

## Notice of Meeting and Agenda

### Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 16 January 2025	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

MARK CONAGHAN  
Head of Corporate Governance

### Membership

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

Councillor Jennifer Adam: Councillor Fiona Airlie-Nicolson: Ms Mary Jane Bird: 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 Marie McGurk: Councillor Iain McMillan: Mr Jack Nellaney: Councillor Iain Nicolson: Mr Ravinder Singh: 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.

### 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.

## **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)

## **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.

- 1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 8 November 2024** **5 - 15**  
Joint report by the Directors of Finance & Resources and Children's Services.
- 2 Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together – Annual Report** **16 - 20**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 3 Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review** **21 - 27**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 4 Annual Report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2023/24 Update on Developments for Fostering Service** **28 - 50**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 5 Early Learning and Childcare Provision – Service Redesign** **51 - 65**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 6 Early Learning and Childcare and Out of School Care – Revision of Fee Rates** **66 - 71**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 7 Learning Estate Programme Update** **72 - 78**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 8 Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) Level Return 2024** **79 - 90**  
Report by the Director of Children's Services.

**9      Education Scotland Inspection of Kirklandneuk Primary      91 - 96**  
**School**

Report by the Director of Children's Services.




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

**On:** 16 January 2025

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

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**Heading:** Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 8 November 2024

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## 1. Summary of Financial Position

- 1.1. The projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2025 for Children's Services is an overspend of £0.901m (0.3%) against the revised budget for the year.
- 1.2. The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2025 for Children's Services is a break-even position.
- 1.3. This is summarised in the table below and further analysis is provided in the Appendices.

**Table 1: Revenue**

Division	Revised Annual Budget £m	Projected Outturn £m	Budget Variance £m	Budget Variance %
Children's Services	257.585	258.486	(0.901)	(0.3%)

**Table 2: Capital**

Division	Revised Annual Budget £m	Projected Outturn £m	Budget Variance £m	Budget Variance %
Children's Services	30.286	30.286	0	0%

## 2. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 2.1. Note the projected Revenue outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 1 above;
- 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 6 and 7.

### **3. Children's Services Revenue Budget Projection - overspend of £0.901m by 31 March 2025**

- 3.1. The Revenue Budget Monitoring report at Appendix 1 identifies a projected annual overspend of £0.901m (0.3% of total budget).
- 3.2. It should be noted that the projected outturn position reported here is based on the latest information available, which is subject to change during the financial year. The impact of any change on this projection will be updated at each board cycle until the close of reporting Period 10. Budget holders are obliged to seek mitigating action to minimise significant budget variances.

### **4. Objective Analysis - Significant Variances**

#### **4.1. Early Learning & Childcare - £0.551m underspend**

Employee costs are currently projected to underspend, mainly due to vacancies. This is under review with management.

#### **4.2. Primary Schools - £1.833m underspend**

Employee costs are currently projected to underspend and this is partly offset by projected overspends in Premises costs and Transport costs. The projected underspend in Employee costs arises mainly within teachers' salaries. The Premises costs overspend is largely due to increased refuse collection costs and demand for janitorial supplies, and the Transport costs overspend is due to the SPT school transport contract being greater than available budget.

#### **4.3. Secondary Schools - £0.734m overspend**

Employee costs, Premises costs and Transport costs are currently projected to overspend. The overspend in Employee costs mainly arises within teachers' salaries, the overspend in Premises costs is mainly due to refuse collection costs, and the Transport costs overspend is due to the SPT school transport contract being greater than available budget.

#### **4.4. ASN Schools - £0.490m overspend**

Employee costs are currently projected to overspend, mainly arising within teachers' salaries. This is due to historic budget levels not keeping pace with increasing pressure on ASN School provision and this will be kept under review.

#### **4.5. Additional Support for Learning - £0.623m overspend**

Employee costs and Transport costs are currently projected to overspend. The overspend in Employee costs mainly arises due to an increase in demand for Additional Support Needs Assistants (ASNAs) within mainstream schools. The Transport costs overspend is due to the cost of ASN transport contracts being higher than available budget.

#### **4.6. Facilities Management - £0.082m underspend**

Premises costs and Supplies and Services are projected to underspend and are partly offset by a small projected overspend in Employee costs. The

Premises costs underspend may reduce during the year, as more of this budget is committed to small property repairs across the school estate.

**4.7. Children & Families - £1.501m overspend**

Supplies and services, Third Party payments and Transfer payments are currently projected to overspend, partly offset by an underspend in Employee costs due to staffing turnover. The Supplies and Services projected overspend mainly relates to demand for both Care at Home for children with additional support needs, and payments to care leavers. The overspend in Third Party payments relates mainly to Fostering and Adoption services. The overspend in Transfer payments relates to Section 22 payments across localities. These areas will be kept under review.

**5. Subjective Analysis - Significant Variances**

**5.1. Employees - £1.197m underspend**

A projected underspend in Primary teaching staffing is partly offset by projected overspends in Secondary and ASN teaching staffing. Projected underspends in non-teaching staffing in Children & Families and Early Learning & Childcare, arising mainly from staff turnover, are partly offset by an overspend in Additional Support for Learning due to the demand for Additional Support Needs Assistants (ASNAs).

**5.2. Premises Related - £0.289m overspend**

The overspend in Premises costs is mainly due to increased janitorial costs and refuse collection costs across the school estate.

**5.3. Transport Related - £0.291m overspend**

The overspend in Transport costs is due to SPT contracts for both mainstream school transport and ASN transport being higher than available budget.

**5.4. Supplies & Services £0.762m overspend**

The overspend in Supplies & Services relates mainly to payments to care leavers and increased demand for Care at Home services for children with additional support needs.

**5.5. Third Party Payments - £0.606m overspend**

The projected overspend in Third Party payments relates to Fostering and Adoption fees, following the implementation of the national rate for fostering allowances, and services related to Children with Disability, related to projected placement costs.

**5.6. Transfer Payments - £0.803m overspend**

The projected overspend in Transfer payments relates mainly to Children & Families, in particular Direct Payments and Section 22 payments.

## 5.7. Income - £0.642m over-recovery

A projected over-recovery of income is currently projected in Children & Families in relation to charges to other divisions of the service not reported to this Board.

## 6. Revenue Budget Adjustments

- 6.1. Under the Council's financial regulations, Directors and their nominated officers, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, have certain delegated authority to transfer sums between subjective budget headings within a service division to enable budget management throughout the financial year. This is known as 'budget virement'.
- 6.2. Transfers between divisions of the same service / department in excess of £100,000, and transfers between services / departments must be authorised by the respective service Director and the Director of Finance and Resources for submission to the relevant policy board for approval.
- 6.3. The Director now seeks homologation from the Board for the following affected virements since the last report:

Revenue Budget Adjustments			
Objective Heading	Subjective Heading	Amount (£m)	Reason
Children's Services	Premises Related	(0.067)	Corporate Landlord transfers relating to small repair projects
Environment, Housing & Infrastructure	Premises Related	0.067	Corporate Landlord transfers relating to small repair projects

- 6.4. The following budget adjustment is in line with the earmarking of funds set aside in previous years, and is therefore for noting only:

Revenue Budget Adjustments			
Objective Heading	Subjective Heading	Amount (£m)	Reason
Children's Services	Various	0.955	Use of service reserves, including £0.935m drawdown of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to match latest estimates of projected expenditure

## 7. Capital Budget Projection - break even position by 31 March 2025

- 7.1. The Capital Investment Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 was approved by the Council on 29 February 2024. Education and Children's Services revised Capital spend for 2024/25 is £30.286m.



- 7.2. The in-year Capital budget is forecast to break-even by 31 March 2025, however, this will be monitored as the projects progress. Further details of the programme can be found in the Capital Monitoring report at Appendix 3.
- 7.3. A number of budget adjustments have taken place between years to reflect revised programming of some capital projects. Details of the adjustments made since the previous Board report, which amount to £1.337m, are as follows:

<b>Capital Budget Adjustments</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount (£m)</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Thorn Primary School (new build)	(0.850)	Budget decelerated into 2025/26
Second Dargavel Primary School (new build)	(0.575)	Budget decelerated into 2025/26
Early Learning & Childcare adaptations	0.088	Budget increase for required work funded by Current Revenue and by contributions from the Lifecycle Capital Maintenance fund
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1.337)</b>	

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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 £0.901m. 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 virement, 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 a break-even position, after the adjustments set out at section 7.3. The Capital programme will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development

While staffing budgets form a significant proportion of the Council's revenue budgets, there are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### 3. Community/Council Planning

Community Plan	
Our Renfrewshire is thriving	The Council's revenue and capital spend ensures that its facilities are fit for purpose and safe for the community, to maximise accessibility.
Our Renfrewshire is well	
Our Renfrewshire is fair	
Our Renfrewshire is safe	
Council Plan	
Reshaping our place, our economy and our future	The Council's revenue and capital spend ensures that its facilities are fit for purpose and safe for the community, to maximise accessibility.
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy	Ongoing revenue and capital budget monitoring is a tool to enable good financial management so that the Council has resources now and in the future for continued service delivery.
Working together to improve outcomes	

### 4. Legal

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**5. Property/Assets**

The capital expenditure noted in this report will result in lifecycle maintenance improvements to existing properties and replacement of ICT assets and infrastructure.

**6. Information Technology**

While ICT assets and revenue costs are included within these reported budgets, there are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**7. Equality and Human Rights**

While new areas of spend may impact on particular groups, any such impact would be assessed prior to the spend being incurred, therefore there are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**8. Health and Safety**

The capital expenditure noted in this report will result in lifecycle maintenance improvements to existing properties and replacement of ICT assets, which may in some cases rectify health and safety issues.

**9. Procurement**

While Procurement is an important consideration prior to the Council incurring any revenue or capital spend, there are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in 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**

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**12. Children's Rights**

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**13. Climate Risk**

The Council aims to reduce its carbon and other emissions to net zero by 2030, however there are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**14. CoSLA Policy Position**

n/a

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**List of Background Papers:**

- Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2024/25, Council 29 February 2024
- Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28, Council 29 February 2024

**Authors:** Richard Conway, Finance Business Partner  
Geoff Borland, Finance Manager

**RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2024/25**  
**1 April 2024 to 8 November 2024**

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

Subjective Summary	Annual Budget at Period 6	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget at Period 8	Projected Outturn	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Previous Projected Outturn Variance	Movement
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Employees	179,256	876	180,132	178,935	1,197	0.7%	1,267	(70)
Premises Related	9,488	(388)	9,100	9,389	(289)	(3.2%)	(319)	30
Transport Related	5,997	502	6,499	6,790	(291)	(4.5%)	(750)	459
Supplies and Services	31,791	(237)	31,554	32,316	(762)	(2.4%)	44	(806)
Third Party Payments	18,918	0	18,918	19,524	(606)	(3.2%)	(743)	137
Transfer Payments	15,904	528	16,432	17,235	(803)	(4.9%)	(926)	123
Support Services	941	0	941	930	11	1.2%	16	(5)
<b>GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>262,295</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>263,576</b>	<b>265,119</b>	<b>(1,543)</b>	<b>(0.6%)</b>	<b>(1,411)</b>	<b>(132)</b>
Income	(5,299)	(692)	(5,991)	(6,633)	642	10.7%	752	(110)
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>256,996</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>257,585</b>	<b>258,486</b>	<b>(901)</b>	<b>(0.3%)</b>	<b>(659)</b>	<b>(242)</b>

**RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2024/25**  
**1 April 2024 to 8 November 2024**

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

Objective Summary	Annual Budget at Period 6	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget at Period 8	Projected Outturn	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Previous Projected Outturn Variance	Movement
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Directorate	1,284	0	1,284	1,303	(19)	(1.5%)	(8)	(11)
Early learning and childcare	33,748	(89)	33,659	33,108	551	1.6%	819	(268)
Primary	65,126	350	65,476	63,643	1,833	2.8%	1,729	104
Secondary	90,625	(183)	90,442	91,176	(734)	(0.8%)	(677)	(57)
ASN Schools	7,302	0	7,302	7,792	(490)	(6.7%)	(481)	(9)
Additional support for learning (ASL)	17,712	252	17,964	18,587	(623)	(3.5%)	(900)	277
Psychological services	1,280	0	1,280	1,280	0	0.0%	0	0
Education development	2,458	(1)	2,457	2,457	0	0.0%	0	0
Attainment Challenge	(484)	(316)	(800)	(800)	0	0.0%	0	0
Facilities management	546	(18)	528	446	82	15.5%	108	(26)
Children & Families	37,399	594	37,993	39,494	(1,501)	(4.0%)	(1,249)	(252)
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>256,996</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>257,585</b>	<b>258,486</b>	<b>(901)</b>	<b>(0.3%)</b>	<b>(659)</b>	<b>(242)</b>

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL  
CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY - NON-HOUSING SERVICES  
1st April to 8th November 2024  
POLICY BOARD: EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Project Title	Prior Years Expenditure to 31/03/2024 £000	Current Year 2024-25						Full Programme - All years			
		Approved Budget 2024-25 £000	Budget Adjustments since previous Board report £000	Revised Budget 2024-25 £000	Projected Outturn 2024-25 £000	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Total Approved Budget to 31-Mar-29 £000	Projected Outturn to 31-Mar-29 £000	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable	
<b>EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN SERVICES</b>											
Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)	10,422	202	0	202	202	0	0%	10,623	10,623	0	0%
Paisley Grammar New Campus	6,707	27,138	0	27,138	27,138	0	0%	85,600	85,600	0	0%
Thorn PS New Build	79	1,000	(850)	150	150	0	0%	14,000	14,000	0	0%
Dargavel Extension (Modular Units)	2,133	117	0	117	117	0	0%	2,250	2,250	0	0%
DPS2 New Build	0	1,000	(575)	425	425	0	0%	45,000	45,000	0	0%
Other Schools Investment Programmes	0	213	0	213	213	0	0%	213	213	0	0%
Total Schools Estate(inc Early Years) Programme	1,553	302	0	302	302	0	0%	1,855	1,855	0	0%
PMHS Extension	0	1,000	0	1,000	1,000	0	0%	37,000	37,000	0	0%
ELCC Improvements	0	0	88	88	88	0	0%	88	88	0	0%
Technology Replacement Strategy ICT	0	651	0	651	651	0	0%	1,851	1,851	0	0%
<b>TOTAL EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD</b>	<b>20,894</b>	<b>31,623</b>	<b>(1,337)</b>	<b>30,286</b>	<b>30,286</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>198,480</b>	<b>198,480</b>	<b>0</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.




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

**On:** 16 January 2025

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

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**Heading:** Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together – Annual Report

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Renfrewshire "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy" was approved by Board in May 2021. It was prompted by the Independent Care Review which highlighted the issue of children who are separated in placements when accommodated by local authorities. In response, Children's Services co-produced a report with our Children's Champions Board, "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together", which recommended practice improvements to keep more brothers and sisters together when they are in the care of the local authority.
  - 1.2 The policy is ambitious and contains the following pledge: "When children come into care Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together". The policy committed to reporting progress on an annual basis.
  - 1.3 This is the third annual report on how Renfrewshire is delivering on the policy. This report covers our activity to keep brothers and sisters together between June 2023 and May 2024. Of the 69 children and young people who were newly accommodated during the period, 49 had a sibling aged under 16 years. Of these 49 children, 26 were placed with at least one sibling.
  - 1.4 This report details the reasons 23 brothers and sisters couldn't be placed together.
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## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Board are asked to:
    - a) note the progress of the third year of implementation of the Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy.
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## 3. Background



- 3.1 The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 became law in January 2021 and places new duties for local authorities in relation to ensuring that brothers and sisters are supported to be together and where this is not possible, to have their relationship supported on an ongoing basis. Our Brothers and Sisters policy is compliant with the requirements of this piece of legislation and has been highlighted as national best practice.
- 3.2 The policy pledges that Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together. It is recognized, however, that there are circumstances in which this will not be possible, or indeed in the best interests of the individual children and young people. Moreover, there are times when brothers' and sisters' individual needs are not compatible with each other, and difficult decisions require to be made by the team of professionals responsible for their care that they should be placed in separate placements.
- 3.3 In circumstances where the separate placement of siblings is due to the unavailability of kinship or foster carers, or residential service able to take a sibling group, or for significant safeguarding reasons, there is a requirement that a robust family time contact plan is in place and the possibility of the children being reunited in placement is regularly reviewed via the established Looked After Reviews process.
- 3.4 Where the team around the child agree a care plan which separates brothers and sisters in care for other reasons, the policy requires the explicit approval of the Head of Children and Justice Services. In this process, the reasons for the separation must be fully recorded and a family time contact plan developed. In addition, an annual report on delivering the pledge is produced for Board to hold the service to account for performance in this area.
- 3.5 A range of practice tools are in use to inform the assessment of brothers' and sisters' relationships and to support the development of these very important relationships, irrespective of their placement, including child-friendly family time contact plans developed by our Promise Ambassador in partnership with local children and young people.
- 3.6 This is the third annual report on progress and covers the period June 2023 and May 2024. The first and second annual reports were presented to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 27 October 2022 and 18 January 2024 respectively.
- 3.7 During the period June 2023 to May 2024 (the reporting period) 69 children and young people were newly accommodated by children's social work. 49 of these children had a sibling under the age of 16. A desk-top review of the circumstances of all children with siblings brought into care during the period June 2023 to May 2024 was carried out to ascertain compliance with the policy and to identify reasons for any separation of siblings.
- 3.8 26 children who were newly accommodated were placed with their sibling or siblings. 23 children who were accommodated could not be placed with their siblings for a range of different reasons including children whose siblings were brought into care at different times, or remained at home with at least one birth parent, and others who have an older sibling or siblings already in care. Where an older child in care has a new baby brother or sister who becomes accommodated, it is often not possible to place them together because of the capacity of the carer household or the different care plans of the children.
- 3.9 The reasons for children not being placed with their brothers and sisters were:
- Siblings at home (12 children)

- came into care at birth after their older siblings were accommodated (3 children)
- sibling was in residential care and this was not an appropriate placement for the younger child (5 children)
- placed separately from siblings because of a permanence plan (1 child)
- initially placed together however their complex care needs meant that separation was necessary (2 children).

- 3.10 As was the case in previous years' reviews, it was shown that small sibling groups of two or three who were brought into care at the same time were most likely to be kept together. There were a small number of cases where one or more children was already in a care placement and the carer was able to accommodate a newly arrived sibling. Younger sibling groups were more likely to be placed together than older children.
- 3.11 Of the 23 brothers and sisters who were separated, there were a number of issues in common. Most frequent was the placement of siblings at different times. A typical scenario was one or more siblings placed together and then a sibling (usually a new baby) coming into care several months or years later. In these cases, either the care placement was unable to offer an additional placement, or the child(ren) already placed had a permanence decision agreed and were at various stages of progression to a permanent destination. In the current review, a sibling pair are currently placed separately but their permanent care plan is for them to be together.
- 3.12 The physical capacity of foster and kinship carers' homes was a barrier to some sibling groups being placed together. However, the carers' ability to provide the level and nature of care required for individual children with differing care and support needs was a more prevalent reason for siblings not being placed together. Our internal foster care service accommodates many sibling groups as well as several households of three or more unrelated children.
- 3.13 Renfrewshire has made considerable progress in recent years towards shifting our balance of care away from foster care towards kinship care. More than half our accommodated children and young people are now in kinship placements. Kinship carers tend to have less capacity to provide placements for multiple children. Review of our placement of children with siblings highlights that while many kinship carers are managing very well with one or two children, they are unable to take on new siblings as they come into care.
- 3.14 The use of kinship care placements also means that half-siblings cannot always be accommodated together because of complex family circumstances. There is a very high frequency of half-sibling relationships amongst our population of accommodated children.
- 3.15 In line with the requirements of the policy, all children accommodated separately from their siblings have a 'family time' contact plan which specifically addresses their contact with siblings. This is reinforced by the statutory duties imposed by the children's hearings system which requires that all reports submitted about children who have siblings includes a specific assessment of their relationship and each child's individual views and wishes about sibling contact.

