;
- a young person is defined in section 135 of the 1980 Act as a person over school age who has not yet attained the age of 18.
- a 'young person' is defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as a person who:
  - (a) has attained the age of 18 years while a pupil at a school.
  - (b) has since attaining that age, remained a pupil at that or another school.
- Section 17(6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 provides that a child who is looked after by a local authority is a child:
  - (a) for whom the local authority is providing accommodation under section 25 of the 1995 Act
  - (b) who is subject to a compulsory supervision order, or an interim compulsory supervision order and in respect of whom they are the implementation authority
  - (c) who is living in Scotland and subject to an order in respect of whom a Scottish local authority has responsibilities
  - (d) in respect of whom a permanence order is in place



## STANDARD LETTER TO PARENTS FOLLOWING DECISION TO EXCLUDE

Dear

After careful consideration of all the circumstances and as a last resort a decision has been taken today to exclude your child XXX from attendance at this school.

The reason for this decision is that.

XXXX

In all the circumstances to allow your child to continue his/her attendance at this school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there.

OR [DELETE AS APPROPRIATE]

You are refusing or failing to comply, or to allow your child to comply, with the rules, regulations, or disciplinary requirements of the school.

The specific circumstances that gave rise to this decision are (INSERT SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES).

Please meet with me on XXX at XXX to discuss XXX's return to school. (MEETING MUST BE WITHIN 7 DAYS OF DECISION TO EXCLUDE)

You may bring a supporter along to this meeting if you so wish. Please contact me as soon as possible if this time is unsuitable in order that we can make other arrangements.

You have the right to appeal against the exclusion. Details of how you might appeal are included with this letter and should you intend to appeal you should do so as soon as possible.

I look forward to meeting you on the above date.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

**STANDARD LETTER TO CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON OVER 16 FOLLOWING DECISION TO EXCLUDE**

Dear

A decision has been taken today to exclude you from attendance at this school.

The reason for this decision is that in all the circumstances to allow you to continue your attendance at this school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there.

The specific circumstances that gave rise to this decision are (INSERT SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES).

Please meet with me on XXX at XXX to discuss your return to school. (MEETING MUST BE WITHIN 7 DAYS OF DECISION TO EXCLUDE) You may wish to bring your parents or a friend to this meeting.

You have the right to appeal against the exclusion. Details of how you might appeal are included with this letter and should you intend to appeal you should do so as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

**Note of return to school following exclusion meeting**

(Update action plan, record on chronology and pastoral notes)

## **APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL**

1. The statutory provisions for appeal are contained in Section 28H and schedule A1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and the Education (Appeal Committee Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations 1982.
2. Under these provisions a parent of a child or young person who has been excluded from attending school or where the child or young person is a young person (a child or young person over school age who has not attained the age of 18 years) the child or young person, may appeal against the exclusion.
3. Under section 41 of the Standard in Scotland's School etc. Act 2000, child or young persons with legal capacity in terms the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 can appeal against the decision to exclude.
4. A parent or young person who wishes to make an appeal against a decision to exclude should do so in writing to Education and Leisure Services, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1LE. The letter should give the name of the child or young person or young person and should contain a clear statement requesting the referral of an appeal against the decision to exclude to an appeal committee set up under Section 28H of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.
5. The appellant will be given the opportunity to go to the hearing and speak to the appeal committee. He/she may ask up to three people to accompany him/her and if he/she so wishes he/she can ask one of them to speak on his/her behalf. If he/she does not wish to be present, he/she can nominate someone else to attend and speak for him/her.

The appellant may decide to make a written submission to the appeal committee and if he/she so decides he/she should send his/her submission to the appeal committee, to Education and Leisure Services, Renfrewshire House, not less than 10 days before the date of the hearing.

He/she may decide, however, simply to submit a letter of appeal and this will be considered by the appeal committee.

6. If the appellant does make a written appeal, it will be acknowledged by the appeal committee by a letter dated with five working days of the appeal being received.

### **7. DEEMED DECISIONS**

In the following circumstances an appeal committee will be deemed to have confirmed the decision of the education authority: where within

- a. a period of one month immediately following receipt by the appeal committee of the reference a hearing has not been held;
  - b. 14 days immediately following an adjournment of a hearing the appeal committee have failed to fix a date for a resumed hearing;
  - c. 14 days following the conclusion of a hearing the appeal committee have failed to notify the parent or the young person and the education authority of their decision and the reasons for it.
8. If the appeal committee confirm the decision of the authority an appeal may be made to the Sheriff of the area in which the school is situated.