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## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

Where children require external placements to remain together there are higher costs than if placed in internal provision.

- 2. HR and Organisational Development**  
All staff in children's social work have been trained in the operation of the Policy.
- 3. Community/Council Planning**  

Our Renfrewshire is thriving	- Providing good quality care is central to ensuring that the most vulnerable children in Renfrewshire are provided with an opportunity to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.
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- 4. Legal**  
The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 placed a new duty on local authorities in relation to how they support and promote contact between brothers and sisters. The current policy satisfies the authority's duty in this area.
- 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.
- 8. Health and Safety**  
None.
- 9. Procurement**  
None.
- 10. Risk**  
None.
- 11. Privacy Impact**  
None.
- 12. Cosla Policy Position**  
None.
- 13. Climate Risk**  
None.
- 14. Children's Rights**  
This report demonstrates compliance with Article 3 (best interest of child), Article 9 (keeping families together), Article 12 (respect for children's views), Article 19 (protection from violence), Article 22 (refugee children) and 25 (review of a child's placement) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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## List of Background Papers

Keeping Brother and Sisters Together - Report to Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 20 May 2021

Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together – Progress Report – Report to Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 27 October 2022

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**Children's Services**  
KN

**Author:** Karen Nowland, Quality Assurance & Practice Development Officer,  
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**To:** Education and Children's Services Policy Board

**On:** 16 January 2025

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

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**Heading:** Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1. Renfrewshire children's services operates a Throughcare & Aftercare Service for care experienced young people.
  - 1.2. In November 2024 the regulatory body which oversees this service, the Care Inspectorate, published '*Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review*'. Renfrewshire staff contributed to the review.
  - 1.3. This report provides an overview of the Care Inspectorate thematic review and considers the current provision of throughcare and aftercare from a Renfrewshire perspective.
- 

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note:
    - (a) how Renfrewshire's Throughcare & Aftercare Service compares with the key messages identified through the thematic review; and
    - (b) the development plans of Renfrewshire's Throughcare & Aftercare Service to continually drive forward the service.
- 

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Scottish Government asked the Care Inspectorate to undertake a thematic review of the experiences for care experienced young people in and leaving care in Scotland.
- 3.2. This request was result of recommendations made in the *Way Home Coalition's 2019 publication 'Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway: Improving*

*Care Leavers Housing Pathways*’ and the Centre for excellence for Children’s Care and Protection’s 2022 publication, *‘CELCIS Continuing Care: An exploration of implementation’*. In these the need for equality in the provision of aftercare services, of pathway planning, and of reducing risks and crises for young people in Scotland were noted. Furthermore, recommendations were also made about hearing young people’s views and experiences of continuing care, as well as considering the impact of continuing care on the outcomes for young people.

- 3.3. The review by the Care Inspectorate was completed under Section 53 of the Public services (Scotland) Reform Act 2010. Through this they were able to interview staff and young people, read records, and reach evidenced based conclusions which could offer opportunities for learning and development.
- 3.4. The Care Inspectorate’s 2024 publication *‘Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review’* was based upon the experiences of 38 young people between 16 and 26 who were, or had been, formally looked after, and were leaving care in the sample local authorities of Shetland, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway.
- 3.5. It also took account of publicly available data and reports, undertook a review of relevant published literature, incorporated the findings of a national survey completed by 31 local authorities about the theme, evaluated 20 case records, 273 staff survey responses and incorporated the views of 85 staff leaders and/ or corporate parenting groups from the sample population.
- 3.6. The review was completed between April 2024 and the publication date of November 2024.
- 3.7. The key messages from the report will now be detailed, along with an overview of Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service’s current position and aspiration around these.
- 3.8. **Key message 1: Almost all young people reported positive relationships with trusted staff who supported them through the stages of moving on from care.**

### **Renfrewshire position**

Renfrewshire’s Throughcare and Aftercare Service currently have 165 open allocations of young people eligible for a service. This does not include the cohort who have opted out of engagement, or for whom an active allocation has been assessed and agreed with them as not required at this time. These young people are aware of their right to request a service, and this would be responded to through the Throughcare and Aftercare duty workers. This may determine, short or longer-term interventions depending on the young person’s need or want.

Young people who are actively working with the service have an individualised welfare and pathway plan. This details their assessed needs, wants, and views, including that around their allocated worker as well as the assessment of any other involved professional agency. The documented feedback around the young peoples’ relationships with their allocated workers is predominantly very positive. The recent Renfrewshire Children’s Service Inspection by the Care Inspectorate in October 2024 highlighted a strength

and noted evidence of positive relationships between staff, young people and their families.

- 3.9. **Key message 2: There was evidence of practice being rights and relationship based as well as trauma informed. Overall care experienced young people's rights were found to be upheld in relation to them moving on from care.**

#### **Renfrewshire position**

The Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service have been proactive in developing their knowledge and skills around relational and trauma informed practice. The team have completed evaluations and training which supports trauma proficient practice, including participation in the Scottish Government and NHS recognised Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training. These efforts by the service and the impacts of them were noted in the Care Inspectorate evaluation which included Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service.

Young people, as evidenced through their Welfare and Pathways assessment and plan are supported to be aware of their rights around them moving on from care. They are also assisted to access independent advocacy and or legal assistances as has been relevant to them and their situation.

- 3.10. **Key message 3: The meaningful involvement of young people in service design and planning proved to offer services which were innovative, creative and effective in positively impacting the lives of care experienced young people.**

#### **Renfrewshire position**

Young people in Renfrewshire are continually encouraged to offer any views they may have about the service and support they receive. This is done through individual direct work with them, as well as periodic consultation events and the outcome of these has been recorded on the case management system, in assessments and fed into service development considerations and planning.

The views of care experienced young people informs service delivery and development, however in the spirit of continuous development we recognise that this could be developed further. We would seek to do this through an explicit engagement strategy, with clear ways in which to we would look to combine the views and experiences of care experienced young people with other data gathered (as per 3.12). This is something that the new Team Manager of Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service is looking to take forward in their 2025 service development plan, with the oversight and support of the Social Work Senior Manager and Children's Services Manager.

- 3.11. **Key message 4: Through there being variable approaches to keeping in touch, not all young people had access to the necessary information to support their transitions. This means that the vision set out by the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (SCLC) is yet to be achieved for all young people.**

## Renfrewshire position

Renfrewshire Council is not a cosignatory of the SCLC (although individual officers are cosignatories) and does not have a published Local Offer in accordance with Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017; an English piece of legislation within which the Local Offer element has been adopted in some other areas of the UK as good practice. This is something which will be addressed in 2025 as part of the Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service development plan. Whilst these are not mandatory through Scottish legislation, it would allow Renfrewshire's Throughcare and Aftercare Service to be explicit in its commitment to and support of care experienced young people. Noted within the Care Leaver Local Offer website is that Renfrewshire is committed to and meets almost all possible practical opportunities to support care experienced young people. This includes, but is not restricted to, council tax exemption, priority access to council housing, offering a setting up allowance and financially supporting care experienced young people to access education and training.

- 3.12. **Key message 5: The benefit of gathering the stories, views and experiences of care experienced young people to enrich complimentary gathered data was noted. Where this occurred and was combined, it offered insight into what was important to them and assisted in informed service design and delivery.**

## Renfrewshire position

The Renfrewshire position is detailed in paragraph 3.10.

- 3.13. **Key message 6: The most significant challenge for partnerships was the availability of suitable housing. This limited partnership's capacity to deliver on young people's aspirations and plans.**

## Renfrewshire position

Like almost every area of the UK, Renfrewshire is having to closely manage a limited supply of general housing stock; resulting in a challenge to meet demands. This has implications upon care leavers in the area, and their wants. Despite this, very good relations have been fostered between Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service and counterparts in the Housing directorate. This has supported the development and implementation of our housing protocol which directs that young people leaving care receive priority status for social housing allocation. Staff across the directorates work collaboratively with the young people to understand and try to meet their needs around community, connections, shelter, safety and security.

Care leavers in Renfrewshire are also fortunate to have access to the Council's Charleston Square supported living service. This offers 10 individual flats for care experienced young people for a short to medium term period, with the aim of assisting them to become equipped for independent living. This resource is regularly inspected by the Care Inspectorate, who in May 2024 rated it Very Good. Similarly, in partnership with Barnardo's, care leavers have access to two Gap houses, opportunities to develop the partnership with Barnardo's and offer additional resources are currently being explored. Renfrewshire Council offer ten satellite flats offering Renfrewshire's



care experienced young people opportunity to take up a tenancy, with assistance from outreach staffing to work on their emotional, practical and social skills to support their aim of sustaining positive independence.

- 3.14. There remains opportunities for development within the service, particularly about formalising the engagement strategies and publicising the extent of assistance the service can and will offer. There is awareness of these areas of development potential, and they will form the basis of the service development plans moving forward; ensuring that Renfrewshire's care leavers have access to the best possible supports.
- 3.15 As is evidenced above, Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service is exceeding the level of its peers in some areas within the sample group evaluated by the Care Inspectorate in their 2024 publication '*Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review*'. Positive efforts are being made to engage, effectively support, and create opportunities for Renfrewshire's care experienced young people to assist them on their journey towards independence.

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## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

None.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

### 3. Community/Council Planning

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Our Renfrewshire is thriving                        | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including support for employment.</i>  |
| Building strong, safe and resilient communities     | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including development of safe plans.</i>   |
| Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including challenging discrimination against those with care experience.</i>                               |
| Working together to improve outcomes                | - <i>Children and justice social work staff work in collaboration with other services to improve outcomes for care leavers including support for employment, access to health, access to housing and access to further education.</i> |

4. **Legal**  
None.
  5. **Property/Assets**  
None.
  6. **Information Technology**  
None.
  7. **Equality and Human Rights**
    - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.
  8. **Health and Safety**  
None.
  9. **Procurement**  
None.
  10. **Risk**  
None.
  11. **Privacy Impact**  
None.
  12. **Climate Risk**  
None.
  13. **Children's Rights**  
As Renfrewshire encourages all children who are looked after to retain that status until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Renfrewshire Throughcare and Aftercare Service operates within the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child.
  14. **Cosla Policy Position**  
None.
- 

### List of Background Papers

- 3.15. Care Inspectorate: '*Transitions for care experienced young people: A thematic review*'. <https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/news/7820-transitions-for-care-experienced-young-people-a-thematic-review>
- 3.16. Way Home Coalition: '*Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway: Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways*'. <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/youth-homelessness-prevention-pathway>

- 3.17. Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection: '*CELCIS Continuing Care: An exploration of implementation*'. <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/continuing-care-exploration-implementation>
- 3.18. The Scottish Government: *Public services (Scotland) Reform Act 2010*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/8/contents>
- 3.19. Care Inspectorate: Report of a joining inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Renfrewshire community planning partnership. [www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/7797/CARH%20report%20for%20Renfrewshire%20Oct%2024%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/7797/CARH%20report%20for%20Renfrewshire%20Oct%2024%20(1).pdf)
- 3.20. TURAS: *Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training*. <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37902>
- 3.21. Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (SCLC): <https://mycovenant.org.uk/about/>
- 3.22. Care leaver local offer: <https://www.careleaveroffer.co.uk/organisations/32116-renfrewshire?term=renfrewshire>
- 3.23. Legislation.gov.uk: *Children and Social Work Act 2017 (section 2)*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/section/2>
- 3.24. Care Inspectorate: *Renfrewshire Council Throughcare Team Housing Support Service*. <https://careinspectorate.com/berengCareservices/html/reports/getPdfBlob.php?id=320158>.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Kevin Smith, Childrens Services Manager. 0141 487 4280

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**Children's Services**

**Author:** Kevin Smith, Childrens Services Manager




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

**On:** **16 January 2025**

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

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**Heading:** **Annual Report of the Fostering and Adoption Service  
2023/24 Update on Developments for Fostering Service**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides elected members with the opportunity to review the 17<sup>th</sup> annual report of Renfrewshire's Fostering and Adoption Service (appendix 1).
  - 1.2 The annual report sets out the work undertaken by the Fostering and Adoption Panel and the Fostering and Adoption Service in the period 1 August year 2023 to 31 July 2024. The annual report notes that on 31 July 2024 there were 69 fostering households approved by Renfrewshire. During the period covered by this report, 6 children and young people had a permanence plan considered by the panel and approved.
  - 1.3 The report considers the work of the panel and the continued work of the Fostering and Adoption Service.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
    - a) note the contents of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2022/23 attached as appendix 1.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Looked After (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and the Adoption Agencies (Scotland) Regulations 2009 require Social Work in its role as a Fostering and Adoption agency to operate a Fostering Panel and an Adoption Panel. This panel has the responsibility for putting forward recommendations to the agency decision makers John Trainer (Head of Children and Justice Social

Work/Chief Social Work Officer) and Michelle McCargo, (Strategic Manager Children and Justice/Depute Chief Social Work Officer) regarding the suitability of people to adopt or foster children. Furthermore, the Panel considers and approves plans for children to be adopted or for the Council to apply for Permanence Orders on a child. The Panel also considers and approves the matching of a particular child with a particular family where the plan is for the child to live there permanently.

- 3.2 Renfrewshire operates a Fostering Panel and Adoption Panel with one constitution. The panel separates out the Fostering business from the Adoption business to ensure that the appropriate regulations are met regarding a quorum, and for the attendance of the legal and medical advisers. The panel has two chairpersons who are independent from the work of the service: one is a Social Work manager, and the other is from the Association for Fostering Adoption and Kinship Scotland (AFKA).
- 3.3 There are currently 24 members of the panel comprising elected members, social work, health and education staff, legal advisers, a medical adviser, carers, independent panel members, and an independent member from AFKA. The panel sits at least monthly- there were 14 panels in the reporting period. There are typically 3 panel members at each meeting along with appropriate advisors. The panel considered 51 agenda items over the course of the year.
- 3.4 The panel has a unique overview of the work being undertaken to assess and approve foster carers and adopters alongside the work being undertaken by social workers to progress plans for children who cannot be cared for within their own family. The annual report has been produced as a means of sharing this work with a wider audience and to assist in the process of service planning.
- 3.5 Renfrewshire had 69 active households of foster carers on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. In the period 1/08/23 and 31/7/2024 an additional 1 household was registered as a foster carer, and 5 foster care households left the service, one household was deregistered as they adopted the child they had fostered, one household was deregistered following a period of poor health. Another household, left after many years and coming to the end of their fostering career. The last two households decided they no longer wanted to foster.
- 3.6 The report notes the ongoing need to recruit Renfrewshire foster carers and adopters because of children being accommodated and in need of permanent care, and our commitment to reducing the number of children being placed externally. In the past we have had high-profile recruitment activity which only produced 1 or 2 more applications to foster. Most of our fostering applications come from people who already have foster carers as friends or family. There is a national difficulty in recruitment of foster carers. The service continues to work with communication and marketing to consider how best to promote fostering recruitment.
- 3.7 In the period 1/08/23 and 31/07/2024, 2 Renfrewshire households were approved as adopters at the Renfrewshire panel.
- 3.8 The Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 increases the responsibility/ duty of Local Authorities to provide continuing care placements for young adults up to the age of 21. This means that more young people are

remaining in the same placement after they are 18. The service continues to assess foster carers to become supported carers wherever this is appropriate.

- 3.9 We currently have 11 young adults living with supported carers. Many of these carers were previously the young adults' foster carers.
- 3.10 The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 became law in 2021 and places new duties on local authorities to place brothers and sisters together in placements and place a new duty on local authorities to promote contact between brothers and sisters who are looked after. This is in keeping with the independent care review report, The Promise.
- 3.11 Renfrewshire approved the "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy" in May 2021. The policy contains the following pledge "When children come into care Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together". The policy recognises that there will be times that brothers, and sisters can't be placed together but requires us to report on this. The annual report on Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy is also presented at the Board today.

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## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

None.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

### 3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is safe - *The provision of foster care provides Renfrewshire's children with safety and care*

### 4. Legal

None.

### 5. Property/Assets

None.

### 6. Information Technology

None.

### 7. Equality and Human Rights

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

### 8. Health and Safety

None.

- 9. Procurement**  
None.
- 10. Risk**  
None.
- 11. Privacy Impact**  
None.
- 12. Climate Risk**  
None.
- 13. Children's Rights**  
This report demonstrates compliance with Article 3 (best interest of child), Article 9 (keeping families together), Article 12 (respect for children's views), Article 19 (protection from violence), Article 22 (refugee children) and 25 (review of a child's placement) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 14. Cosla Policy Position**  
None.
- 

### **List of Background Papers**

- (a) None.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Fiona Duncan, Social Work Senior Manager on 0300 300 1199.

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**Children's Services**  
FD/KO 25/11/24

**Author: Fiona Duncan, Social Work Senior Manager, 0300 300 1199,  
fiona.duncan@renfrewshire.gov.uk**



**THE FOSTERING AND  
ADOPTION  
PANEL AND SERVICE  
  
ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024**



## **Foreword**

## **Introduction**

## **Context**

- Accommodated and Looked After Children/Young People
- Overview of the work presented to the Fostering and Adoption Panel 01/08/23 – 31/07/24
- Panel Membership
- Staffing
- Commitment to permanency planning

## **Report on the Fostering Service**

- Development of the Fostering Service 2023 – 2024
- Recruitment Activity
- Preparation Groups
- New Foster Carers and deregistration
- Foster Carers Reviews
- Permanent Foster Carers
- Foster Carers Training
- Foster Carers Support Group
- Consultation Group
- Fostering Events
- Break Through Group
- Newsletter
- Future Development of Fostering Service 2024 -2025

## **Report of Supported Carers Service**

- Overview of Supported Carers Service

## **Report on the Adoption and Permanence Service**

- Development within the Adoption Service 2023 – 2024
- The Adoption Register Scotland
- Recruitment of Adoptive Parents
- Family Finding
- Adoption Plans and Links
- Adoption Support Groups / Individual Families
- Adoption Newsletter
- Birth Relative Support
- Letterbox Contact
- Future Development of the Adoption Service 2024 – 2025

## **Conclusion**

## Foreword

As one of the two agency decision makers I have the pleasure of welcoming the annual report of Renfrewshire's Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care Service and The Fostering and Adoption Panel. On behalf of me and John, I'm delighted to present a report which demonstrates the work on the service and the panels over the past twelve months and also looks to the developments over the next twelve months.

On 31 July 2024, Renfrewshire Council had 620 Looked After Children. Of these, 153 children and young people were looked after at home, 264 were looked after by kinship carers or friends/relatives and 213 were accommodated with foster carers, in pre-adoption arrangements or within residential placements. Renfrewshire Council had 69 Fostering households at this time.

Children who are looked after in foster care, can either be with Renfrewshire foster carers or with foster carers approved by an external agency or charity. Wherever possible we try to have children live with Renfrewshire foster carers and only look to external agencies when a suitable match cannot be made with Renfrewshire carers. On 31 July 2024 there were 24 children/young people living with external providers, an increase of 3 from the previous year.

The work of the Fostering and Adoption Service continues to ensure that children are living in the best and safest environments to meet their individual needs, and that children who require to live permanently in foster care or to be adopted are matched with an appropriate foster family at the earliest opportunity.

The Fostering and Adoption Service remains committed to ensuring that the principles of Renfrewshire's 'Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together' policy are embedded in all aspects of its practice. Where we cannot place brothers and sisters together, the service supports natural family time between brothers and sisters outwith formal arrangements wherever possible.

The Fostering and Adoption Panel provides an important quality assurance role in ensuring that the work undertaken to assess children's long-term care needs, and the assessment of their potential carers, is carried out to the highest standards. The Panel's role is to make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker who ultimately approves children's permanence plans or confirms that a household can adopt or become foster carers.

Panels continue to deal with a range of complex issues and to progress children's plans in a timeous, focussed manner. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, 6 children's permanence plans were approved by the Agency Decision Maker.

We hope that you enjoy reading this year's annual report.

Michelle McCargo  
Strategic Manager for Children and Justice  
Depute Chief Social Work Officer

John Trainer  
Head of Children and Justice Social Work  
Chief Social Work Officer

## Introduction

This is the 17<sup>th</sup> annual report of Renfrewshire Council's Fostering and Adoption Panel and Service and covers the period 1 August 2023-31 July 2024.

Renfrewshire Council has a statutory duty to operate Fostering and Adoption Panels. In Renfrewshire we have one Panel which carries out both functions.

The Adoption and Fostering Panel operates within the statutory framework of the Adoption Agencies (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (Part II) (AAS Regulations) and the Looked After (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (Part VI) (the LAC Regulations).

These regulations set the basis for the membership of the Panel, the frequency of meetings, the appointment of advisors and the different functions of the Panel.

The Renfrewshire Fostering and Adoption Panel held its AGM in June 2024 with Panel members, Advisors, and an Agency Decision Maker in attendance. There is a Business Meeting at the start of each Panel to review overall functioning. The quorum for individual meetings of the Panel is three members, and it is ensured that this number includes people with relevant experience and a range of backgrounds to provide robust and independent scrutiny of the business presented.

Responsibility for the functions and decisions of the panel rests with the Chief Social Work Officer. Authority is delegated to a Senior Manager in Children's Services to chair the Panel. We have a second chair from the Association of Fostering and Kinship Adoption Scotland. The Head of Children and Justice Social Work, and the Strategic Manager for Children and Justice act as Agency Decision Makers for the Panel. This is to ensure compliance with the recommendation of the Guidance on Looked After Children Regulations (Scotland) 2009, to appoint more than one Agency Decision Maker, to cover, holidays, illness, alternatives for review (appeal) panels and other circumstances.

The Panel has several purposes. This includes considering prospective foster carers, prospective adopters, and supported/continuing carers. It also involves reviewing existing registrations for foster carers, prospective adopters and supported/continuing carers. In addition, the Panel considers individual children's needs for alternative permanent carers (where the care plan for the child is that they do not return home to their birth family); this includes considering the most appropriate legal route to secure this outcome. The Panel also considers the matching of a child with specific foster carers or adoptive parents within permanence plans.

The fostering and adoption team is responsible for the recruitment, training, supervision and support of suitable foster carers and prospective adopters. There is also a significant role in providing post adoption support to adopted families once Adoption Orders are granted. Ensuring we have sufficient carers with the skills and experience necessary to meet the needs of the diverse range of babies, children and young people who need care away from their birth families is the over-arching objective of the team.

## Context

The work of the Fostering and Adoption Panel should be viewed in the context of the overall numbers of Renfrewshire Council's Looked After and Accommodated children.

### Accommodated and Looked After Children/Young People

As of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, Renfrewshire Council had 620 Looked After Children/Young People. The number of children living in Kinship arrangements has slightly reduced from the previous year, from 270 to 264. The number of children living with Renfrewshire Council's foster carers also remained similar, increasing by 3 from the previous year, whilst those residing with independent/charity sector foster carers also increasing by 3.

	31/07/2023	31/07/2024
Local Authority – Children in Children's Houses	20	21
Local Authority – Children in Foster Carer	112	115
Independent Sector Children in Foster Care	21	24
Independent Sector Children in External Residential Resource	29	37
Pre – Adoption	2	5
Independent Sector Children – Secure School	3	1
Children Looked After by Kinship carers/friends/relatives	270	264
Children Looked After at home	170	153
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>620</b>

<b>Cases presented to the Fostering and Adoption Panel</b>		
Business Item	Aug 22 -July 23	Aug 23 - July 24
Child adoption plans and links	4	5
Approval of Renfrewshire adopters (households)	6	2
Approval of adopters to increase registration	0	0
Conversion of Foster carers to Adopters	0	0
Approval of Adopters for children from overseas.	0	0
De registration of adopters	0	0
Review of Registration (Adoption)	1	1
Children's Permanence Order plans	9	1
Links with Permanent Foster Carer	4	1
Approval of new Foster Carer	6	1
Approval of Foster Carer – change from interim to permanent status	4	0
De registration of foster carers	4	5
Approval of Supported Carers	5	5
Initial review of Foster Carers after 1 year	2	6
Foster Carer Reviews (after year 3)	24	24
<b>Total Number of Agenda Items</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>51</b>

**There were a total of 14 Fostering and Adoption Panels held between 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.**

### **Panel Membership**

There has continued to be a committed Panel membership over the past year. Very positively, the number of panel members has significantly increased from 12 to 24 including, chairpersons. The majority of Panels are chaired by the delegated Senior Manager from social work and the other is independent and commissioned from the Association of Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland. An active recruitment drive for panel members ensured that the panel membership reflects a wide range of experience from a range of areas including social work, education, health, independent sector, and those with lived experience of fostering and adoption. In addition, there have been approved 2 new legal advisers.

Panel members have all the support and information they need to make legally competent recommendations.

The Medical Advisers continue to offer a valuable service and support to the Panel in respect of provision and interpretation of medical information in relation to the children and adults being presented to Panel. The Medical Adviser provides up-to-date written information regarding any health issues in relation to a child or a prospective foster carer or adoptive parent.

The Panel has a representative from the council's legal services who acts as Legal Advisor and provides written legal advice to the Panel in relation to adoption and permanence work. The Legal Advisor attends the Panel whenever permanence is being considered, and on other occasions where the chairperson feels their advice is required.

At present, the Team Manager for Adoption acts as the professional Panel Advisor supported by the Team Manager for Fostering. The medical, legal and panel advisers are non voting members.

Feedback from panel members is gathered and ideas generated are incorporated into the business meeting agenda for consideration on how to improve the functioning and participation at panel.

### **Staffing**

Following an internal social work service redesign the structure of the Fostering, Adoption and Continuing Care/Supported Care Service will be as follows:

- Senior Social Work Manager - Registered manager of the services
- 1 Team Manager Adoption (responsible for adoption and permanence service, and management of staff)
- 1 Team Manager Fostering (responsible for the fostering and supported care service and management of staff)
- 1 Senior Practitioner
- 8 full time Social Workers
- 2 part time Social Workers
- 2 Social Work Assistants

For some years now, the fostering and adoption service has had a separate fostering team and an adoption and permanence team. This separation allows the development of more specialist

skills regarding fostering and adoption. Both teams work closely together and share expertise and learning. There is also a social worker dedicated to continuing and supported care.

### **Commitment to Permanence Planning – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

During this period, Renfrewshire has progressed adoption and permanence plans for 8 children. This is fewer than last year, and whilst last year there were more Permanence Order Plans being approved than Adoption Plans, this year there were significantly more Adoption Plans compared with Permanence Order Plans. Renfrewshire Council continues to recognise the importance in progressing plans for children within appropriate timescales. It is envisaged that the forthcoming social work service redesign will support and enable social work staff involved in permanence work to undertake both the direct work with the child and family and to complete the necessary reports.

Renfrewshire Social work service is committed to keeping children with their birth families where it is safe to do so, and is working to improve identification of potential alternative care arrangements within parents' wider family network at the earliest possible stage. This important work with parents occurs before presentation to the Fostering and Adoption Panel. Following this, even where permanence outwith the family becomes necessary, it can provide the child with important life-long links with their birth family and contribute to more positive long-term outcomes for children.

The decision to place a child permanently outwith their birth family rightly involves a high level of assessment to ensure the plan is in the best interests of the child and will meet their needs throughout their childhood. During the permanence process, checks and balances are in place to ensure the best possible outcome for the child. Permanence planning work is complex however, it is also highly rewarding when children find new families and have the opportunity to thrive into adulthood.

## **Report on Fostering Service**

The fostering service continues to offer a high standard of care to children in the care of Renfrewshire Council. While the number of foster carers has reduced over the period, the number of children being cared for in foster care has slightly increased. At times carers have gone outwith their registration to care for children needing care. The most common reason for this has been to keep brothers and sisters together. When carers go outwith their registration this must be approved by the Agency Decision Maker. It is a testament to the commitment of Renfrewshire carers that there are fewer foster carers caring for more children.

### **Developments within the Fostering Service 2023 – 2024**

- Implementation of the Scottish Recommended Allowance
- Embedding the principles of the Promise by encouraging carers to become Promise Keepers.
- Social Events for Foster Carers
- Specific event for short break carers
- Reviewed application process around Preparation Groups.
- Piloted professional training plan for carers.
- Manager engagement with neighbouring authorities and Social Work Scotland
- Participation in AFKA practitioners forum.

### **Recruitment Activity/ Preparation Groups**

The Fostering Senior Social Worker works with Renfrewshire Council's Communication team to continue to develop and refine a recruitment strategy making use of social media. It is

recognised nationally that there is a shortage of foster carers and recruitment is on the national agenda. The Fostering Team Manager has been involved in discussion involving Scottish Government and representation from most Local Authorities in Scotland to share ideas about recruitment however success remains limited.

When a person makes a fostering enquiry, an initial visit is carried out by the fostering social worker. Following this there is discussion between the social worker and the senior social worker/team manager and they consider whether to progress the enquiry based on the fostering criteria. Ideally at this stage the enquirer would be invited to attend preparation groups and it would not be until they had completed the preparation groups and with the agreement of the service, they would then submit their application and the home study part of the assessment process would begin.

However, over the past year, the service has adapted this process due to the small number of enquiries, rather than an enquirer waiting for there to be enough people to run preparation groups, the assessment begins and the applicant can attend preparation groups at any stage of the process. This should reduce delay and get potential carers through the process quicker.

The preparation groups are facilitated by social workers from the fostering team and they use the materials produced by the Fostering Network "Skills to Foster". The preparation groups provide the opportunity for the participants to receive more in-depth information and to discuss the implications of fostering. The preparation groups tend to run over 5 evening ( or weekend) sessions and cover topics such as why children come into care, what a foster carer does, identity and life chances, working with others including birth parents, attachment and brain development and creating a secure environment.

Experienced foster carers come along to talk to the group about their different experiences of caring for foster children, financial issues and support.

There was enough interest to run one preparation group in August/September 2023 of which 4 households were invited. Only two households completed the sessions and progressed to assessment. Of these two, one withdrew early on in the process, citing concerns about financial uncertainty. The other household did progress through assessment but this application currently on hold due to concerns raised about her dog. It is still hope that this will progress.

## **New Foster Carers and Carers Deregistered**

In the period August 2023 – July 2024, one new foster carer was approved and this was as a short break carer. During this period there were also five fostering households deregistered. One household was deregistered as they adopted the child they had fostered, one household was deregistered following a period of poor health. Another household, left after many years and coming to the end of their fostering career. The last two households decided they no longer wanted to foster.

## **Foster Carer Reviews**

A Review of Foster Carers Registration takes place at the Fostering Panel at the end of their first year of fostering and every three years thereafter. Outwith this timescale, foster carers will also return to Panel if their registration requires a review due to a change in registration, consideration of a complaint or allegation, breakdown, or a significant change in circumstances. In Renfrewshire, Foster Carer Reviews take place annually, so when not reviewed by the Fostering Panel, the review is conducted by a Social Work Manager.

Between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024 the Fostering Panel reviewed 26 foster care households and 26 internal foster care reviews took place.

Foster Carer Reviews are an opportunity for foster carers to talk about their experience, training, and support etc. Renfrewshire Council's foster carers, in the main expressed satisfaction with their experiences of fostering and their learning and remain enthusiastic and committed. They have found the support provided by their social worker to be beneficial and available as required.

The foster carers provide written and verbal contribution to the review process, as well as written reports from their birth children. Reports by their supervising social worker and child's social worker are all part of the review process. Foster children are encouraged to contribute to the review process and birth parents are encouraged to submit a report for the Foster Carer Review regarding the care their child/children is receiving.

The duties of the supervising social workers from the fostering team are to keep regular contact with the foster carers, this includes home visits and telephone contact. Supervision between carers and their worker generally takes place four weekly. This is dedicated time that allows discussion and reflection about caring for the children, training and development as well as performing a range of duties including ensuring health and safety checks are carried out annually, annual medical information is received and PVG checks are up to date, Safer caring policies are in place for each fostering household which include a minimum of two unannounced visits annually. Supervising social workers will also attend Looked After Children Review meetings and conduct joint visits with the child's social worker as necessary.

### **Permanent Foster Carers**

One child's plan for a Permanence Order was approved between 1 August 2023– 31 July 2024 and the plan is that his current carers will be re-assessed as permanent carers for him.

### **Foster Carer Training**

Foster carers have the opportunity to attend training designed specifically for them which is provided by the Social Work Training team and members of the fostering and adoption team. The latter have also provided evening sessions to capture carers who work. The range of training offered, covers child protection, safer care, lifestory work, promoting positive behaviour, children with disabilities and contextualising safeguarding which is delivered using Virtual Reality headsets.

Social workers and foster carers can also attend external training courses. The Fostering Network and Association of Fostering and Kinship Adoption Scotland have provided training and network lunches to foster carers, the fostering and adoption team staff, who have also attended network lunches and practitioners forums.

### **Foster Carers' Support Group**

The foster carers have their own informal support group where they can share information/experiences and any issues raised within the group are fed back to the fostering team via the carers supervising social worker or the foster carers consultation group. The group meets monthly and is supplemented by a "WhatsApp" group that the carers use for communication.



## **Consultation Group**

The Carers Consultation Group met four times between August 2023 and July 2024. All foster carers are invited to this group, and it is attended by the Senior Social Worker Fostering, the Service Manager/or Operations Manager. This provides an opportunity for foster carers to be kept updated with any changes within the service and discuss any issues that have arisen for them or other carers. There is usually a group of between 10-12 carers who regularly attend but actions from the meeting are circulated to all carers. It is also the opportunity for more informal discussion.

## **Foster Carer Events**

The Fostering Service has facilitated 2 Foster Carer Coffee Mornings over the last year, these have been an informal opportunity, where all fostering households are invited along as well as all the fostering and adoption staff and managers. Attendance at these events has been high, the foster carers come along, tea/coffee and cakes are provided people can have a chat in a very informal setting, it is also an opportunity for foster carers to put a face to the names of staff members whom they may not have met in other circumstances.

The Fostering Service organised a Fostering Day Out at Finlaystone Country Park in May 2024 to coincide with "Fostering Fortnight", a national campaign organised by Fostering Network to raise the profile of fostering. Foster carers were invited along with the children they care for including birth and foster children. This event was enjoyed by 38 children along with 32 foster carers and staff and managers from the fostering service including the Head of Service.

There are 9 short break carers who provide an invaluable service mostly to families in the community by offering short breaks to children to allow parents/carers respite. Undoubtedly, this support has prevented some children being accommodated. Carers in this group also offer short break/holiday cover for our foster carers. This role has many similarities to our foster carers but also there are some differences. Many of this group continue in paid employment and offer support at weekends and so do not have the same opportunities to network. The fostering service held a coffee evening during "Fostering Fortnight" specifically for this group of carers, 8 out of 9 households attended and allowed the opportunities to meet other carers and staff within the service. This was a successful event and informal relationships were made.

## **Breakthrough Group**

The Breakthrough group is now in its 9<sup>th</sup> year and has been running on a monthly basis since 2015. This is a semi structured participation group for children and young people in foster care. This group is facilitated by the Fostering Service and Who Cares Scotland.

The group was originally set up to give children/young people a safe space with other children who may be experiencing similar issues whilst living in fostering families. The focus of the group was to support and facilitate the young peoples' voices on issues important to them. There are around 9 regular group members, some of whom are original members from 2015 and 3 new young people were welcomed this year.

Over the years the focus of the group has naturally evolved. Over the past year they decided to try and complete a project as a group as opposed to their individual stories being included in a newsletter. The theme of their project was called 'Moving relationships' addressing the importance of maintaining significant relationships throughout their care journey. The group worked in partnership with the Promise Arts and Culture Programme, and it was decided to create an animation, and funding was accessed via Future Paisley. The young people worked with an animation company Toads Caravan and over 6 sessions, their thoughts and ideas were

used and they created a short animation entitled “Moving Relationships” This animation was completed and shared with Children’s Services senior managers in February 2024. The young people appear to have enjoyed this experience, learning new skills.

The group also worked with a local comedian, actress and business owner, Anna Devitt. Anna is a keen supporter of care experienced young people and having heard of the group, was happy to offer her expertise. Over the past 6 months she has been working on the groups newest project titled ‘We are in Care’. A project looking at what is important to the young people through different mediums. It is hoped to have this project finished by the end of 2024.

### **Newsletter for Foster Carers**

The fostering newsletter is produced in Spring, Summer and Winter editions and distributed to all foster carers by e-mail. The focus of the newsletter is providing foster carers with updates on legal or practice changes that affect them or the children they care for and providing some thought-provoking articles about fostering issues. The newsletters seek to keep foster carers informed of changes within the social work service or procedures and also advertise training opportunities specific to fostering. The hope is that foster carers will become more involved in the content and focus of future newsletters as participation so far has been somewhat limited. Carers are contacted regularly to solicit contributions or ideas for contributions. In the summer newsletter this year one of our carers provided an interesting account on how to support children through play at the time of their transition to adoption. This involved resource material the carer had gained through some independent training she had attended. In the past the newsletter has been able to report on children’s artwork or achievements. Topics covered in the last year include updates on the social work service redesign, the redesign report for Children’s hearings, the AFKA Staying Connected Toolkit, the activities of the Who Cares Breakthrough group for fostered children, and a review of children’s books on emotional regulation. The summer newsletter provided a ‘long read’ article on the rewards and challenges of caring for the modern teenager. The newsletter provides the carers with links to explore more information on the topics covered and provides encouragement for carers to record any additional learning.

### **Future developments of the fostering service 2024 – 2025**

- Introduction of use of My Story App
- Increase number of carers producing “Letter to the Child”
- Update Safer Carer Policy in line with new guidance
- Foster carer participation with Project Change
- Offer “drop in” sessions to social workers on permanence
- Develop and produce Permanence Training for social workers
- Deliver training to social workers using the Staying Connected Toolkit
- Collaboration with Educational Psychology to offer specific support to foster carers to help support the child in their care

## **Report on Supported & Continuing Care Service 2023-2024**

### **Current carers and outcomes for young people**

At present the service consists of 9 continuing carers and 2 supported carers supporting 11 of Renfrewshire’s young adults. Of the 11 young adults, 4 attend college placements fulltime, 1 attends university, 1 has an apprenticeship and 4 are in fulltime employment.

1 young adult, moved onto independent living and secured their own tenancy, whilst attending college and working parttime.

1 mother and baby placement ended as the young adult has successfully moved onto independent living. She is managing her tenancy positively and adapted to parenthood successfully. She works part time and reports from all agencies are that she has excelled as a parent.

Many of our young adults have had the opportunity to go on holiday either with their carers or as independent adults both domestically and internationally.

1 young adult has been supported to maintain relationships with birth family in Poland.

Several young adults are undertaking driving lessons with some having secured their driving licence over the past 12 months.

## **Developments**

- Carers have been signed up to national online training database.
- Carers have been actively encouraged to engage in the training and enhance their knowledge to support them to be more informed carers.
- Welfare assessment being completed for young people

## **Future Developments**

- Discussion with Care Inspectorate regarding registration as Continuing Care Service

## **Report on the Adoption Service**

### **Developments within the adoption service in Renfrewshire 1 August 2023-31 July 2024**

1. Secured a further year of funding from The Promise, allowing the Birth Connections service, which provides individual and group based support for birth family members affected by adoption, to continue until March 2025.
2. Significantly developed work with birth families affected by adoption, including supporting brothers and sisters separated by adoption to reconnect.
3. Developed support around final family time events for children and birth parents, to ensure these are positive and provide meaningful, lifelong information. This practice has been informed by birth parents with lived experience of these events.
4. Continued work with Scottish Adoption Support Services (SAAS - Barnardo's) for young people, birth parents and adopters requiring additional support, where appropriate.
5. Continued work with Scottish Adoption Register/Link maker.