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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Social Work Officer

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**Heading:** The Promise: Progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise)

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper summarises the progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise) by Education and Children's Services.
  - 1.2 This paper also highlights the publication of The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board report, published on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and the consultation work taking place in relation to The Promise Plan 24-30.
  - 1.3 We are in year 3 of this 10-year programme of change and there is good evidence of progress in Renfrewshire to #KeepThePromise with significant developments underway and more planned.
  - 1.4 The delivery of The Promise in Renfrewshire requires a strongly committed multi-agency partnership working approach and demonstration of a collective understanding, commitment, and activity in relation to The Promise across all the partners.
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## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
  - [a] note the progress and update by Education and Children's Services to #KeepThePromise
  - [b] note the publication and key messages contained in The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board report and the consultation activity taking place for The Promise Plan 24-30
  - [c] consider becoming a **"Promise Keeper"** and joining Renfrewshire's network of champions and experts in their own field to #KeepThePromise

- [d] note that regular update reports will be brought to Board to ensure elected members are sighted on implications for policy and practice as our Promise work progresses.
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. Renfrewshire Council and partners are committed to delivering on The Promise to the Care Experienced community, that by 2030, Scotland is "the best place in the world to grow up in" and that all our children are "loved, safe, and respected and realise their full potential".
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Council and partners are Keeping The Promise to:
- Children and their families on the edges of the care system who we want to support to avoid compulsory supervision away from home. We want to keep children at home where that is safe.
  - There will be children who require to be in the care system living away from home for their safety – they should have a childhood in care which is loving, caring and compassionate.
  - Children in care should be supported to successfully transition to the adult world.
- 3.3 We are committed to better outcomes for our Care Experienced Community:
- By keeping more families together, the number of children and young people on compulsory measures of supervision away from home be reduced by 2030 – leading to significant reduction in Care Experienced population over time.
  - For those who need to be part of the care system, the system will give them love, compassion and consistency.
  - Children and their families will be better supported through whole family support.
  - The balance of our spend between prevention and more intensive intervention switched. Families that need help get it early - before crisis point.
  - Reduction in Care Experienced-related poor outcomes including poverty, homelessness, substance misuse, poor health including mental health, offending, school exclusion, educational attainment and low employability.
  - Increased consistency in service provision across the country and the workforce will be valued, informed, respected and supported.
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### **4. Progress and Update – High Level**

- 4.1. Renfrewshire Promise Keepers: The roll out of Promise Keeper role has progressed significantly since its inception, and we have ambitious plans to grow this network in 2023/24. There are currently over 180 Promise Keepers across Renfrewshire. A Promise Keeper can be an elected representative, a senior leader, middle manager, or member of frontline staff. Promise Keepers are responsible for championing The Promise within their own expertise/staff teams/professions ensuring that their colleagues are aware of their responsibility to #KeepThePromise.

- 4.2. Promise Keepers are central to ensuring The Promise remains at the forefront of service design and delivery. Promise Keeper values have been developed and recruitment to the role is ongoing. All Promise Keepers undergo training to ensure that they have a good understanding of The Promise and are being supported to fulfil this role.

**All Renfrewshire Education and Children's Services Policy Board Members are invited to become a Promise Keeper. Please contact [samantha.macrae@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.macrae@renfrewshire.gov.uk) for further information**

- 4.3. Renfrewshire's Promise strategic planning and Governance Structure, incorporating The Promise Oversight Group and four workstreams, have been revisited and clearly aligned to Children's Services Partnership Plan and to the Council Plan.
- 4.4. The Promise is a high-level aim for Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership and the partnership has agreed that "There must be an urgency and demonstratable evidence of a collective understanding, commitment and activity in relation to The Promise."
- 4.5. The Promise Manager, started in post October 2022, manages the Children's Services Partnerships response to the implementation of The Promise in Renfrewshire. The Promise Manager is monitoring the effectiveness of the Oversight Group and workstreams and our response to #KeepThePromise will be informed by emerging themes/priorities around The Promise Plan 21-24 and Plan24-30.
- 4.6. Renfrewshire's Promise Manager and Promise Ambassador are well connected to the Promise delivery mechanisms at COSLA, Promise Scotland and Scottish Government.
- 4.7. Renfrewshire Promise delivery mapping and planning tool is informing delivery of the Promise Plan 21-24 and activity around identification of Key Indicators/measures of success has taken place. This mapping tool was developed in conjunction with Promise Scotland Delivery Partners. The Promise Manager has been sharing this mapping and planning tool approach with Local Authorities from across Scotland.
- 4.8. The mapping tool is capturing Promise related activity in Renfrewshire including but not limited to Education, Social Work, Employability, Mental Health, Youth Justice, Family Support, Workforce, Children's Hearings, GIRFEC, UNCRC, Brothers & Sisters, Police, Fire & Rescue Service and Health.
- 4.9. A Promise Self-Evaluation Tool has been developed to assess progress and areas for development in key areas across different services in Renfrewshire. The self-evaluation tool has been circulated to a wide range of services in the local authority and to partner agencies. The analysis of this evaluation will be available by September 2023 and will inform our future plans.
- 4.10. Renfrewshire Language Policy has been produced and shared. This guidelines for how practitioners should speak about and describe Care Experience and Care Experienced children and young people. This policy was co-designed with Care Experienced young people and staff from across Renfrewshire.