## **Recruitment, Preparation & Assessment of Adoptive Parents**

Within the reporting period the Adoption Service received 23 initial enquiries which is three fewer than the figure of the previous year. Some of these did not progress due to a range of issues, and others continue to progress with their adoption journey. One preparation group was held, in May 2024. At this group, an Adoptive Parent spoke about his adoption journey, to support the learning of those attending. The feedback received from the group was extremely positive, particularly in relation to the contributions that came from lived experience. As a result

of this feedback, the service plan to review preparation group materials, with a focus on including the voices of birth parents going forward.

The Adoption Service has progressed 2 adoption applications (households) to the Adoption panel during the reporting period, and both were approved. Feedback received about the adoption assessment has highlighted that although the process is lengthy there is recognition that the content and discussions although at times difficult are necessary in preparing for the next stages of the adoption journey.

Renfrewshire Council's Adoption Service has continued to use Scotland's Adoption Register. Once applicants have been approved as adopters for a brief period, their information and what age of child they have been approved for is added to the Register. Adoption social workers across Scotland can access this information should they be trying to place a child for adoption.

## **Family Finding**

There continues to be a need for adoptive parents for children of all ages particularly for brother and sister groups, older children, and children with additional support needs. Nationally, there has been a continued reduction in the number of children being placed for adoption which has seen the average wait for a child identified for adoptive families significantly increase. Consequently, there are a large number of adoptive parents on Scotland's Adoption Register.

Scotland's Adoption Register previously reintroduced face to face Adoption Exchange days and Adoption Activity Days. Over the course of this reporting period, they have shifted to a mixed model, with some in person events and some online. The Register has continued to support practitioners in achieving permanence for children Scotland.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, the Adoption Service has been actively family finding for 15 children in Renfrewshire, a significant increase on 4 from last year. Of these children, 5 have an adoptive family link formally agreed through the Fostering and Adoption Panel, and all of those have been placed with their adoptive family. Of the 15 children mentioned, a further 6 had an adoptive family link potentially identified, but not formally agreed, during this reporting period, and the service continues to search for adoptive families for the remaining 4 children.

## **The Adoption Register (Scotland) - National Position**

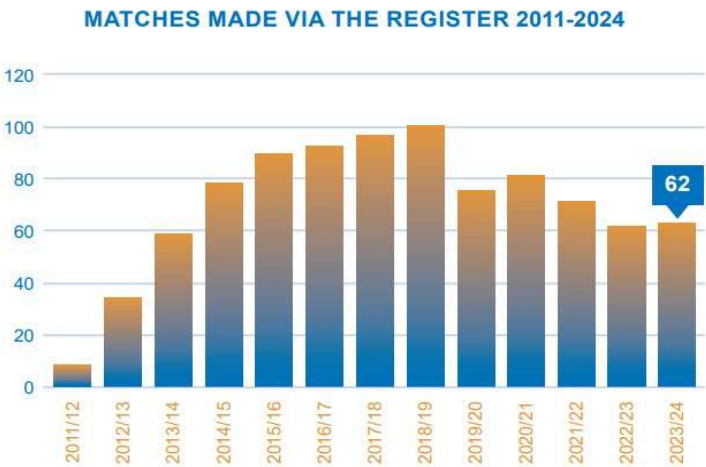
Scotland's Adoption Register is a statutory service fully funded by the Scottish Government. It provides a free service to support local authorities and voluntary agencies with family finding activity, and Renfrewshire's Adoption service continues to actively engage with this. The Adoption Register is where prospective adopters, once approved, have their approval details registered. The Adoption Register is committed to facilitating social workers' overall goal of securing children's futures through moves to permanent families.

A total of 62 children were matched with adoptive families through the Scottish Adoption Register in 2023/24.

The Register played an active role alongside AFKA Scotland and AUK Scotland in the delivery of Adoption Week Scotland 2023 with a focus on support throughout adoption. This year returning to an in-person event with over 100 attendees throughout the day hosting stalls, networking and sharing, and attending free workshops.

The Adoption Register continues to improve the process and to support adoption agencies in reducing delays in matching children with adoptive families.

The end of year total of matches is a very small increase on the previous year, up from 61 to 62 despite the continued increase in numbers of children being referred throughout the year. On 31st March 2024 there were 113 children on the Register compared to 134 the previous year, and 169 adopters on the Register compared to 209 the previous year.



**GENDER**

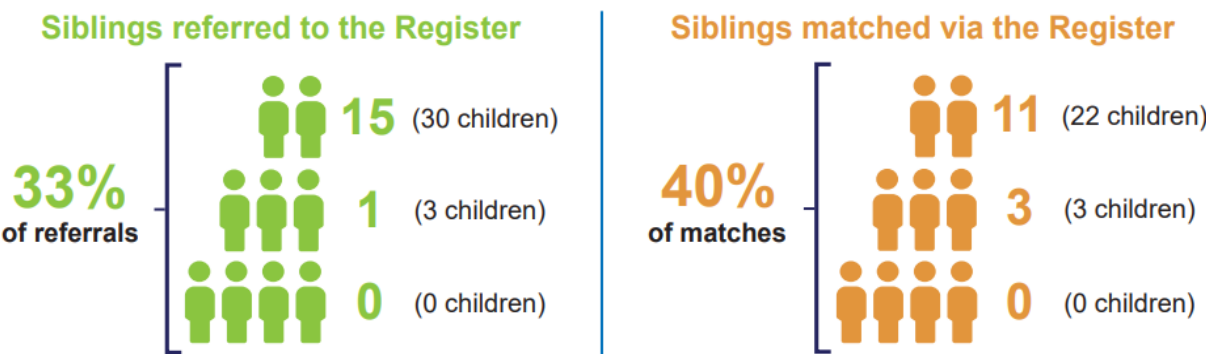
Of the 101 children referred to the Register in 23/24, 45 (45%) were girls and 56 (55%) were boys. This sees a continuation of more boys than girls following a brief change in 21/22 where more girls than boys were referred to the Register since its inception in 2011.

**ETHNICITY**

83 (82%) were White (82% White Scottish). 14 White Other (13%). 1 (0.9%) of Indian heritage. 1 (0.9%) of Asian heritage. 1 (0.9%) of Black African heritage. 3 (2.9%%) of mixed heritage.

**SIBLINGS**

33% of the children referred to the Register in 2023/24 were part of a sibling group. This is a small decrease from 35% last year. 40% of the matches made in 2023/24 were for sibling groups.



**Renfrewshire Adoption Plans and Links- 1 August 2023-31 July 2024**

During the reporting period, 5 children were presented to the Adoption Panel for consideration of their adoption plans and links. This is a slight increase on the 4 adoption plans considered in the previous year. In all cases the Agency Decision Maker accepted the panel's recommendations to approve the adoption plan and links between the child and their prospective adopters.

**Adoption Support Group**

The Adoption Service continued to engage positively with families through Adoption Support Groups facilitated by the team. Over the reporting period, the support group met in November 2023 and March 2024, for Christmas and Easter themed activities. The Easter adoption support group took place in Barshaw Park, and was attended by 12 Adopters and 15 children and they enjoyed an egg hunt. The Christmas adoption support group was held at Eastwood Theatre in Giffnock to see a pantomime. Fourteen families attended, consisting of 21 adults and 22 children. The group met an hour beforehand to ensure families had time to come together for peer connection too. The pantomime was fun and aimed at the wide age group in attendance.

There are some families who are regular attenders at the group, and it is positive to see established relationships that have formed, and warm welcomes extended to those who have not attended before. Many of the children recognise one another and are excited to come together. This support group also provides additional opportunity for brothers and sisters who live separately to come together. The feedback for this group remains very positive. Adoptive families feedback that they value the opportunity to come together, to form connections with other families. This provides a good support for parents, and for their children to be with other adopted children with shared lived experience. Adopters advise that attending the group enables them to feel part of a support network; it provides an opportunity to discuss adoption with their children openly and positively which helps them support their child's growing understanding of their life story.

Adoptive parents have consistently advised they value support groups and training. Therefore, this year the adoption service have continued to offer all adoptive families access to training through Barnardo's SASS, and plan to further develop training opportunities with colleagues in other parts of children's services in Renfrewshire Council.

### **Adoption Support to Individual Families**

Throughout the year the adoption team have provided adoption support on an individual basis to 25 adoptive families and to 2 adopted people who are young adults. Barnardo's Scottish Adoption Advice Service (SAAS) also continues to offer support, including counselling, to Renfrewshire families. A total of 42 children in 33 families received an adoption allowance during the reporting period.

Post Adoption Support Planning meetings are held for all children when an adoption order is granted to consider their support needs. An adoption social worker is allocated to adoptive parents for 1 year following the granting of an adoption order at which point the adoptive family are invited to a review meeting to consider any further adoption supports required.

Within Renfrewshire there are 85 adoptive families on the mailing list who receive the quarterly newsletter and notification of all support groups and training events.

### **Birth Connections**

Birth Connections is funded by The Promise, via the CORRA Foundation, to support birth family members who are affected by adoption. Birth Connections launched in March 2023 so has been running for a year and a half. The service offers both individual supports, tailored to the individual's specific needs, and group support every two weeks, providing a therapeutic environment to meet with other people who have had similar lived experience. The individual support provided since the service launched has ranged from supporting people to understand the Adoption process and the terminology surrounding this, supporting birth family members to engage in life story activities for children (such as photo albums, memory boxes, letters), to

filling in application forms (such as housing, ID, counselling referrals), supporting attendance at appointments (such as GP, Addiction support, Justice meetings), building up confidence out in the community, linking in with community led groups and organisations, supporting engagement with letterbox exchange, and more. The Group support launched in May 2023, so saw it's first anniversary in this reporting period. Birth Connections' aim is to provide lifelong support so that birth family members can access the support they need at any time when they feel able to, and can choose when they do or do not wish to engage.

Birth Connections runs its fortnightly Group out of Station 7 in Johnstone (Active Communities) and are liaising closely with this organisation and the community opportunities that they can provide. Currently, the team facilitates quarterly Cooking/Baking classes through them and have also enjoyed other opportunities such as Barista training for the birth family members engaged with Birth Connections, through Station 7.

The CORRA funding allowed for a full time staff member to run Birth Connections along with the Adoption Team. The initial funding was for one year and has been extended for a further period until 30 March 2024.

Birth Connections currently supports around 33 birth family members with individual support and there are currently 4 birth family members involved in the Group Support. These numbers continue to grow.

## **Adoption Newsletter**

The Adoption Newsletter is produced and distributed every 3 months, around Easter, Summer, Halloween and Christmas. The Newsletter starts with either a poem related to the season or lyrics to a song or a whole playlist readers can put on whilst reading through it. This aims to encourage adoptive parents to take some time to relax and focus on learning and feeling connected to our service and other adopters. The Newsletter contains information on what is new in the Adoption Team, but also in the world of Adoption, with relevant articles included. Any dates with training opportunities and events are highlighted for Adopters to plan their family diaries. Each newsletter is usually themed, and some activities relating to that theme are included – such as recipes for baking Halloween cookies, or descriptions of activities to do during the Summer holidays. Through these different strands of information, adoptive parents are recognised as parents like any others, with children to entertain in holiday periods; and as parents through adoption, with the specific circumstances and needs this can entail. There is also an Art Corner which contains artwork made by adopted children, sent in by their parents. This provides a platform for adopted parents to show how proud they are of their children's achievements, and allows children themselves to be directly involved in this publication. Finally, the adoption teams' contact details are always included. The Newsletter is distributed to every household on our mailing list of families. Some of these families have other, direct contact with the service, and others do not. Providing the Newsletter to all households reminds adopted families that the service is there for them should they need support and the message is that the need for post adoption support at some point is the norm, rather than ever having a sense of failure.

## **Letter Box Contact**

Letterbox contact provides contact between birth families, adoptive parents, and sibling groups. It primarily supports children placed for adoption and their adopted and birth families, but also includes those living with permanent foster carers. The letterbox service can provide support in writing and replying to letters, and ensures information exchanged is safe and appropriate. Currently, the letterbox service has a caseload of 125 which 79 are operational. Letterbox contact varies on an individual case basis, mostly contacts are annual, however there are

some which are two, three, or even four times per year. The service previously introduced individual support and offered electronic methods of letterbox to support some participants to engage via email. This encouraged a high uptake of participants.

## **Future Developments of the Adoption Service**

Over the next year the service intends to strengthen the adoption service by developing the following:

1. Introduction of Birth Parents' Voices in Preparation Groups; including audio recordings and art work to help prospective adopters understand birth parents' experiences.
2. Increase opportunities to attend support groups for adoptive parents and their children; specifically a monthly drop-in group for families.
3. Highlight the importance of Listening to and Supporting the Experience of Adoption during Adoption Week Scotland.
4. Build on our existing links with colleagues in Educational Psychology to offer training opportunities for adopters informed by the skills and knowledge of the care experienced aspect of their service.

## **Conclusion**

This report has highlighted the work of the Fostering, Adoption and Supported Carers Services and the work of the Fostering and Adoption Panel during August 2023 - July 2024. The activity of the Fostering and Adoption Panel reflects the number of children unable to live with their birth families within Renfrewshire.

The Fostering, Adoption and Supported Carers Services are committed to safeguarding children's lives in Renfrewshire and to continual improvement.

As the Registered Manager for the Fostering and Adoption Service, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our panel members for their commitment to Renfrewshire's most vulnerable children.

I would also like to express my thanks to Renfrewshire Foster Carers, Continuing Carers, Supported Carers and Adopters who have continued to show their commitment and love to the children they look after, and adopt. They help us to ensure that the children receive the best outcomes that they can.

As always, we look forward to the coming year and to progressing our work with all partner agencies to continue to improve the outcomes and secure the future of Renfrewshire's most vulnerable children.

Fiona Duncan  
Social Work Senior Manager  
(Registered Manager of Fostering and Adoption Service)



## **Appendix 1 Renfrewshire Council Fostering Criteria**

### **Who Can Foster?**

Renfrewshire Council accepts applications from different backgrounds as everyone has their own individual experience to offer.

#### **Requirements to foster:**

1. Are over 21 years,
2. Are in good health and
3. Have a spare bedroom.

#### **You can be:**

1. Single, married, cohabiting or in a civil partnership.
2. Own or rent the property you live in
3. Be employed or not employed.
4. Be of any religious background or sexuality.

### **Preparation Groups**

Enquirers will be required to attend preparation groups before making a formal application. The purpose of these groups is to provide the opportunity to learn more about fostering, and the children who require to be in a foster placement.

If preparation groups are not available other means will be considered to provide and share information with enquirers.

### **Local Authority, Health, and Police Checks**

All applicants will be subject to stringent local authority, health, and police checks. These will extend to any other resident in the household over 16 years of age and to anyone who will have care of the child.

## **Appendix 2 Renfrewshire Council Adoption Criteria**

### **Age**

All applicants must be over 21 years of age.

### **Status**

Applications will be considered from couples or single applicants irrespective of their sexuality.

A couple may be the same sex or unmarried. Same sex couples are not required to be in a Civil Partnership.

Joint applicants must be in an enduring family relationship.

### **Preparation Groups**

Enquirers will be required to attend preparation groups, if groups are available, prior to making a formal application. The purpose of these groups is to provide enquiries with the opportunity to learn more about the children needing adoption, their backgrounds and the genetic factors adopters may have to consider when parenting adopted children.

If preparation groups are not available other means will be considered to provide and share information with enquiries.

### **Infertility**

Prospective adopters should have completed infertility investigations at least 6 months prior to application.

### **Local Authority Health and Police Checks**

All applicants will be subject to stringent local authority health and police checks. These will extend to any other resident in the household over 16 years of age and to anyone who will have care of the child.




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

**On:** **16 January 2025**

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

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**Heading:** **Early Learning and Childcare Provision – Service Redesign**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 In conjunction with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Scottish Government's Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance, July 2021 ("Statutory Guidance") places a duty on local authorities to ensure funded early learning and childcare (ELC) is made available to eligible children in their area. All children aged 3 and 4 and also some 2-year-olds are eligible to receive 1140 hours of ELC per year.
  - 1.2 Renfrewshire Council has continued to observe the duty to provide the entitlement to 1140 hours of free ELC.
  - 1.3 Data for both Renfrewshire Council and the wider data set for Scotland shows there are fewer children eligible for funded ELC than had been predicted, with a lower than anticipated national and local uptake of the entitlement to 1140 hours of free ELC.
  - 1.4 The Scottish Government has adjusted the funding approach for funded ELC, replacing the specific annual grant funding with an annual core quantum funding based on the numbers of eligible children within Council areas.
  - 1.5 On 31 October 2024 the Education and Children's Services Policy Board approved to both an engagement exercise with parents and carers on future delivery models of ELC provision in Renfrewshire Council run establishments and to a further report being presented to the Policy Board in January 2025 on ELC provision in Renfrewshire Council establishments.
  - 1.6 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the outcome of the engagement with parents and carers and to make recommendations on future delivery models of ELC provision in Renfrewshire Council establishments. The revised models take into account the reduction in birth rates, data relating to uptake and demand of 1140 hours of funded ELC and population projections, current parental preferences and consideration of the revised funding provided to the Council to deliver the ELC entitlement.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 21 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
- note the outcome of the engagement process with parents and carers; and
  - approve the proposals regarding future delivery models of ELC establishments as outlined in section 8 of this report.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) Order 2021 amended the entitlement of ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours, effective from 1 August 2021. The Scottish Government's Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance, July 2021 ("Statutory Guidance") places a duty on local authorities to ensure that funded ELC is made available to eligible children in their area.
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Council has continued to observe the duty to provide ELC to eligible children through the provision of places in local authority, private and voluntary sector nurseries and with childminders.
- 3.3 The current entitlement of 1140 hours can be claimed for all 3 and 4-year-old children and is available to eligible 2-year-olds as defined within the criteria laid out by the Scottish Government.
- 3.4 In line with sections 31 and 32 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 parents of children that are still 4 years old on the date they are eligible to start school can defer their child's start at primary school for a year and that child is automatically entitled to additional year of funded ELC. This entitlement to an additional year of ELC was fully implemented from August 2023.
- 3.5 The 1140 hours expansion of ELC is underpinned by four key principles quality, accessibility, flexibility, and affordability. A key aim of the expansion is to raise the attainment of all children with a focus on giving children the best start in life and in narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. These 4 key principles are fully reflected in Renfrewshire Council's delivery of ELC.
- 3.6 Data from across Scotland shows that there are fewer children eligible for funded ELC than previously predicted. In line with the national picture, the uptake of ELC places in Renfrewshire Council area has been lower than originally estimated, with an average of around 90% occupancy rate. The expectation is that the projected decline in birth rates will continue to impact the overall level of uptake.
- 3.7 The Scottish Government has provided additional funding to local authorities to support the expansion to 1140 hours from the previous entitlement of 600 hours. Since its introduction in August 2021 the expansion to 1140 hours was provided through a specific revenue grant allocation and distributed using a needs-based distribution methodology previously agreed by Scottish Ministers and COSLA Leaders. From 2024-25, the ring-fencing has now been removed and the full funding for ELC is included within the overall General Revenue Grant.
- 3.8 The table below shows the level of funding received from the Scottish Government (to support the expansion of 1140 hours) to Renfrewshire Council since August 2021. To date, the budget reduction has been met through reducing places in some Council ELC establishments in line with demand and need and reducing staffing levels.