- 4.11. The 'Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together' policy, co-designed by Care Experienced young people from the Renfrewshire Champions Board, reduces the separation of Brothers and Sisters entering care unless there is a clear safeguarding reason to do so is worthy of note and has been shared with our partners widely as accepted best practice and is an approach that is being adopted by other local authorities.
  - 4.12. Considerable activity has begun in 2023 on a Supportive School Structure - Right to Education Project. Renfrewshire has been successful in a funding application to the Corra Foundation for an investment of £150,000 to support us to think differently and challenge ways of working around Supportive School Structure (Right to Education). This funding is for two years and will allow us to conduct targeted work to highlight the need to ensure that all Care Experienced (CE) children and young people have a key person who is their advocate/supporter.
  - 4.13. This key person, a Principal Teacher The Promise, will ensure their attendance, participation and achievement are being supported and monitored effectively. This resource will provide focus tracking, and a genuine response to building positive relationships to ensure that school and life outside school is supported appropriately.
  - 4.14. Communities That Care Curriculum Resource Schools programme is entering its third and final year. Renfrewshire Council fund this programme, in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland creating inclusive school environments for Care Experienced pupils through a curriculum delivery programme. The goal of the programme is to create more caring and inclusive school environments for Care Experienced pupils.
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## **5. The Promise Scotland Oversight Board Report**

- 5.1. The Promise Scotland Oversight Board (PSOB) published their second report on 22nd of June on Scotland's progress in relation to The Promise. PSOB is responsible for holding Scotland to account by checking that The Promise is being kept. The board monitors tracks and reports Scotland's progress to #KeepThePromise.
- 5.2. The report strikes a balance between the progress made, across sectors, while bringing attention to the areas where Scotland must do more to keep the promise by 2030.
- 5.3. This report recognises the complex context the country has been in since The Promise was made in 2020; not least the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the "cost-of-living crisis" and the impacts around central funding. The Oversight Board celebrates and thanks the workforce who are striving to #KeepThePromise.
- 5.4. Over the next year the board has asked for: "• Explicit leadership and drive from the Scottish Government and scrutiny bodies to articulate a clear set of principles, outcomes and milestones that will guarantee the promise. • A strategic investment plan to deliver the required change."



- 5.5. The report focused on three priority areas – Education, Brothers and Sisters and Homelessness. It outlines the commitments in each area within The Promise, positive examples of practical change and outlines what else the Oversight Board expects to happen by the time the Oversight Board publishes report three.
  - 5.6. The PSOB in this report “does not believe that delivering the original aims of Plan 21- 24 is realistic within its given timeframe.” The report goes on to say 2030 remains the date by which the promise must be kept. However, for this to happen “everyone plays their part over the next seven years, this is still achievable.”
  - 5.7. Renfrewshire Promise planning and activity overseen by Renfrewshire’s Promise Oversight Group, reporting to Renfrewshire’s Childrens Service Partnership, will be informed and take appropriate lessons from this report.
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## **6. The Promise Plan 24-30 Consultation**

- 6.1. We are now in year 3 in all our endeavours to #KeepThePromise and Promise Plan 21- 24 is ending. Plan 21-24, the first of the three intended plans, began on 1st April 2021. Plan 21-24 set out what action needed to be taken, by who and by when. It covered 25 priority actions required to be progressed by the end of March 2024 to ensure the promise was kept, in full, by 2030 at the latest.
  - 6.2. Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor on The Promise, will lead the work to co-devise Plan 24-30. The starting point will take account of the impact and effectiveness of the work undertaken within Plan 21-24. Over the summer, Fiona Duncan is consulting on how to co-devise Plan 24-30 with the methodology set out in autumn 2023. Before the methodology for co-devising Plan 24-30 is fully developed and published in September 2023 there will be a consultation exercise.
  - 6.3. The Renfrewshire’s Promise Oversight Group members and partners have been invited to be involved in this consultation activity. The Promise Manager is engaging positively with Promise Scotland around this consultation.
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## **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 is not 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 also become clearer and there will likely be actions for HR and Organisational Development Teams.

### **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 excellent 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**

Corporate Parenting Duties: Renfrewshire Council along with many other public bodies and Organisations in Scotland are Corporate Parents under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Scottish Government has set out a Legislative Programme to Support the Change required to #KeepThePromise. This legislative programme involves introducing legislation between now and 2030 including: The incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law; a Bail and Release from Custody Bill; a Children's Care and Justice Bill; a Housing Bill; a Legal Aid Reform Bill; and a Human Rights Bill. By the end of this parliamentary session, there are plans to bring forward a Promise Bill to make any further legislative changes required to #KeepThePromise. It is likely that there will be legal implications as a result of this legislative programme, and it is not yet clear what those legal implications will be.