Financial Year	Specific Grant Awarded to Renfrewshire (£)	Reduction in Specific Grant (£)	% Reduction	Contained within General Revenue Grant (£)
2021-22	21.883m	-	-	-
2022-23	18.716m	3.167*	(14.5%)	
2023-24	18.430m	0.286	(1.6%)	
2024-25				18.438m

\* Grant Aided Expenditure was increased by £2m in 2022-23 so net reduction was £1.167m

## 4. Current ELC Delivery Models

- 4.1 A mapping exercise of ELC provision was undertaken in the lead up to the 1140 expansion to guarantee available provision to meet entitlement and projected demand across Renfrewshire and in each geographical area. ELC places in Renfrewshire were developed to ensure a mix of Council and Funded Provider settings across each geographical area. Currently there are 38 Council ELC establishments, 36 approved Funded Provider establishments and 12 childminders delivering the Renfrewshire wide ELC entitlement. Some parents choose to access their child's ELC entitlement across more than one setting, this is referred to as a blended placement.
- 4.2 The 2014 Act places a duty on local authorities to consult on a 2 yearly cycle with representative populations of parents to gather information on demand, need and preferences relating to ELC and childcare for children aged 0 to 14 years. Consideration is also given to the data gathered from the Children and Young people consultation exercises to ensure that the models of delivery of ELC continues to be aligned with parental need and expectation.
- 4.3 In line with the key principles for the 1140 expansion, ELC provision was grouped into local geographical areas, across 10 admissions panel areas, to ensure accessible provision and choice of services for parents. Each panel area has a range of providers (Council and Funded Providers) and options of delivery, including term time and 52 weeks per year, full day, and part-time places, as follows:
- services which open between 8 am to 6 pm over the school year, 46 or 50 weeks;
  - services which open for a school day model over the school year;
  - specific options of 6 hours per day (school day) over the school year;
  - 8am to 6pm over 2.5 days for 50 weeks; or
  - 8 am to 1 pm or 1 pm to 6 pm over 45.6 weeks.
- 4.4 Renfrewshire Council ELC provision consists of:
- 13 ELC classes linked to primary schools, which operate during the school day / term time;
  - 9 ELC classes linked to primary schools, which operate over a longer day (8 to 6 pm) across the calendar year;
  - 15 ELC centres (standalone establishments), which operate over a longer day (8 to 6 pm) across the year; and

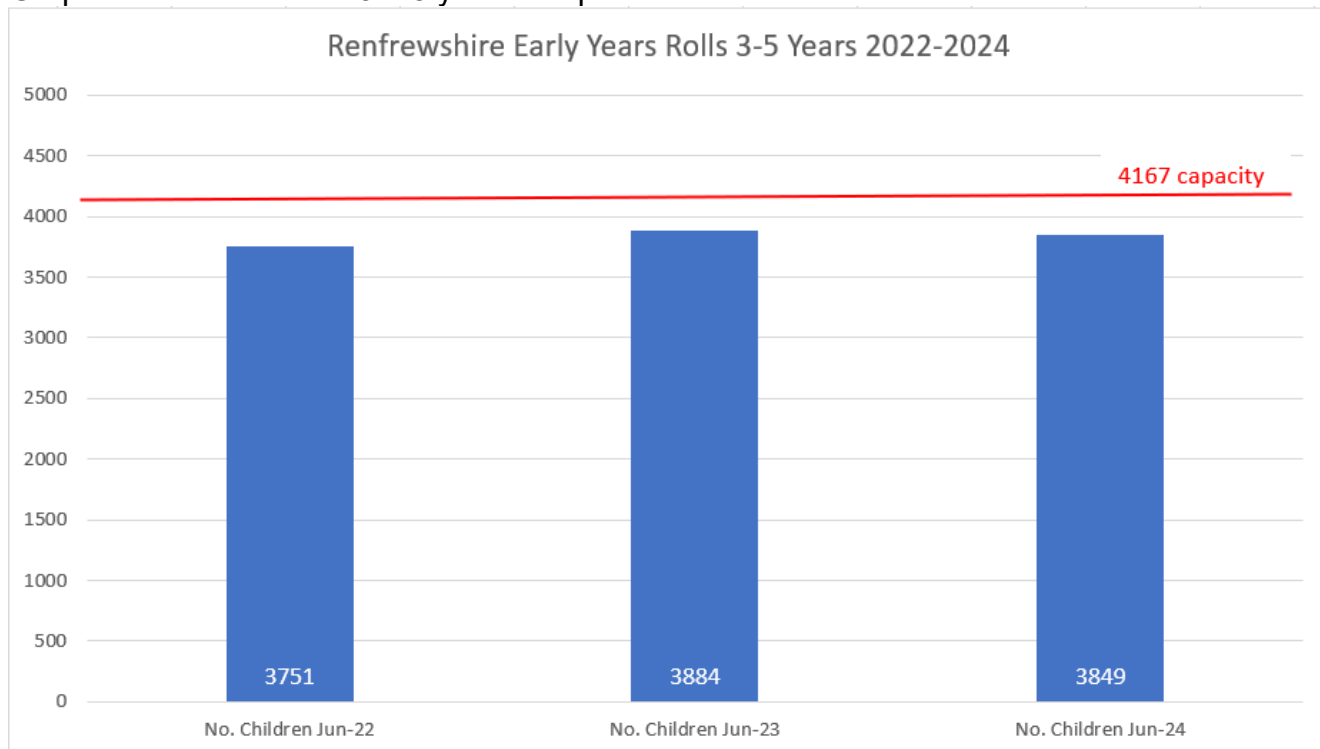
- 1 ELC class for children with complex needs, which operate over a longer day (8 to 6 pm) across the year.

- 4.5 The above models of Council ELC provision have not been reviewed since the full implementation of the 1140 expansion in August 2021.
- 4.6 In delivering ELC the Council and other regulated providers are required to maintain a minimum statutory adult:child ratio and for children aged 3 to 5 years the ratio is 1 adult to 8 children. It is also required to comply with the required floor space per child as set in legislation.
- 4.7 For ELC services that operate for an extended day/year they require staffing levels and schedules to ensure the statutory ratios are maintained across a maximum day from 8am to 6pm across a calendar, as well as enabling lunch breaks and annual leave.
- 4.8 Appendix one attached to this report provides the range of establishments / settings and models of delivery within each of the admissions panel areas, and also noting any revisions to proposed models of delivery for session 2025/26.

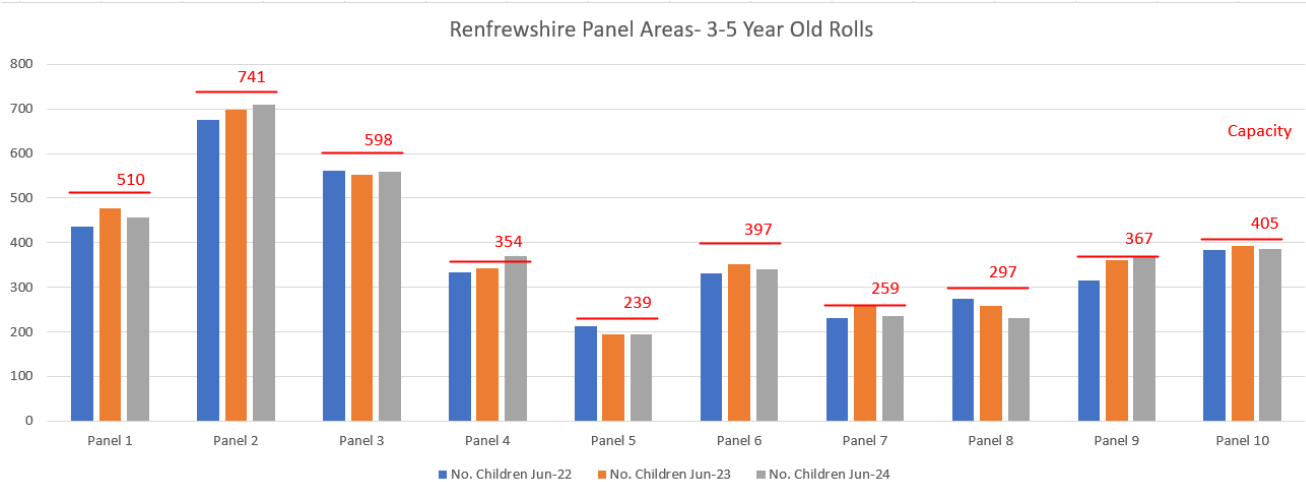
## 5. Data Review

- 5.1 The data review includes an overall position of ELC provision for children aged 3 to 5 years in the Renfrewshire Council area and for each geographical admissions panel area. It includes information on historic trends of demand and uptake of ELC places in Renfrewshire Council area and across the admissions panel areas, including in local authority and funded provider settings:

Graph 1 – Renfrewshire 3 – 5 year old uptake:



Graph 2 – Uptake and demand of ELC places in all Renfrewshire establishments by panel



The name and geographical areas covered for each panel area is included in appendix one.

5.2 In the Renfrewshire Council area, capacity within the system was 92% in June 2024 across all establishments. For local authority establishments only, this figure was 89%. This has been broadly consistent across the previous 3 years and equates to a surplus of around 318 places overall, with 275 in local authority establishments.

5.3 Since academic session 2022/23 to 2024/25 there has been a reduction in the number of places in local authority ELC establishments by approximately 100. This is a result of routine monitoring of uptake and demand across admissions panel areas and in individual establishments and to ensure best value.

5.4 Table 1- Panel Capacity – June 2024

	Panel 1	Panel 2	Panel 3	Panel 4	Panel 5	Panel 6	Panel 7	Panel 8	Panel 9	Panel 10
Percentage Capacity (All Establishments)	89%	96%	94%	100%	81%	86%	91%	77%	100%	95%
Surplus Places (All Establishments)	54	31	38	0	45	57	23	67	0	20

5.5 A new roll projection estimate for across the Renfrewshire school estate was published at the end of October 2024. This will model projected school roll across the local authority and provide further context to estimated demand in admission panel areas. In ELC there is no roll projection available, the school projections can help illustrate population trends within each geographical admission panel area. Analysis of current roll projection data indicates a degree of local variation in early years population.

5.6 A new Renfrewshire Council area level population projection based on the 2022 census data is due to be released by National Records Scotland in January 2025, this will provide an overall view of Renfrewshire demographics.

5.7 These distinct pieces of information will help to provide a clearer picture of projected population growth and further demand for services across geographical admission panel areas. Both of these new data sources will be used to support the development of proposals for ELC once the sources are available to the Council.

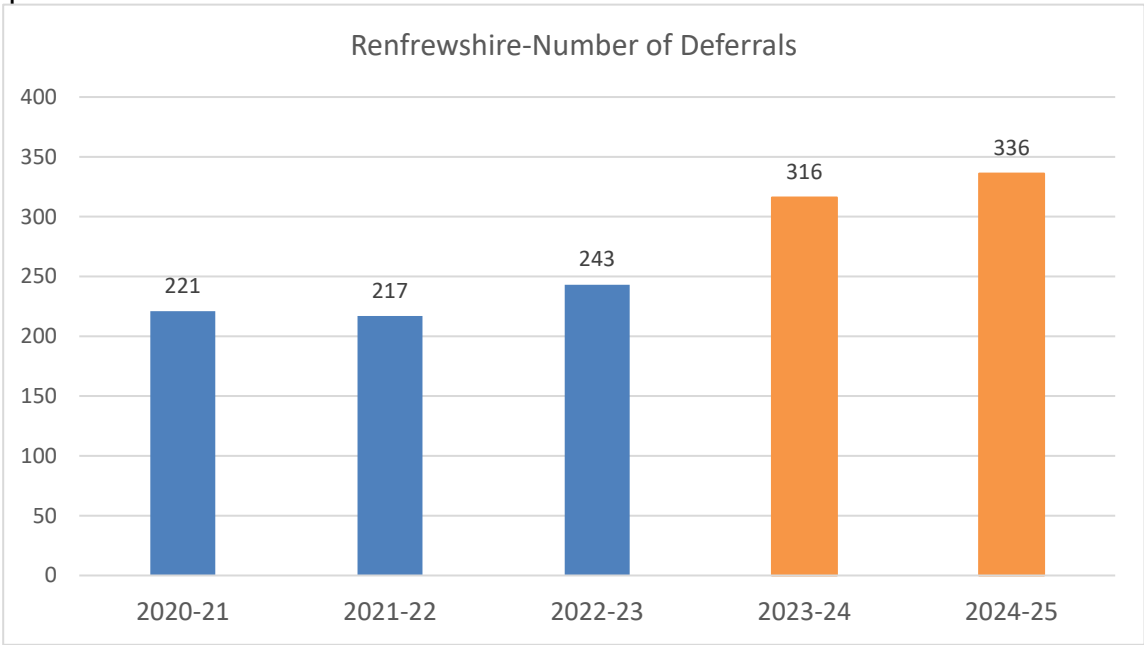
- 5.8 Other factors that influence the demand for ELC places in a local area includes the Scottish’s Government’s Funding Follows the Child policy which gives families the flexibility on where they choose to access their child’s ELC. Parents can also choose to defer a child’s start date at primary school if they are still 4 years of age on the first day of a new school term and their child is entitled to an additional year of ELC.
- 5.9 In line with the Funding Follows the Child’s policy parents can access an ELC place in either a local authority or funded provider setting; within the area a family resides in, or in any area across Renfrewshire, or in an establishment out with Renfrewshire Council boundaries. A snapshot of Geographic Information System (GIS) data system (which is a platform for collecting, analysing, and displaying geographic data) from June 2024 shows a variance in the percentage of children accessing ELC in the geographical area that they reside in (the data is outlined below). GIS analysis will continue to be monitored to assess ongoing patterns of attendance.

Table 2 – GIS data snapshot June 2024:

Panel	Panel 1	Panel 2	Panel 3	Panel 4	Panel 5	Panel 6	Panel 7	Panel 8	Panel 9	Panel 10
Percentage of Children Attending ELC Setting within Home Panel Area	83%	94%	94%	52%	68%	70%	54%	65%	70%	73%

- 5.10 For deferred entry to school data on deferral numbers shows an upward trend in the uptake of an additional year of funded ELC since the change to legislation effective from August 2023:

Graph 3 – Deferral data:



**6. Engagement with Parents and Carers**

- 6.1 Following Policy Board approval on the 31 October 2024, an engagement process was carried out between 13 November and 1 December 2024 to gather the views of current parents and carers using Renfrewshire Council ELC establishments on the Council’s delivery models to help



inform future provision. Views were gathered via an online survey where parents and carers were emailed a direct link to the survey, with a reminder email sent to maximise the number of responses. The survey was completed by 651 respondents, representing a 28% return rate.

- 6.2 Of the 651 parents and carers that responded to the survey, 406 (60%) respondents accessed ELC in an establishment which is open between 8 am and 6 pm across the calendar year. The remaining 266 (40%) indicated that their child attended an ELC term time class. 97% of respondents indicated that they received an ELC place in their preferred type of establishment. The following provides a breakdown on the ELC model accessed by respondents:

ELC Model	Number of Respondents	Percentage
ELC term time class	266	40%
ELC extended day, year class	210	31%
ELC extended day/ year centre	196	29%

- 6.3 In terms of patterns of attendance, almost all (90%) respondents reported that the pattern of attendance allocated for their child met their needs. The data gathered suggests that the majority of respondents prefer a school day (approximately 9 am to 3 pm)/ term time model of provision, with 56% choosing this option; with the remaining 34% accessing a range of patterns of placement across the extended day / calendar year. Only 78 (12%) respondents stated that their child did not attend for their full 1140 entitlement, with 77% of this group reporting this was due to personal choice and the remaining 23% (18) advising this was due to the suitability of the ELC placement. A breakdown of response by pattern of attendance is provided below:

Pattern of attendance	Number of Respondents	Percentage
school day / term time model	382	56%
2.5 days per week over the calendar year.	93	14%
3 days per week over the school year.	23	3%
3 days per week over the calendar year	67	10%
Half days – mornings 8am to 1pm over the calendar year.	50	7%
Half days – afternoons 1 to 6pm over the calendar year.	12	2%
Other	50	7%

- 6.4 Views were gathered on the key factors that most influenced parents/ carers in selecting a preferred pattern of attendance, with ELC establishment being close to home identified as being the most important (48%). Only 29% indicated that having a placement that fits around working hours was a key influencing factor in selecting a pattern of attendance. The data gathered suggests that only a small number of parents require an early morning (before 9am) or late afternoon (after 4pm), with 16% and 14% respectively selecting these options. A breakdown of response by key influencing factors of attendance is provided below (parents/ carers were asked to select all options that applied):

Key factors inflencing choice of attendance pattern	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Availability of a full year place	205	31%
Availability of term-time school day place	252	39%
Extended opening hours – before 9am	104	16%
Extended opening hours – after 4pm	89	14%
Close to home	316	48%
Fits my work hours	187	29%
Co-incides with other personal care arrangements	134	21%
Ability to access 1140 in more than one setting (blended place.	27	4%

- 6.5 Parental /carer views were also gathered on the factors that are important when selecting an ELC establishment. The 2 most important factors identified were close to home (35%) and quality of provision (26%). Accessing an ELC establishment close to a work place was the least favoured factor, with only 4% of respondents choosing this option.
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7. Engagement with ELC Staff and Leadership Teams

- 7.1 Gathering the views of the Council’s ELC staff and establishment leadership teams continues to be a priority in recognition of the important role they play in ensuring the effective delivery of ELC in Renfrewshire Council. Therefore, an engagement exercise was also conducted with the Council’s ELC workforce to gather their views on the Council’s delivery models of ELC provision, staffing and management models to inform future provision. The methodology adopted for the engagement of the workforce included an online survey, individual engagement sessions with heads of establishments, depute heads and senior ELCOs and staff teams. This engagement took place between 13 and 20 November 2024.
- 7.2 Heads of establishments were invited to provide their views on the models of delivery, both across a geographical admissions panel area, through an engagement session; and on the models provided in their individual establishment, via the completion of a survey. In terms of the engagement session, heads of establishment were split into 6 groups, which were defined geographically with a link to admissions panel areas.
- 7.3 Data from the individual establishment responses suggests that the greatest demand from parents is for a school day, 9am to 3pm model of delivery (98% responses), mirroring the response from the parent survey. The least demand from parents is for afternoon sessions over the calendar year (3%), 3 days per week over the school year and blended place (10%).
- 7.4 The responses on the models of delivery provided by establishments suggests a level of flexibility to the range of models being provided to respond to need. 65% of the respondents indicated that parents were not using the full 1140 ELC entitlement. The most common models of delivery when parents are not fully using their 1140 ELC entitlement were identified as 2.5 days per week over the calendar year and 5 pm sessions over the calendar year (6 responses for each) and school day placement (5 responses). A breakdown of responses by model of delivery is provided below:

Models of delivery offered in ELC establishments	Number of Respondents
school day (6 hours per day)	39
2.5 days per week over the calendar year	25
3 days per week over the school year	6
3 days per week over the calendar year	22
5 am sessions over the calendar year	21
5 pm sessions over the calendar year	18
Blended placement	15
Other (defined in comments as wraparound care, which is in addition to the entitled ELC hours.	8

NB: 2 ELC establishments provided more than 1 response.