### **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 Leaders have committed to The Promise and its ambition to ensure that Scotland's children grow up 'loved, safe and respected.' COSLA published '*Delivering The Promise in Local Government*,' a research project with the Improvement Service, in April 2023. COSLA and SOLACE established The Promise Local Government Programme Board in August 2022. The Board is chaired by SOLACE and comprises membership across a range of local government professional associations. The Board was established to monitor and drive the delivery and implementation of the actions required of local government to #KeepThePromise.

13. **Climate Risk**  
None.

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### List of Background Papers

The Promise: [Link](#)

The Promise Plan 21-24: [Link](#)

The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board Report: [Link](#)

The Promise Plan 24-30 Consultation: [Link](#)

Delivering The Promise in Local Government COSLA report [Link](#)

The Promise Local Government Programme Board: [Link](#)

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### Children's Services

MG

21 July 2023

**Author:** Maurice Gilligan, Promise Manager Email:  
[maurice.gilligan@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:maurice.gilligan@renfrewshire.gov.uk)






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**To:** Education and Children Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Social Work Officer

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**Heading:** Children's Looked After Statistics - 2022

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Each year on 31 July the Scottish Government conducts a census of the number of children who are looked after and the number of children on the child protection register. The information gathered during the census is analysed by the Scottish Government and an annual report published. The annual report is generally published in late March, however this year it was delayed until late April. The annual report and data tables can be accessed via this link <https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-scotland-2021-22/documents/>
  - 1.2. The 2022 report provides members with information on the numbers of looked after children and the number of children on the child protection register on 31 July 2022. Whilst there was a census on 31 July 2023 the results from that will not be available until March 2024.
  - 1.3. On 31 July 2022 there were 12,596 looked after children in Scotland, a 5% reduction from the previous year. The number of looked after children in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2022 was 592 compared to 587 on 31 July 2021. This represented an increase of just under 1%.
  - 1.4. The number of children on the child protection register across Scotland on 31 July 2022 was 2,031, a reduction of 4% from the previous year. 78 children were on the Renfrewshire child protection register on 31 July 2022 compared to 71 the previous year. This represents an increase of 10%.
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## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the education and children policy board notes the content of this report and agrees that a report on the 2023 census will be presented to a future meeting.

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## **3. Background**

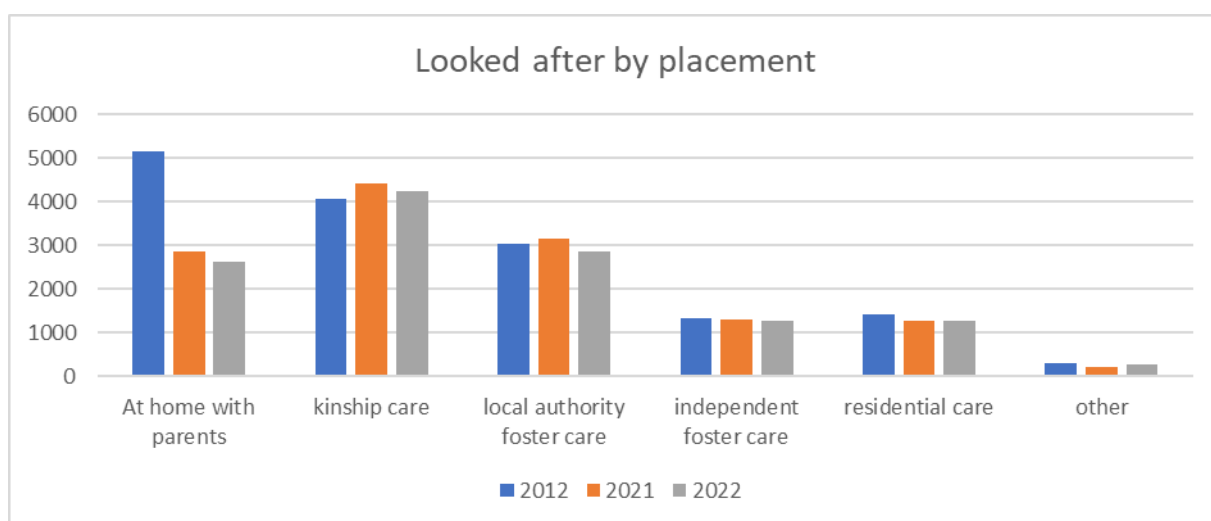
- 3.1. On 31 July each year, local authorities complete a census for the Scottish Government in relation to the number of children who are looked after and those who's names are on the child protection register. Whilst the census is conducted in July the report on the data is generally not available until late the following March. The 2022 data report from the Scottish Government wasn't published until 25 April 2023.
- 3.2. Renfrewshire adopted a strategy to reduce the number of looked after children in 2012. This report will provide an update on the progress in reducing the numbers of looked after children.
- 3.3. It should be noted that social work operates under the minimum necessary intervention principle and the "no-order" principle. This means that a significant number of children and families being supported by social work aren't reported in national statistics. The minimum necessary intervention principle requires social work to provide support and intervention at the right level at the right time to allow children and families to move out of the system quickly when challenges are addressed and resolved. The "no-order" principle means that a children's hearing or court should only impose a compulsory order on a child where it is better for the child to do so than not have the order in place.

### **Looked after children - Scotland**

- 3.4. On 31 July 2022 there were 12,596 looked after children in Scotland. This was a reduction of 5% from the previous census. The trend over the past 10 years has been a reducing number of looked children after children across Scotland. On 31 July 2022, the rate per 1000 children (aged birth – 17) of looked after children in Scotland was 12.3 down from 12.9 in July 2021 and 15.7 in 2012. The rates vary significantly across Scotland from 4.3 per 1000 in East Renfrewshire to 26.9 per 1000 in West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.5. In the 2022 census 55% of Scotland's looked after children were in the care of their own parents or birth family through a kinship care arrangement. The breakdown of that figure is those cared for at home 21% and 34% cared for by kinship carers. Nationally the percentage of children in foster care is 33%. The breakdown for foster care is 23% of looked after children in foster care provided by the local authority and 10% in foster care in the independent sector. 10% of Scotland's looked after children are in residential care.

- 3.6. The number of looked after at home with their own parents has reduced by 49% compared to the 2012 position. The number of children looked after in kinship care arrangements has increased by just over 4% in the same period. The reduction in children placed with foster carers from the 2012 position to 2022 is just over 21%. The number of children in residential care fell by just over 3.5% from 2012 to 2022.
- 3.7. Chart 1 shows where Scotland's looked after children live by care placement type at the census point in 2022, 2021 and 2012.

**Chart 1**



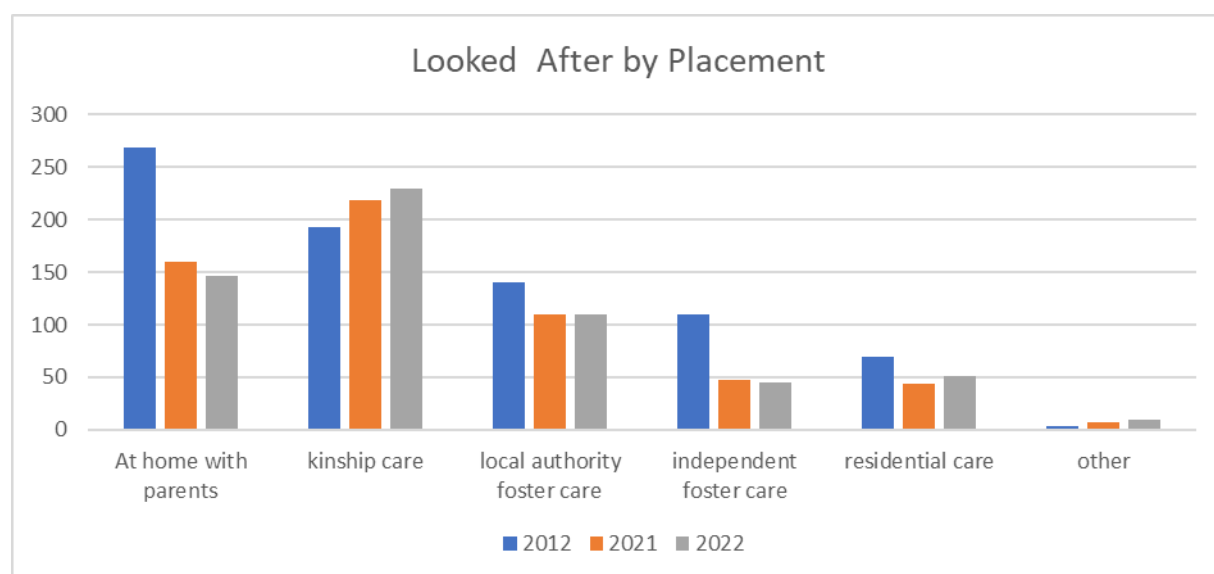
### Looked after children - Renfrewshire