- 7.5 Data from the engagement session showed a 50% split in views regarding the flexibility of choice and range of provision provided across panel areas as being fit for purpose to meet needs. Examples of the reasons given, included a need for more term time provision; afternoon places not being popular; inability in some areas to provide a greater level of flexibility in placements allocated due to the capacity of places; and the appropriateness of the geographical grouping of some admissions panel area. These responses are slightly at odds from the response to the staff survey and views of parents/ carers, with 90% of parents and carers

indicating that the pattern of attendance allocated for their child met their needs. A break down of responses on fitness of delivery models across admissions panel areas is as follows:

<b>Fitness of delivery models across admissions panel areas</b>	<b>Group responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Flexibility of choice and range of provision	3	50%
Affordability re placement type and access to wraparound care	4	67%
Ensuring a quality provision in line with national standards and expectations	6	100%

- 7.6 There were 197 responses to the staff survey, with 51% of the responses coming from staff working in an extended day / year centre, 26% from staff from an extended day/ year ELC class and the remaining 23% of responses from a term ELC time class. The respondents represented the range of officers and managers deployed in ELC establishments, with representation across 9 out of the 10 admissions panel areas.
- 7.7 The views gathered from the staff survey highlight a variance in the responses provided by heads of establishments during the engagement session regarding the fitness of delivery models in meeting need. Data from the survey show that 77% indicate flexibility of choice and range of provision, 90% report affordability and access to wraparound care, with only 62% highlighting that quality provision was in line with national standards and expectations. The views given by staff on why they felt the quality of provision was affected included: not having enough time for paperwork and planning due to longer sessions; limitations of establishment building; placement types, such as long day and afternoon sessions being disrupted due to term-time children leaving; and the number of children with additional support needs.
- 7.8 Heads of establishments and staff were also provided with an opportunity to provide their views on staffing and management models. The data received on this from the engagement processes will also be used to inform future provision in line with the available budget, legislation requirements in terms of staffing levels and the commitment to deliver high quality ELC provision in line with national standards and expectations.

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## **8. Proposals on future ELC Models of Delivery**

- 8.1 It is recognised that there is a need to review and redesign some of the Council's ELC provision to take account of the future level of provision required across geographical admissions panel which is in line with population estimates for 3 and 4 year olds, historic trend and demand of uptake of 1140 ELC entitlement, current parental preferences, feedback from ELC establishment staff and leaders and available budget.
- 8.2 As the entitlement to 1140 hours of ELC in Renfrewshire Council area is delivered through a mix of Council and funded provider settings across each geographical area, it is important that any proposed future changes to provision in an admissions panel area takes cognisance of places provided by approved funded providers. An engagement exercise was also conducted with funded providers in November 2024 to gather information on their future plans for delivering funded ELC places. 34 out of 36 approved funded provider responded to the survey. The data gathered indicates that none of the providers currently have plans to reduce the number of funded ELC places, with 5 providers indicating an intention to increase the number of places for children aged 3 to 5 years.

- 8.3 Given the level of new data in relation to population projections and feedback on models of provision it is proposed that officers in Children's Services take time to scrutinise the data and to effectively plan future ELC provision in Renfrewshire Council run establishments in line with future demand, need and the available funded budget.
- 8.4 Officers from Children's Services will also give consideration to the appropriateness of the current geographical admissions panel area in line with available data to ensure these remain fit for purpose.
- 8.5 However, in order to address immediate surplus ELC provision and to take cognisance of the revised funding provided to the Council to deliver the ELC entitlement, the following changes to provision are proposed for academic session 2025/26:

ELC Establishment	Admissions Panel Area	Proposed change to provision	Timeline / phasing
St Margaret's ELC	Panel 1 – Howwood, Johnstone and Lochwinnoch	Change from an extended day / year to a term time model of delivery	Sessions 2025/26 and 2026/27
Glenfield ELC	Panel 6 – Foxbar, Glenburn, Brediland and Meikleriggs	No change to model of provision – reduction in the number of places provided and amalgamating all children into main ELC building.	August 2025

- 8.6 A further report will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Policy board at a future date outlining proposals for any further changes to future delivery models of ELC provision in Renfrewshire Council run establishments. The Council will continue to be committed to ensuring high quality provision and a range of options for delivering ELC in each area admissions panel to enable flexibility, choice and accessibility of services for parents and carers in line with the key principles for delivering 1140 hours of ELC.

## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

A summary of the overall financial position is provided in paragraph 3.8 above. Any potential changes to the service will have to be managed within future ELC budget allocations.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development

If the proposals for the changes to the service as set out in section 8 of the report are approved any surplus staff, as a result of the remodeling / reduction in provision, will transfer to vacant posts in other ELC establishments. Staff transfer will be managed in line with usual practice.

The legislative adult to child ratios will continued be maintained.

### 3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving - Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people.

Our Renfrewshire is well	- Early intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for children and young people.
Our Renfrewshire is fair	- The engagement process is designed to ensure everyone can give their views and have them heard.
Our Renfrewshire is safe	- Local services will continue to lead to healthier outcomes for children and young people.
Reshaping our place, our economy, and our future	- The engagement process informs the redesign of ELC provision.
Building strong, safe, and resilient communities	- The quality of community lives is enhanced by supporting parents, children, and young people.
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	- Placements will continue to be allocated in line with policy.
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy	- Support to families through a range of flexible and accessible places will support parents into and sustain employment, training or enter education.
Working together to improve outcomes	- Ensuring children have a high quality ELC experience.

#### **4. Legal**

Changes to the manner in which services are provided may require modification to pre-existing contractual arrangements. The Council will continue to comply with the statutory guidance and legislation in relation to ELC provision.

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

The Glenfield satellite unit will be surplus to provision due to the proposed amalgamation of children into the main Glenfield ELC building. An investigation will require to be conducted to establish the future arrangements for this building.

#### **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 parents will continue to access ELC provision via a range of models. 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**

It is integral to the Council's aim of securing the health and wellbeing of employees and those affected by these proposals.

**9. Procurement**

None directly arising out of this report.

**10. Risk**

There is a level of risk that a number of ELC places in an area could be reduced if a funded provider(s) decides to continue in business. The production and monitoring of roll projections and planning future ELC provision.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. Climate Risk**

None.

**13. Children's Rights**

This risk to article 29, children's right to an education which must develop every child's personality, talent, and abilities to the full.

**14. COSLA Policy Position**

Revised funding arrangements for ELC provision was agreed by COSLA and the Scottish Government.

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**List of Background Papers**

- (a) Early Learning and Childcare Provision, Education and Children Services Policy Board, 31 October 2024.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 0141 618 7196

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## Renfrewshire Council Local Area Admission Panel Groupings

Establishment	Current Model	Proposed Model
<b>Panel 1 – Howwood, Johnstone, Lochwinnoch</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Auchenlodment ELC Class Lochwinnoch ELC Class St Margaret's ELC Class Spateston ELC Centre West Johnstone ELC Centre  <b>Funded Providers</b> Mid Gavin Nursery Stepping Stones Gleniffer Nursery*Sharon's Tiny Tots Childminding	School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year <b>School day / term time</b> Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Panel 2 Erskine, Bishopton, Inchinnan, Langbank</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Dargavel ELC Centre St Anne's ELC Class St John Bosco ELC Class  <b>Funded Provider</b> Bright Starts Nursery Cairellot Day Nursery Carli's Kindergarten (Erskine) Happitots Erskine Erskine Community Nursery – Bargarran Erskine Community Nursery – St Anne's Inchinnan Community Nursery Little Pandas Carole McLauchlan Catherine Whyte Karen Finnie Kelly Rix	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time  School day / term time  School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time  School day / term time  School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Panel 3 Renfrew, Hillington</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Glendee ELC Centre Kirklandneuk ELC Centre Moorpark ELC Centre  <b>Funded Provider</b> 3 Bears Nursery Little Flowers Nursery Little Stars Hillington Bright Horizons In Safe Hands Nursery Puddle Lane Catherine Young Claire Crawford Karen Chalmers Kerry Goudie Little Rabbit	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year

<b>Panel 4 - Houston, Bridge of Weir, Brookfield, Weirs Wynd, Kilbarchan.</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Houston ELC Class Bridge of Weir ELC Class  <b>Funded Providers</b> Abbey Nursery (Houston) Kilbarchan Community Nursery Rivendale Nursery Gryffe Manor Little Paddock Childminding	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Panel 5 - Linwood, Brooklands</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Our Lady of Peace ELC Class East Fulton ELC Class  <b>Funded Providers</b> Linwood Community Childcare Carli's Kindergarten (Linwood) Elaine Parkhill Childminding	School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Panel 6 - Foxbar, Glenburn, Brediland, Meikleriggs</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Bushes ELC Class St Peter's ELC Class Heriot ELC Class Foxlea ELC Centre Glenburn ELC Centre Glenfield ELC Centre  <b>Funded Provider</b> Carriagehill Nursery - Green Road	School day / term time School day / term time School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year	School day / term time School day / term time School day / term time School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Panel 7 - Paisley West 1, Elderslie, Baronscroft, Castlehead, Westend</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Hugh Smiley ELC Centre St Mary's ELC Class West ELC Class Wallace ELC Class  <b>Funded Providers</b> Abbey Nursery (Paisley) Maxwellton Park Nursery	School day / term time School day / term time School day / term time  Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time	School day / term time School day / term time School day / term time  Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time
<b>Panel 8 - Paisley West 2, Ferguslie, Shortroods, Phoenix Park</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Hillview ELC Centre Douglas Street ELC Centre Ferguslie ELC Centre Mossvale ELC Class  <b>Funded Providers</b> Glencoats Lodge Nursery Happitots Nursery (Glasgow Airport) Rainbow Nursery	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year School day / term time  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year



<b>Panel 9 - Paisley Central 1, Charleston, Hawkhead, Hunterhill, Lochfield, Paisley South, Todholm</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> St Charles' ELC Class Todholm ELC Class Lochfield ELC Centre Paisley ELC Centre  <b>Funded Providers</b> Carriagehill Drive Nursery Jennyswell Nursery Nursery Times Orchard Grove Nursery	School day / term time School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	School day / term time School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Panel 10 - Paisley Central 2, Gallowhill, Paisley North, Ralston, Seedhill.</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Gallowhill ELC Class Ralston ELC Class St Catherine's ELC Class Williamsburgh ELC Class  <b>Funded Providers</b> Abbeymill Childcare Leaps & Bounds Nursery Little Learners	School day / term time School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year	School day / term time School day / term time Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year  Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year Extended day/ calendar year
<b>Renfrewshire Council Area</b>		
<b>Local Authority</b> Riverbrae ELC Centre	Extended day/ calendar year	Extended day/ calendar year




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

**On:** 16 January 2025

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

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**Heading:** Early Learning and Childcare and Out of School Care – Revision of Fee Rates

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 On 31 October 2024 the Education and Children's Services Policy Board agreed to a review of wraparound fee rates in Renfrewshire Council Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) establishments and to a further report being presented to the Policy Board meeting with proposals for revised rates.
  - 1.2 Renfrewshire Council currently has a charging policy enabling parents to purchase wraparound care in the Council's ELC establishments and Out of School Care (OSC) Services.
  - 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the outcome of the review of wraparound fee rates and proposes an increase to the fee rates in the Council's ELC establishments and OSC services.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to approve:
  - (i) an increase in the wraparound fee rates in ELC establishments from £3.48 to £3.65 per hour, with revised concessionary rate from £2.70 to £2.83, effective from 1 April 2025.
  - (ii) an increase to the fee rate in the OSC services and the introduction of separate rates for term-time and full day holiday provision, as follows:
    - an increase in the term time rate from £10.10 per session to £10.60, effective from 1 April 2025;
    - the introduction of a half day rate of £10.60 for holiday provision, effective from 1 April 2025; and

- the introduction of a full day rate of £15.90 for holiday provision, effective from 1 April 2025.

2.2 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is also asked to agree that from April 2026 the rates for ELC wraparound care and OSC rates will be subject to the increase in charges for services agreed in the Council budget each year.

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### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) Order 2021 amended the entitlement of ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours, effective from 1 August 2021. The Scottish Government's Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance, July 2021 ("Statutory Guidance") places a duty on local authorities to ensure that funded ELC is made available to eligible children in their area. The current entitlement of 1140 hours is available to all children aged 3 and 4-years and to eligible 2-year-olds, as defined within the criteria laid out by the Scottish Government.
- 3.2 There is no entitlement to ELC for children aged 0 to 2 years of age. Within Renfrewshire, under the discretionary powers within section 1(1C) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, children in this age group and non-entitled 2-year-olds are currently provided with an ELC placement under the Council's discretionary powers or parents can purchase places.
- 3.3 The Council's Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy (Standard Circular 3A) provides guidance to ELC staff on the procedures for prioritising and allocating ELC places in an equitable way, ensuring that families in greatest need obtain a service appropriate to their needs. The policy also advises on the application process and allocation of wraparound care.
- 3.4 Wraparound care charges apply for places in the Council's ELC establishments. The Council provides parents with an opportunity to purchase extra hours in addition to the entitled 1140 hours of funded ELC or to purchase a place for a child aged from birth to 3 years who is not eligible.
- 3.5 Wraparound care in Renfrewshire Council establishments can be purchased before / after an entitled placement, for full-days and part days. The opportunity to purchase wraparound care is dependent on the availability of places in a Renfrewshire Council ELC establishment, with priority allocation given to ELC entitled places or priority need.
- 3.6 Renfrewshire Council operates 2 OSC services for school age children – Ferguslie OSC in Ferguslie Park and Shortroods OSC in Shortroods area. These services operate during school term time between 3.00pm until 5.45pm and between 8.00am until 5.45pm during school holidays and in-service days.
- 3.7 The current rates for a wraparound care in ELC establishments is £3.48 per hour, with a concessionary rate of £2.70. The current charge for an OSC place is a flat rate of £10.10 per session. This rate applies to both term time after school session and for full day holiday cover.

- 3.8 The rates for wraparound care in ELC establishments and OSC have been in place for a number of years.
- 3.9 The Council's concession rates for wraparound care applies for the following:
- Student in fulltime education
  - For 2nd or subsequent children attending the setting.
  - In receipt of any of the following benefits:
    - Pension Guarantee Credit
    - Income Support
    - Job Seekers Allowance (Income based)
    - Maximum working Tax Credit- income threshold applies
    - Tax Credit with a Disability Element
    - Council Tax Reduction Scheme
    - Housing Benefit
    - Income related Employment and support allowance
    - Attendance allowance
    - Disability Living Allowances (Child Element)
    - Universal Credit- income threshold applies
    - In receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and / or clothing grants
- [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants)
- 3.10 Parents purchasing either ELC or OSC service are required to comply with Renfrewshire Council's Agreement to Purchase Care.

#### 4. Revised ELC and OSC Fee Rate

- 4.1 Following Policy Board approval on the 31 October 2024, officers from Children's Services undertook a bench marking of the Council's ELC wraparound care fees against the current rates set by other Councils within the West Partnership and the market rate set in Funded Provider ELC settings. The same benchmarking exercise was applied for OSC rates.
- 4.2 The outcome of the benchmarking exercises are as follows:

Table 1 – ELC current wraparound rates for children aged 3 to 5 years:

Benchmark	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate	Average hourly rate	Concessionary rates applied
West Partnership	£3.53	£6.46	£4.60	4 out of the 8 local authorities apply a concessionary rate (includes Renfrewshire Council)
Funded Providers	£4.60	£8	£6.68	

NB – Information based on responses from 16 funded providers and all 8 West Partnership Councils. Most providers (local authority and funded provider) apply a separate rate for children under 3 years of age.

Table 2 – OSC current rates:

Benchmark	Lowest rate Term time session	Highest rate Term time session	Lowest rate Half day holiday session	Highest rate Half day holiday session	Lowest rate Full day holiday session	Highest rate Full day holiday session
West Partnership	£11.75	£16.73	£11.75	£26.14	£22.40	£52.70
Funded Providers	£13.50	£20.30	£13.50	£20.30	£29.00	£37.85

NB – only 3 of the 8 West Partnership Councils provide out of school care provision, this includes Renfrewshire Council.

- 4.3 The benchmarking exercises highlight that Renfrewshire Council rates are lower for both ELC and OSC than those set by other Councils across the West Partnership and Funded Provider settings.
- 4.4 It is proposed that a 5% increase is applied to the rate for ELC wraparound care, which is reflective of the annual percentage increase in fees and charges across other Renfrewshire Council services in recent years. Therefore, the proposed revised hourly rate for ELC wraparound care is £3.65 per hour, with a revised concessionary rate of £2.83, effective from the 1 April 2025.
- 4.5 In terms of OSC it is proposed that the fee arrangement is restructured to apply separate rates for after school care term-time and full day holiday provision, in line with the approaches adopted by other councils across the West Partnership and by Funded Providers. The following revised rates are proposed from 1 April 2025:

Table 3 – OSC propose rates:

	Approach	Proposed rate
Term-time afterschool session	A 5% increase reflective of the annual percentage increase in fees and charges across other Renfrewshire Council services in recent years.	£10.60
Half day holiday session	Similar to the approach adopted across the West Partnership and giving cognisance to the location of the 2 OSC services.	£10.60
Full day holiday session	Similar to the approach adopted across the West Partnership and giving cognisance to the location of the 2 OSC services.	£15.90

- 4.6 It is suggested that from April 2026 the rates for ELC wraparound care and OSC rates will be subject to the increase in charges for services agreed in the Council budget each year.

## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

Renfrewshire Council's delivery of ELC and OSC is required to be in line with budget. The rates for wraparound care in ELC establishments and OSC have been in place for a number of years.

## 2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

## 3. Community/Council Planning

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Our Renfrewshire is thriving                         | - Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people.   |
| Our Renfrewshire is well                             | - Early intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for children and young people.  |
| Our Renfrewshire is safe                             | - Local services will continue to lead to healthier outcomes for children and young people.  |
| Building strong, safe and resilient communities      | - The quality of community lives is enhanced by supporting parents, children and young people.                                     |
| Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all  | - Placements will continue to be allocated in line with policy.  |
| Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy | - Support to families through ELC and OSC provision will support parents into and sustain employment, training or enter education. |
| Working together to improve outcomes                 | - Ensuring children have a high quality ELC and OSC experience.  |

## 4. Legal

None

## 5. Property/Assets

None

## 6. Information Technology

None.

## 7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. Some negative impacts on equality groups have been identified from the Equality Impact Assessment. For example, households who are in poverty or socio economic disadvantage would be disproportionately affected, and that it's likely that some equality groups might be disproportionately affected as they are likely to be overrepresented within this group (for example, households where the adult or child has a disability, ethnic minority households etc.).

Mitigating actions to families impacted from the increase in fees may be able to get help with the cost of registered childcare, through Government support schemes such as tax free childcare / benefits.

Following implementation, the 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**

A possible reduction in the demand for wraparound care in ELC establishments and OCS due to the fee rate increases.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. Climate Risk**

None.

**13. Children's Rights**

Article 28 – children's rights to an education which must develop every children's personality, talent and abilities to the full.

**14. Cosla Policy Position**

None.

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**List of Background Papers**

- (a) Early Learning and Childcare Provision, Education and Children Services Policy Board, 31 October 2024.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 0141 618 7196 [Kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:Kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

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**Children's Services**

24/12/2024

**Author:** Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 0141 618 7196,  
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**To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On: 16 January 2025**

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

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**Heading: Learning Estate Programme Update**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. Renfrewshire Council is delivering a large-scale investment into the learning estate. This programme of works which is underway includes four major projects to enhance and expand the current estate.
  - 1.2. This report provides an update on the delivery of these projects and highlights next steps. The projects covered in this report are as follows:
    - Paisley Grammar School Community Campus
    - Park Mains High School extension and alterations
    - New Dargavel Primary School
    - Thorn Primary School new build
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Board is asked to note the contents of this report.
- 

## **3. Paisley Grammar School Community Campus**

- 3.1. The project to deliver a new Paisley Grammar School continues at pace with construction on track for completion in the summer of 2026. To demonstrate the scale of the project and the progress being made, see attached images in Appendix A of this report.



- 3.2. Further updates will be provided on this project at points of major milestone achievement.
- 3.3. The project team are in the process of designing information boards in collaboration with Morrison Construction. These boards will be placed in a prominent location in the current Paisley Grammar School to showcase to pupils and staff what will be delivered as part of their new community-based school.