- 3.8. On 31 July 2022 there were 592 looked after children in Renfrewshire. This was an increase of 5 children from the previous year (increase of just under 1%). The trend within Renfrewshire over the past 10 years has been a reducing number of looked children after children. At the census in 2012 Renfrewshire had 786 looked after children. Over the past 10 years the number of looked after children in Renfrewshire has reduced by just under 25%.
- 3.9. At the 2022 census Renfrewshire had the 6<sup>th</sup> highest number of looked after children in Scotland. In 2012, Renfrewshire had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of looked after children in Scotland.
- 3.10. In the 2022 census 63.5% of Renfrewshire's looked after children were in the care of their own parents or birth family through a kinship care arrangement. Just under 25% of Renfrewshire looked after children are cared for at home with their parent(s). This is a higher proportion than the Scottish position. Just under 39% of Renfrewshire's looked after children are cared for in a kinship arrangement. This is the highest looked after group in Renfrewshire and again a higher percentage than the national figure.
- 3.11. Looked after children placed with internal foster carers account for just over 18.5% of the looked after population. Just over 7.5% of Renfrewshire's looked

after children are placed in external foster care. This means that 26% of Renfrewshire's looked after children are in foster care compared to 33% of the looked after population at a national level. Renfrewshire has a lower use of external foster care than the Scottish percentage.

- 3.12. 5.7% of Renfrewshire's looked after children are in external residential provision with just under 3% in our internal houses. This give a total of 8.7% of Renfrewshire's looked after children being in residential care compared to 10% at a national level.
- 3.13. The number of looked after children in Renfrewshire cared for at home by their parents at 31 July 2022 has reduced by just over 45% compared to the 2012 census. Over the same period kinship numbers have increased by 19%. The 2022 census shows there were just under 21% fewer children looked after in internal foster care compared to the 2012 census. There were almost 60% fewer looked after children in external foster care at the 2022 census compared with the 2012 census.
- 3.14. 8.7% of Renfrewshire's looked after children in cared for in a residential house or residential school. 33% of those looked after in a residential setting are placed within a Renfrewshire children's house. There has been a 27% reduction in the number of children in residential settings compared to the 2012 figure.
- 3.15. On 31 July 2022, the rate per 1000 children of looked after children in Renfrewshire was 17.6, similar to the rate in 2021. This is higher than the national rate per 1000. The 2012 rate was 23.3 per 1000 in Renfrewshire. The Renfrewshire rate is in the middle of the range for the 6 local authorities within the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board.
- 3.16. Chart 2 shows the breakdown of where Renfrewshire's looked after children live by care placement type.

**Chart 2**





### **Child Protection - Scotland**

- 3.17. The number of children on the child protection register across Scotland on 31 July 2022 was 2,031. This is a reduction from the 2021 figure of 2119, a 4% decrease. The rate per 1000 population (aged birth – 15 years) on the child protection register on 31 July 2022 was 2.2. This is a significant reduction from the 2012 position when 2,698 children were on the child protection register (a rate of 2.9 per 1000).
- 3.18. During the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022, across Scotland there were 11,473 child protection investigations in 2022, a rate of 12.6 per 1000 children. The rate varies across Scotland from 1.3 per 1000 in East Renfrewshire to 31.9 in Midlothian.
- 3.19. During the above timeframe, child protection case conferences were held in relation to 4,058 children, a rate of 4.5 per 1000 children. The rate across Scotland varies from 1.3 per 1000 children in East Renfrewshire to 10 in North Ayrshire.
- 3.20. The main areas of concern identified at child protection case conferences across Scotland are domestic abuse, neglect, parental mental health problems, parental substance misuse and emotional abuse.

### **Child Protection - Renfrewshire**

- 3.21. On 31 July 2022, there were 78 children on Renfrewshire's child protection register. This was an increase of 7 from the previous year. At the census in 2012 the number of children on Renfrewshire's child protection register was 86. The rate per 1000 population (aged birth – 15 years) on Renfrewshire's child protection register on 31 July 2022 was 2.6. This is a reduction from the 2012 position when the rate was 2.8 per 1000).
  - 3.22. Between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022, a child protection investigation was carried out in relation to 382 children. This was a rate of 12.8 per 1000 of the child population.
  - 3.23. 197 child protection case conferences were held in the 2021/22 reporting year, a rate of 6.6 per 1000 of the child population.
  - 3.24. The main areas of concern identified at child protection case conferences in Renfrewshire were similar to those reported across Scotland.
  - 3.25. It should be noted that Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee receives regular reports on and scrutinises the child protection activity within the authority.
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## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial Implications

The current number of children looked after in external residential provision is at a higher level than for a number of years. The service is working to ensure that children's needs are met by placements and where possible they can return to Renfrewshire to mitigate demand on budgets.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None

### 3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Community Care, Health and Well-being - Children and families are supported to address the challenges they face.

Safer and Stronger - Children and families receive the right support to ensure they are safe at home and in the community.

### 4. Legal Implications

The authority works within the legal framework to discharge its duties to looked after children and those involved in the child protection system.