#### **4. Park Mains High School Extension & Internal Alterations**

- 4.1. The project to extend and enhance Park Mains High School is progressing with the procurement process to appoint a main contractor under way. Tenders have been received and this will now progress through the relevant process where a recommended contractor will be proposed to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services (FRCS) Policy Board in February 2025.
- 4.2. Design work continues to develop with the project team now having a proposed concept design. These designs have been informed through significant engagement with the school community including the parent council of Park Mains, parent councils of all associated primary schools, pupils, and staff. This engagement began in late 2023 with design partners from Space Zero who led in-depth engagement with the school community to inform the provisional designs.
- 4.3. These concept designs have allowed the Council to progress to the point of conducting the statutory Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) process. This process was completed in December 2024 where the project team hosted two information evenings at Park Mains High School on an open invite basis. These events were supported by circa 15 large-scale printed boards that showed the community all aspects of the proposed design of the extended Park Mains High School. These boards were also emailed to all parents and carers at Park Mains and its associated primary schools after the events. The purpose of this process is to allow the community to comment on the proposal to allow any reasonable and beneficial amendments to be made via the feedback received, and for officers to discuss and document any concerns raised.
- 4.4. A full summary of the process has been compiled and will be submitted to the Planning Authority for consideration when progressing to the full planning application process in 2025.
- 4.5. The next major steps of this project are to appoint a main contractor who will then take on the final design stage and progress towards a 2026 construction start, and completion in 2027.

#### **5. New Dargavel Primary School**

- 5.1. As part of the previous update to this Board on 31st October 2024, it was noted that the project to deliver a new primary school in Dargavel had recently completed the PAN process. This has allowed the project to progress where the full planning application has now been submitted to construct the new 800 capacity primary school with community facilities. As this is a major planning application, the decision will be made at the Council's Planning and Climate Change Policy Board in 2025.

- 5.2. The project team continue to develop all detail supporting the delivery of the project including design and programming. On this basis, the approach has been agreed for the construction methodology and procurement strategy for delivery. In collaboration with the Council's delivery partner (Hub West Scotland), main contractor (BAM Construction), and lead consultants, it has been agreed that the most efficient route to constructing the school is to split the project into defined stages. This will encompass the following:
- **Enabling works** to begin early ground works for aspects such as drainage, will take place from early 2025. This will see the first activity on site.
  - **Main works** to begin in autumn 2025. This will see the construction of the building and all supporting components begin.
- 5.3. From a contractual perspective, the project will be further broken down into multiple subcomponents, as is normal in complex construction projects. These matters will be dealt with through the appropriate governance route which is the FRCS Policy Board. Members of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board will be kept fully up to date on progress of contractual appointments, and should expect the first batch of contract recommendations to be submitted to the February 2025 FRCS Policy Board which will include:
- Consultant appointments and payments
  - Enabling works package for ground works
- 5.4. Beyond this, further reports will be submitted to the FRCS Policy Board later in 2025 to make recommendations to award contracts for the main works construction. The main works contract that will deliver all aspects of the school will likely be broken down into two contract awards, the first being an advanced works package, and the second being the remainder of the main works. This will follow a similar route to previous projects including Paisley Grammar, which provides an efficient procurement approach but importantly the ability to maintain sustained momentum in delivering the project which is particularly important for this project.
- 5.5. As noted, the FRCS Policy Board will be presented with these contract recommendations throughout 2025. All of this is accounted for in the agreed programme with Hub West Scotland.

## **6. Thorn Primary School New Build**

- 6.1. The project to deliver a new Thorn Primary School has been progressing with early design work and has considered possible site layout as well as indicative space requirements, based on engagement with school staff and key stakeholders. This work is now being progressed in line with the principles of the wider Learning Estate Strategy, approved by members of the board in August, and considering the full-estate roll-projection data, which members saw in October, to ensure we maximise the benefit the Thorn project brings to the Johnstone community. A further update will be brought to the board in March 2025 as part of the next stage of the Learning Estate Strategy.

## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

All projects are costed and included in Council financial planning. Projects are bound by rigorous governance including budget management and reporting.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

### 3. Community/Council Planning

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Our Renfrewshire is thriving                    | - <i>New, and improved, learning estate assets will allow our children and young people to thrive with the best possible infrastructure to support their school experience. Staff, and community users will benefit from modern and inclusive environments.</i> |
| Reshaping our place, our economy and our future | - <i>The learning estate shall be appropriately scaled and equipped to meet curriculum expectations and deliver an appropriate learning and teaching experience for all.</i>  |

### 4. Legal

None.

### 5. Property/Assets

These projects will deliver significant improvements to the learning estate, extending the life of assets, and improving the experience of young people, staff, and the wider community.

### 6. Information Technology

Digital improvements will be delivered through the learning estate strategy, where access to technology for all, will be a key priority for projects.

### 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. 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**

Any procurement work required will be conducted in collaboration with the Council's Procurement team and adhere to appropriate regulations.

**10. Risk**

All projects are bound by rigorous governance and supported by detailed risk registers. Risk is reported and managed at various levels with scrutiny applied to ensure mitigations and contingency plans are in place.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

**12. Climate Risk**

New, and improved, learning estate assets will directly contribute to the Council's journey towards net zero. Sustainability is a key concept of all projects.

**13. Children's Rights**

When considering any future school provision, the impact this will have on children is a key consideration, and any work will be based around the direct needs of children to allow their education experience to thrive. Whilst children have a right to choose where they wish to attend school in collaboration with their parents, the council's admissions policy applies to ensure that schools that are oversubscribed can be managed.

**14. Cosla Policy Position**

None.

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*Children's Services*  
*JL/JO/GMcL Dec 2024*

**Author:** Jack Lochans - [jack.lochans@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:jack.lochans@renfrewshire.gov.uk)



## Appendix A – Images of Paisley Grammar School Community Campus









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

**On: 16 January 2025**

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

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**Heading: Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) Level Return 2024**

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## **1. Summary**

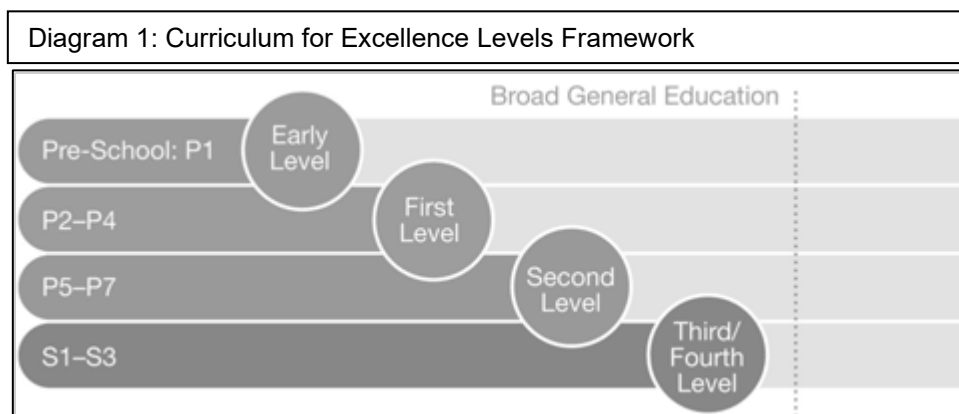
- 1.1. This report summarises attainment in the Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level Return (ACEL) 2023-24. The Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (CfE) return contains data on the highest CfE level achieved for all pupils in Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 3.
  - 1.2. The 2023-24 return demonstrates that there has been an increase in attainment across almost all curricular areas and stages. Attainment is now in line with or ahead of pre-pandemic levels. Renfrewshire is ahead of national figures across all stages and curricular areas in 2023-24. This has been a consistent trend in almost all stages and curricular areas, however the decreases in Renfrewshire's data post pandemic were greater than national resulting in very close alignment with national figures in 2021-22. The 2023-24 data illustrates that Renfrewshire has made greater progress over the previous 3 years and is now comfortably ahead of national figures.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members of the education and children's policy board are asked to:
  - note the content of this report;
  - note the efforts of the children and young people and the significant commitment of teachers and support staff.

### 3. Background

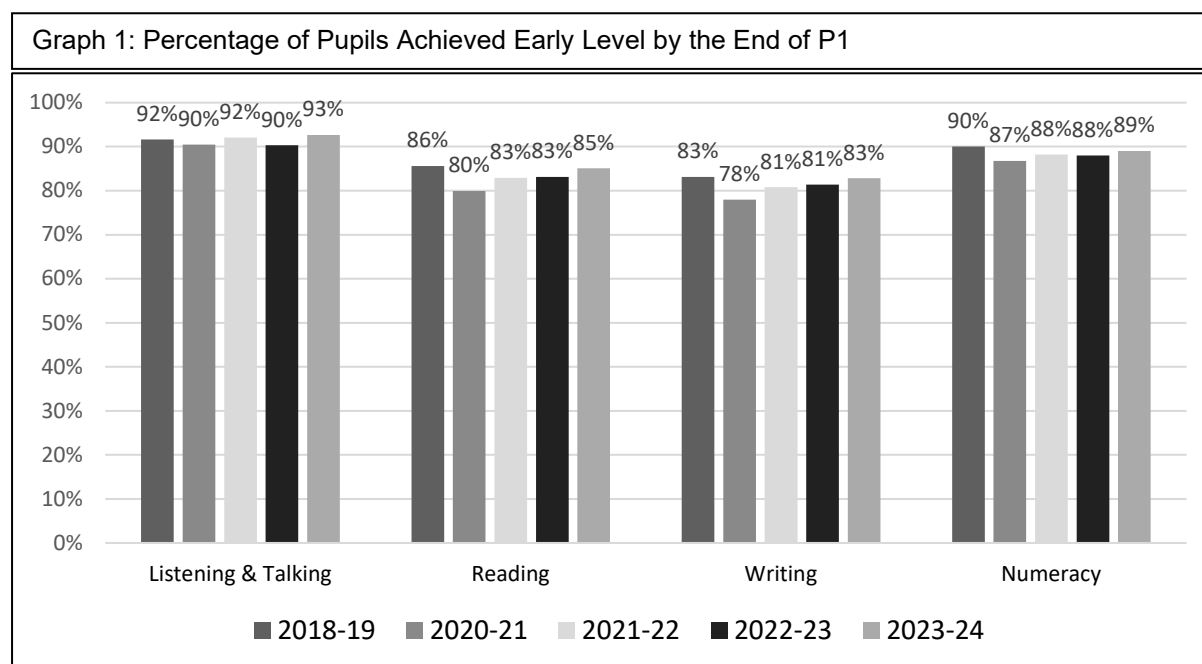
- 3.1. The 2024 ACEL return includes data on all Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 pupils and Secondary 3. The data measures performance in the literacy curricular areas (listening & talking, reading, writing) and numeracy. Assessment of the level achieved is based on teacher professional judgements.



- 3.2. Diagram 1 shows the 4 curriculum levels within broad general education (P1-S3). The ACEL return measures the percentage of pupils that have achieved early level by the end of Primary 1, first level by the end of Primary 4, second level by the end of Primary 7 and third/fourth level by the end of S3. This reflects the path that most children and young people are expected to follow. However, the framework displayed in diagram 1 is designed to be flexible to permit careful planning for those with additional support needs.
- 3.3. The return is submitted for the 2023-24 school session and is published nationally in December 2024. Due to school closures, there was no return for the 2019-20 school session as it would not have been possible to gather accurate data. The closure of schools in March 2020 and January 2021 had a negative effect on some pupils' progress and attainment with socio-economically deprived children amongst those who were most negatively affected. This was reflected in the 2020-21 figures and should be kept in mind when interpreting trends over the previous 6 years.



## 4. Attainment by Stage

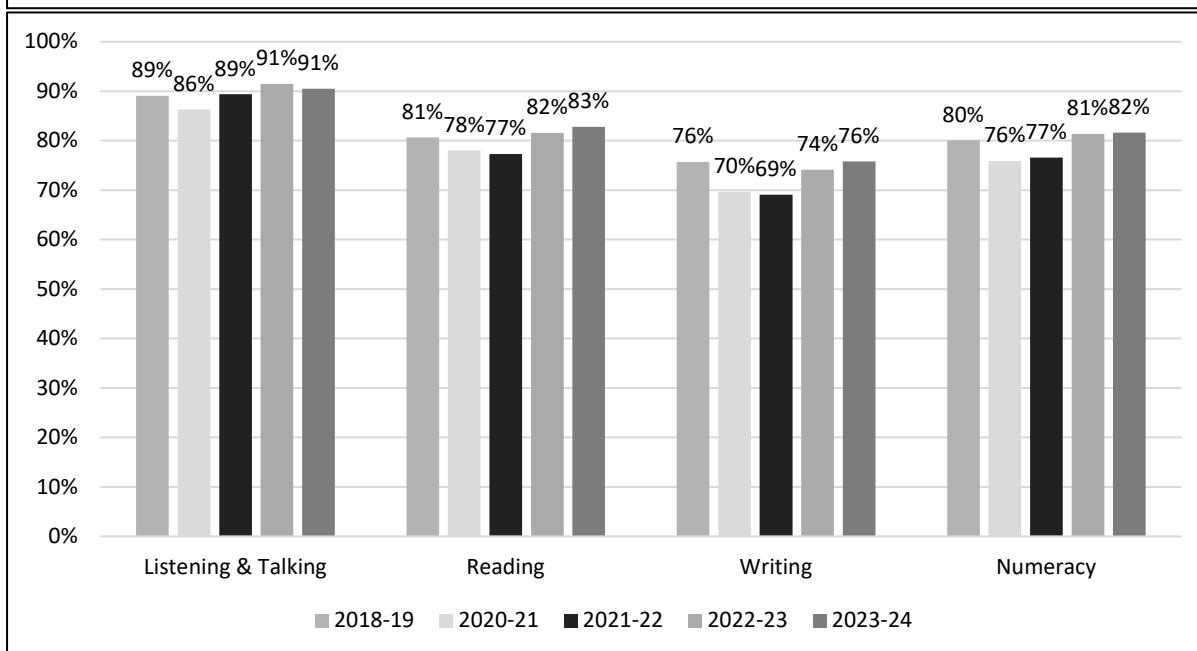


- 4.1. Graph 1 shows that attainment has increased across all measures in P1 since 2022-23. The largest increase has been in listening and talking which is up 2.3 percentage points which has brought this measure ahead of pre-pandemic levels. Reading, writing and numeracy attainment is now within 1 percentage point of 2018-19 figures.

Table 1: Percentage of Pupils Achieving Early Level by the end of P1. 2023-24				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	93%	85%	83%	89%
National	87%	81%	79%	85%

Renfrewshire is ahead of national figures at this stage across all curricular areas. The largest difference is in listening and talking where Renfrewshire is ahead by 5 percentage points and the smallest difference. Renfrewshire has been consistently ahead of national data at this stage since the data collection started in 2015-16.

Graph 2: Percentage of Pupils Achieved First Level by the End of P4

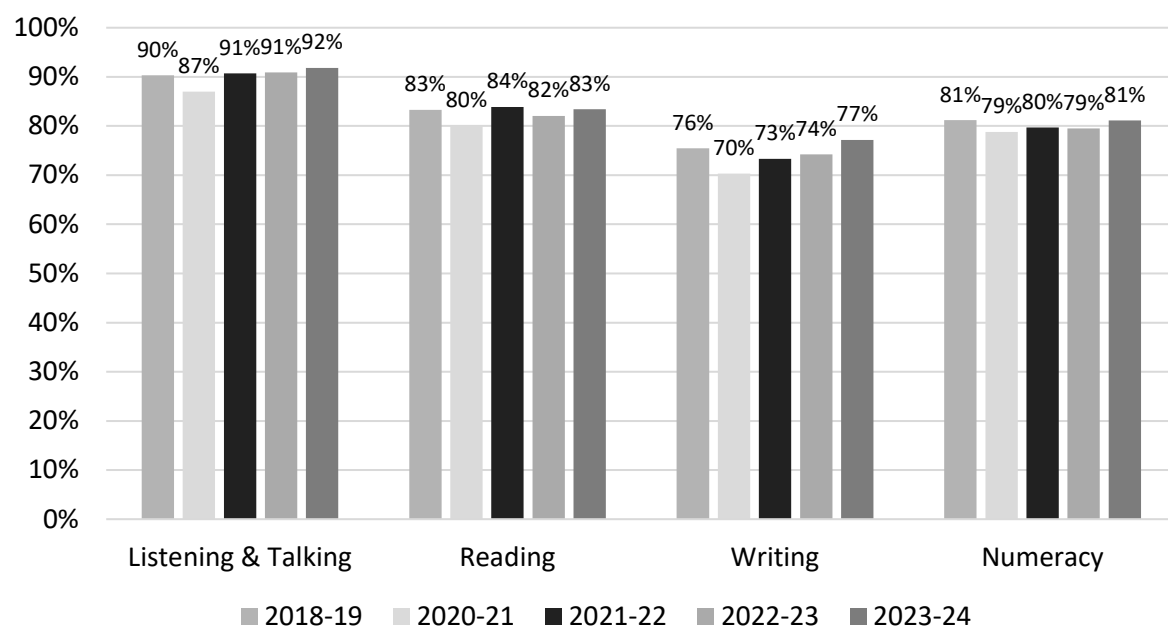


- 4.2. Graph 2 demonstrates attainment has increased in reading, writing and numeracy since 2022-23. There has been a marginal decrease in listening and talking however this is less than 1 percentage point. All curricular areas are in line with or ahead of pre-pandemic levels.

Table 2: Percentage of Pupils Achieving First Level by the end of P4. 2023-24				
	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	90%	83%	76%	81%
National	87%	79%	74%	78%

- 4.3. Renfrewshire is ahead of national figures across all curricular areas in P4. The percentages differences are within 2 to 4 percentage points across the curricular areas, with reading the largest difference at 4 percentage points. This has been a consistent trend in almost all curricular areas since 2015-16 however Renfrewshire was -0.6 percentage points behind national in 2021-22. Since that point Renfrewshire attainment has increased by 6 percentage points, compared with 4 percentage points nationally, resulting in the positive difference within the 2023-24 figures.

Graph 3: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Second Level by the End of P7



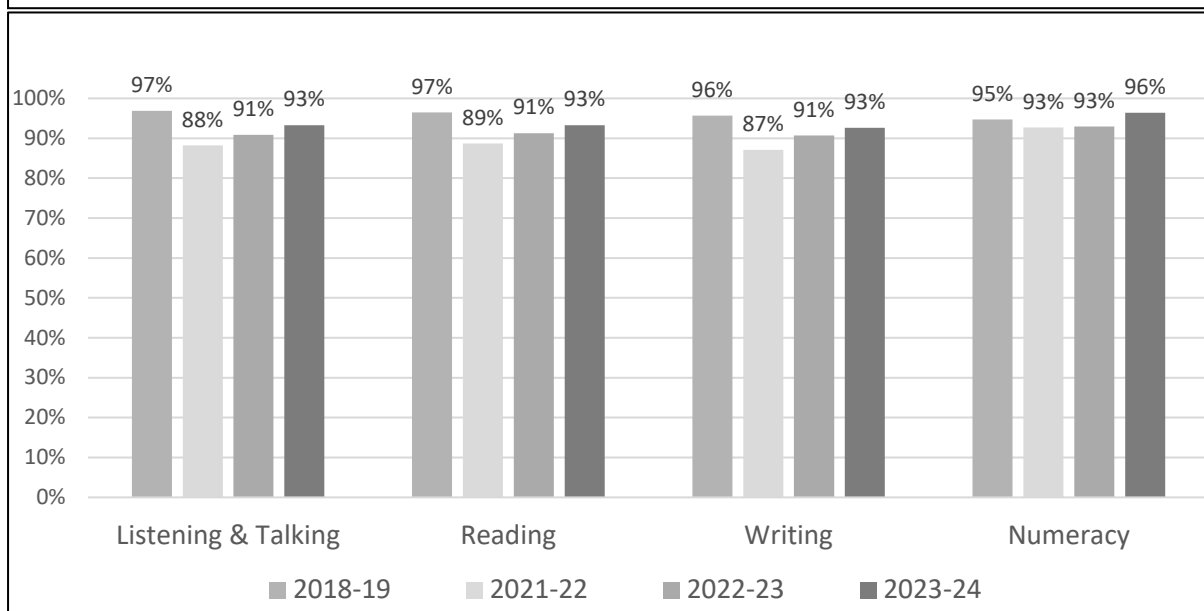
- 4.4. In Primary 7, attainment has increased in all curricular areas since 2022-23. The largest increase has been in writing which has increased by 3 percentage points and has had sustained improvement over the since 2020-21. All measures are in line with or ahead of pre-pandemic levels.