### 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 it is for noting only.

### 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.

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**List of Background Papers**

None

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*Children's Services*

*JCTLG*

*25 July 2023*

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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Social Work Officer

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**Heading:** Interagency Child Protection Update

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The protection of vulnerable children is a key responsibility for Renfrewshire Council. The authority works in partnership with the NHS, Police Scotland, and a range of other statutory and voluntary sector services to protect children identified at risk of significant harm.
  - 1.2. Locally the leadership for interagency child protection work is located within the Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee (RCPC). RCPC has membership from all of the partner agencies involved in protecting children in Renfrewshire and has an independent chairperson. RCPC is accountable to the Renfrewshire Chief Officer Group and provides regular updates to the public protection member/officer group.
  - 1.3. The Scottish Government published new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in September 2021. Recognising that services were in recovery from the COVID pandemic the timescale for implementing the guidance was set for October 2023.
  - 1.4. This report provides an update on the Renfrewshire position on implementing the 2021 national guidance.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the education and children policy board notes the content of this report.
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The protection of vulnerable children is a shared responsibility for all services in the public and independent sectors. There is a recognition that the public has a responsibility to help protect children. The message from Scotland's children is that "it's everyone's job to make sure I'm ok".
- 3.2. To promote the protection of children and to ensure that appropriate supports and services are in place there is a requirement for each local authority area to have a child protection committee. The local child protection committee has the following responsibilities:
  - Provide leadership within and across partner organisations on child protection.
  - Undertake self-evaluation and improvement work.
  - Ensuring learning and development of staff.
  - Support to staff to discharge their responsibilities in child protection.
- 3.3. In Renfrewshire the child protection committee membership includes the Director of Children's Services, the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice/Chief Social Work Officer, the Head of Education, the Chief Officer of Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Detective Superintendent Renfrewshire Public Protection Unit, the Public Protection Medical Lead for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and the Head of Health and Social Care (RHSCP). RCPC has an independent chairperson and a Lead Officer. The independent chairperson, John Paterson recently retired from the role and a new independent chairperson, Tam Baillie is taking up the role in September 2023.
- 3.4. The Renfrewshire Chief Officer Group is the Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council, the Divisional Commander for Police Scotland and the Nurse Director NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The Chief Officer Group has oversight of the work of RCPC.
- 3.5. Renfrewshire has a Member Officer Group for public protection. This group receives regular reports from RCPC and Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee.
- 3.6. RCPC has responsibility for ensuring that the guidance available to staff locally reflects the national guidance. The Scottish Government produced new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in September 2021. The Scottish Government advised that all local areas require to have their local guidance compliant and reflective of the national guidance by October 2023.
- 3.7. Within Renfrewshire a review of the local guidance was carried out in the period September 2021 to December 2021 to identify where improvements could be made immediately to improve the protection of children in Renfrewshire. Some immediate changes were put in place in relation to the approach to how child protection investigations were carried out, the process

for making decisions on how protection plans for children were developed and how the views of children and families were presented and considered.

- 3.8. In addition, an iterative improvement approach was taken over the period January 2022 to March 2023. The improvements included the involvement of education staff in the initial referral discussion process for responding to child protection referrals, the way decisions and interim safety plans were devised and shared with children and families, improving the way services responded to young people aged 16-17, and the way services responded to child protection concerns outwith the immediate family (referred to as contextual safeguarding).
- 3.9. Since March 2023, RCPC has worked to revise fully the Renfrewshire Interagency Child Protection Guidance to ensure it is fully compliant with the National Guidance issued in September 2021. The refreshed and revised Renfrewshire Interagency Guidance has been issued to staff for implementation from 14 August 2023 when school staff return.
- 3.10. Over the past 12 months RCPC has revised its approach to self-evaluation and improvement activity. A new sub-group has been established to ensure that RCPC has a robust model of self-evaluation and improvement activity. The sub-group has ensured that all agencies have in place internal evaluation processes to support the multi-agency evaluation and improvement approach. Staff were recently asked to complete a survey on the protection of children across Renfrewshire. The survey results are being analysed and will be presented to the meeting of RCPC in September 2023. RCPC will conduct a multi-agency case file audit in November 2023 to inform the development plan for the following 12 months.
- 3.11. Over the last twelve months RCPC has attempted to improve communication with front-line staff about the work of the committee. After each meeting of the committee a staff newsletter has been produced. The newsletter has allowed individual members of RCPC to introduce themselves to the staff across the partnership and highlight activity.

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## Implications of this report

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

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Safer and Stronger | - Children and families receive the right support to ensure they are safe at home and in the community. |
|--------------------|---|

**4. Legal Implications**

The authority works within the legal framework to discharge its duties to children involved in the child protection system.

**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 it is for noting only.

**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.

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**List of Background Papers**

None.