Table 3: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Second Level by the end of P7. 2023-24

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	92%	83%	77%	81%
National	88%	81%	76%	78%

- 4.5. Renfrewshire is ahead of national in all curricular areas within the 2023-24 data, within a range of 1 to 4 percentage points. This has been a consistent trend in listening and talking, reading and numeracy. Writing attainment was behind national figures by 1 percentage point in 2022-23 but the increase within Renfrewshire's data over this period has resulted in the local authority moving 1 percentage point ahead of national.

Graph 4: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Third Level by the End of S3



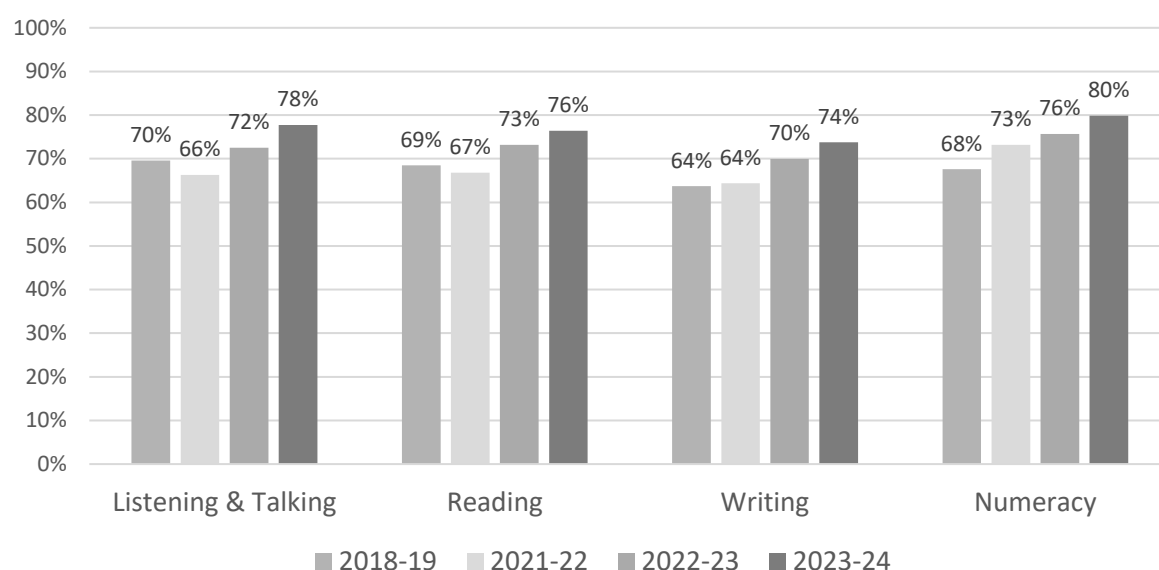
4.6. The ACEL return measures the percentage of pupils who achieve third and fourth level in S3. The percentage of pupils that achieved third level or above are displayed in graph 4. Attainment has increased across all measures since 2022-23. The greatest improvement has been in numeracy which increased by 3.5 percentage points. As a result, numeracy attainment is now ahead of pre-pandemic levels. Literacy attainment remains lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Table 4: Percentage Pupils Achieved Third Level or Above by the end of S3. 2023-24

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	93%	93%	93%	96%
National	91%	90%	90%	90%

4.7. As shown in table 4, Renfrewshire is ahead of national figures across all curricular areas in S3. The largest difference is in numeracy which is 6 percentage points ahead of the national figure. The literacy organisers are all 3 percentage points ahead. These figures had moved in line with or in some cases marginally behind national figures in the post-pandemic figures therefore the 2023-24 data demonstrates that Renfrewshire has increased at a higher rate than national figures in the previous 2 years.

Graph 5: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Fourth Level by the End of S3.



- 4.8. Graph 5 shows the percentage of pupils achieving fourth level across all curricular areas. These has been significant and consistent improvement in this measure across all curricular areas. All areas are considerably above pre-pandemic levels.

Table 5: Percentage of Pupils Achieving Fourth Level by the end of S3. 2023-24

	Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Renfrewshire	78%	76%	74%	80%
National	64%	63%	61%	65%

- 4.9. Renfrewshire is ahead of national data across all curricular areas in this measure. The differences range from 12 to 15 percentage points, with the largest difference in numeracy. This is greater than in other stages however is in line with previous years at this level.

## 5. Poverty- Related Attainment Gaps

- 5.1. The attainment gap is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) which is an area-based measure based on pupil postcode. In line with the Scottish Government approach, the data in the section below is split into SIMD quintiles which represent 20% most deprived areas (quintile 1) to 20% least deprived areas (quintile 5).

Graph 6: Attainment in Literacy by SIMD Quintile (P1, P4, P7 Combined)

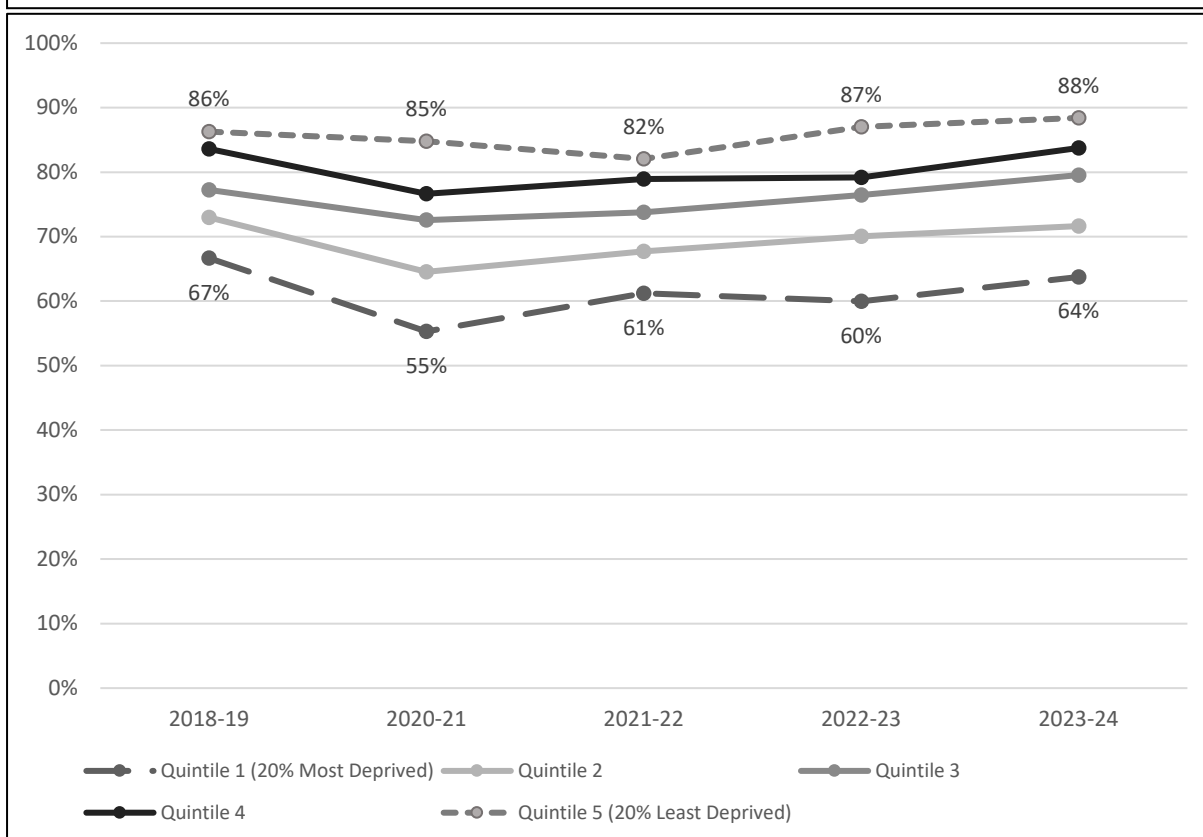


Table 6: Percentage Point Gap Between Quintile 1 and 5 in Literacy (P1,P4,P7)

	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Literacy	-20%	-30%	-21%	-27%	-25%

- 5.2. Graph 6 shows that attainment of pupils living in SIMD quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) have increased attainment since the previous year but remains below pre-pandemic levels. Pupils living in SIMD quintile 5 (20% least deprived areas) have also increased attainment however are now above pre-pandemic levels. Attainment of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas were most significantly impacted by the pandemic, with an 11-percentage point drop in this group between 2018-19 and 2020-21. This compares to a 1 percentage point drop for pupils living in 20% least deprived areas over the same period. As a result the size of the gap (shown in table 6) has decreased by 2 percentage points since 2022-23 to 25 percentage points. This is lower than in 2020-21 however there has been some year on year variation since this point.

Graph 7: Attainment in Numeracy by SIMD Quintile (P1, P4, P7 Combined)

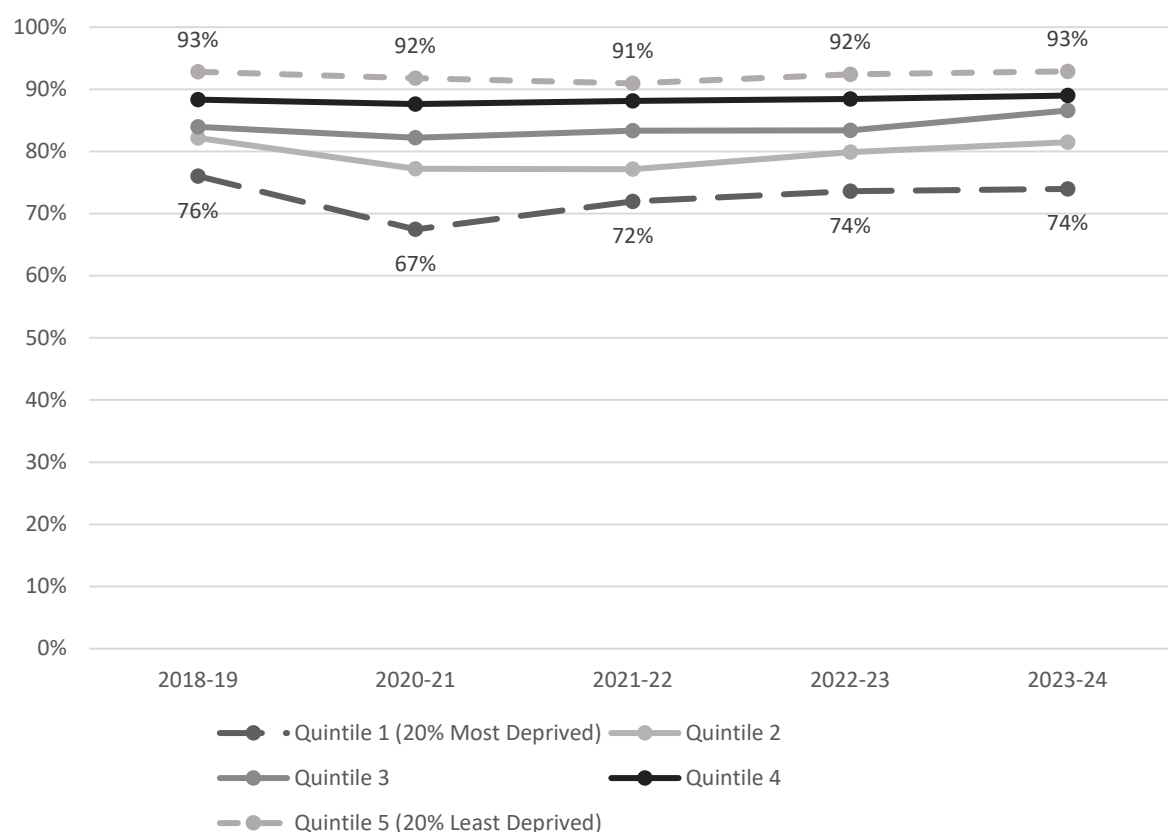


Table 7: Percentage Point Gap Between Quintile 1 and 5 in Numeracy (P1,P4,P7)

	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Numeracy	-17%	-24%	-19%	-19%	-19%

5.3. Graph 8 demonstrates attainment in numeracy by SIMD quintile. Similar to literacy, attainment of pupils living in SIMD quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) had the largest decrease in 2020-21. There has been improvement in this measure since 2020-21, however 2023-24 figures for pupils living in quintile 1 were unchanged on the previous year. Percentage point gaps, shown in table 7, have remained unchanged over the previous 3 years. The current figure of 19 percentage points is lower than in 2020-21 but remains higher than the pre-pandemic figure of 17 percentage points.

Table 8: Percentage of Pupils Achieved Literacy & Numeracy in Primary (P1,P4 & P7) 2023-24

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Renfrewshire	National	Renfrewshire	National
Quintile 1 (Most Deprived)	65%	64%	74%	72%
Quintile 2	71%	70%	81%	77%
Quintile 3	80%	74%	86%	81%
Quintile 4	83%	79%	89%	85%
Quintile 5 (Least Deprived)	88%	85%	92%	89%
<b>Percentage Point Gap between Quintiles 1 and 5</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>-18%</b>	<b>-17%</b>

- 5.4. Renfrewshire is in line with or ahead of national figures across all SIMD quintiles in literacy and numeracy. The difference is most marginal in quintiles 1 and 2 literacy, however is broadly consistent within numeracy. While attainment is higher in Renfrewshire, the size of the gaps also remain larger than nationally. In literacy, this is a difference of 3 percentage points, however in numeracy the difference is only 0.5 percentage points.

## **6. Conclusion and next steps**

- 6.1. The Achievement of a CfE Level Return in 2023-24 has demonstrated that attainment continues to improve with the majority of measures increased since 2022-23. These increases have resulted in most measures returning to pre-pandemic levels. The exception to this is attainment at third level or above in S3 however there has been significant improvement in attainment at fourth level at this stage.
- 6.2. Attainment gaps remain larger than pre-pandemic levels. Pupils living in SIMD 20% most deprived areas were most significantly impacted by the pandemic and the 2020-21 figures demonstrated large decreases in attainment. Attainment has improved across both groups and gaps are reduced since 2020-21. However, attainment of pupils living in 20% most deprived areas remains below pre-pandemic levels and as a result attainment gaps are wider than in 2018-19.
- 6.3. Renfrewshire is consistently ahead of national figures in 2023-24 due to greater increases within Renfrewshire data in the previous year. This is an improvement on recent years where figures for some stages and curricular areas were within 1 percentage point of national figures.
- 6.4. While the 2023-24 figures are positive we recognise there is scope for further improvement, particularly around attainment of our pupils living in most deprived areas. We will continue, through our quality improvement framework, to support and challenge our schools and ensure continual professional learning is available across a wide range of areas. Additionally, a targeted schools programme is in place for 2024-25 which is providing focused support for primary schools with high levels of deprivation and below average attainment levels. This programme alongside our universal offer aims to increase attainment for all and reduce the poverty related attainment gap.

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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**

Children and Young  
People

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



- 4. Legal Implications**  
None.
- 5. Property/Assets Implications**  
None.
- 6. Information Technology Implications**  
None.
- 7. Equality and Human Rights Implications**  
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
- 8. Health and Safety Implications**  
None.
- 9. Procurement Implications**  
None.
- 10. Risk Implications**  
None.
- 11. Privacy Impact**  
None.
- 12. COSLA Policy Position**  
None.
- 13. Climate Risk**  
None.
- 14. Children's Rights**  
This links to, Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

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## List of Background Papers

- (a) none

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Children's Services  
JO/FE  
10/12/2024

Author: Fiona Elliott-Frew, Management Information Officer, Children Services, [fiona.wright-ED@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.wright-ED@renfrewshire.gov.uk)




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

**On: 16 January 2025**

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

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

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Education Scotland Inspection of Kirklandneuk Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland in October 2024 as part of a national sample of education. Education Scotland uses different models of inspection and at Kirklandneuk Primary School the full model approach was deployed. Inspectors assessed the school with a focus on four quality indicators which are referenced in How Good is our School? 4

Quality Indicator 1.3 Leadership of Change

Quality Indicator 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment.

Quality Indicator 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion.

Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement.

- 1.2 This was a very positive inspection which evaluated quality indicators in the school as

Quality Indicator 1.3 Very Good

Quality Indicator 2.3 Good

Quality Indicator 3.1 Very Good

Quality Indicator 3.2 Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.1 Safeguarding

- 1.5 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. The inspection report in the form of a letter to parents, published by Education Scotland on 10 December April 2024, 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.

1.6 The letter to parents identified four key strengths of the school

- The confident, polite children demonstrate a good understanding of their school values. They are proud of their school, enthusiastic and keen to learn. Relationships at all levels are nurturing and positive.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides clear leadership and direction to the school. This enables the school to move forward at an appropriate pace with its improvement journey. As a result, the staff team demonstrate leadership and look outwards to improve outcomes for children.
- Staff across the school, work very well with families and partners to improve children's health and wellbeing. They collaborate to meet the wellbeing needs of children effectively, including those with barriers to learning.
- Staff encourage and support children to develop leadership skills and take responsibility in a variety of interesting and creative ways. As a result, children contribute confidently and positively to the life and work of the school.

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

- Continue to improve the consistency of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure all children receive high-quality experiences.
- Continue to raise attainment at all stages across the school, particularly in reading and writing.

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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 areas for further improvement in the Education Scotland report on Kirklandneuk Primary School.

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## 3. Background

- 3.1 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 Kirklandneuk 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 two 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 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** – No financial implications
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – No HR implications
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 crosscutting theme of improving outcomes for children and families as well as other Council Plan key strategic outcomes.

### **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** - The full model inspection includes a focus on QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion. In evaluating this QI, one of the themes that HM Inspectors evaluate is the school's Fulfilment of Statutory Duties related to attendance, exclusions, ASL Act and Associated Code of Practice, Bullying, Equality Act, Health and Nutrition, and Gaelic education.
5. **Property/Assets** – No risks to property/assets.
6. **Information Technology** – No information and technology risks.
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** – No negative impacts on health and safety.
9. **Procurement** – No procurement risks
10. **Risk** – No risks identified.
11. **Privacy Impact** – No impact on privacy.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – N/A
13. **Climate Risk** – None.
14. **Children's Rights** – This links to, Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life. Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this. Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

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**List of Background Papers** - The inspection report and additional evidence is published on the Education Scotland website.

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EH

4 December 2024

**Author:**

Emma Henry, Head of Education, [emma.henry@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:emma.henry@renfrewshire.gov.uk)



10 December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Kirklandneuk Primary School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

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

- The confident, polite children demonstrate a good understanding of their school values. They are proud of their school, enthusiastic and keen to learn. Relationships at all levels are nurturing and positive.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, provides clear leadership and direction to the school. This enables the school to move forward at an appropriate pace with its improvement journey. As a result, the staff team demonstrate leadership and look outwards to improve outcomes for children.
- Staff across the school, work very well with families and partners to improve children's health and wellbeing. They collaborate to meet the wellbeing needs of children effectively, including those with barriers to learning.
- Staff encourage and support children to develop leadership skills and take responsibility in a variety of interesting and creative ways. As a result, children contribute confidently and positively to the life and work of the school.

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

- Continue to improve the consistency of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure all children receive high-quality experiences.
- Continue to raise attainment at all stages across the school, particularly in reading and writing.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four 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 Kirklandneuk Primary School

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

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

[Kirklandneuk Primary School | Inspection Report | 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.

Jennifer Wadley  
HM Inspector