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*Children's Services*

*JCTLG*

*26 July 2023*

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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** Thursday 24 August 2023

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**Report by:** Chief Social Work Officer

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**Heading:** Hearings Systems Working Group – Final Report

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The Children's Hearing System was introduced under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. It is a unique system with no other jurisdiction across the world having a similar model. Whilst there have been some changes in the legislative framework since 1968, the fundamental model of children's hearing has remained the same.
  - 1.2. During the period of the Independent Care Review many of those who participated shared their experience of involvement, both positive and negative, in the hearing system. A consistent message was the hearing system is complex and confusing, didn't make sense to children and families and could be traumatic for those children and families involved with it.
  - 1.3. The Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) was established in August 2021, with Sheriff David Mackie as the chairperson to review and make recommendations in relation to the Children's Hearing System in Scotland. The HSWG published its final report on 25 May 2023. The report contains 97 recommendations for change and improvement to the current children's hearing system. The Scottish Government is considering its response to the recommendations.
  - 1.4. This report highlights the major thematic areas where major changes are proposed by the HSWG.
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## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the education and children policy board notes the content of this report and agrees that a further report is presented to the board when the Scottish Government present its response.

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### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Children's Hearings System is unique with Scotland the only country in the world to operate the model. It was introduced following the Kilbrandon Report which led to the passing of the Social Work Scotland (Act) 1968. When the children's hearing system was established the majority of children referred to it were those who had been involved in offending and a smaller minority referred for concerns over their welfare and protection. Over the years the balance of reasons for referrals has changed dramatically with most children referred to the children's hearing being for welfare and protection grounds.
- 3.2. At the core of the children's hearing system is the role of the Children's Reporter and the members of the children panel. Children can be referred to the Children's Reporter for a range of concerns. Following investigation of these concerns grounds of referral are prepared by the Children's Reporter and presented to a children's hearing.
- 3.3. The children's hearing consists of three members of the public who meet with the child, their parent(s) and a social worker to discuss the grounds of referral and to agree a plan to support the child and family. The child can be made the subject of a compulsory supervision requirement. If a compulsory supervision is put in place by the children's hearing, a social worker is assigned to the child to work with them and their family to address the concerns for which the child was referred.
- 3.4. During the period of the independent care review many care experienced children, young people and adults shared their experience of involvement in the children's hearing system. The positives and negatives were balanced, however it was clear that to deliver the Promise in Scotland there was a need to undertake reform of the children's hearing system.
- 3.5. In August 2021 the HSWG was established with Sheriff David Mackie as the chair. The HSWG is a partnership between Children's Hearing Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration, and the Promise. The voice of children and young people involved with the hearing system was central to the HSWG through the participation of the Our Hearings Our Voice. Our Hearings Our Voices are an independent board of young people aged 8 to 18 who have direct experience of the children's hearing system.
- 3.6. As the HSWG undertook their review they linked with a range of public bodies and organisations including COSLA, SOLACE, Police Scotland, Social Work Scotland, providers of advocacy services for children and young people, the legal profession and third sector organisations providing safeguarding work.
- 3.7. The HSWG published its report, Hearings for Children, with 97 recommendations on 25 May 2023. The report is over 300 pages long and contains an explanation behind each of the recommendations. The recommendations generally are policy changes, practice improvements or

legislative changes. The HSWG has indicated that it believes the Scottish Government must accept all of the recommendations and not to adopt a pick and mix approach.

3.8. The HSWG makes recommendations in relation to:

- The provision of early and ongoing support to children and their families including formal models to divert children from children's hearings where possible.
- Workforce planning in relation the recruitment and retention of social work staff to ensure consistency of support for children and families.
- The need to address child poverty as one of the drivers for children coming to the attention of services.
- The shift in practice from adversarial children's hearings to hearing which are built on awareness of trauma on children and their families and inquisitorial in nature.
- Changes to the composition of children's hearings from three voluntary members to a qualified and salaried professional chairperson and two trained and skilled panel members paid at a daily rate.
- Improvements to advocacy support and importance of the voice of the child and their family.
- The reasons children are referred to the children's hearing and how these are written to be rights based rather than current deficit model.
- Policy and legislative changes.

3.9. The HSWG has indicated that whilst indicating they expect the Scottish Government to accept and implement all of the recommendations, some can be taken forward immediately. Officers are currently reviewing the HSWG report to identify where immediate changes to practice can be made in Renfrewshire to improve the experience of children and their families involved with the hearing system.

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## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial Implications

The recommendations could have significant financial implications if they are adopted in full by the Scottish Government. Once the Scottish Government responds to the recommendations from the HSWG, it will be possible to advise elected members of any financial implications for Renfrewshire.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

Any changes will have an impact on the role of the social worker in discharging the responsibilities for the local authority within the children's hearing system. Once the Scottish Government responds to the

recommendations of the HSWG it will be possible to advise elected members of implications for Renfrewshire's staffing model and training of staff.

**3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications**

None

**4. Legal Implications**

There is no clarity on how the Scottish Government will respond to the recommendations however it is likely that there will be a need for legislative changes.

**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 it is for noting only.

**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.

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**List of Background Papers**

None

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*Children's Services*

JCTLG

25 July 2023

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