



## Aberdeenshire Children and Young People's Rights Report and Action Plan 2023-2026



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## 1. Progress, Innovation and Working Practices 2020 – 2023

The past three years have given us more opportunities to talk about children's rights than ever before. Upholding and further effecting children's rights is at the forefront of our minds as we continue to work to fully understand the impact of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and other world events on children and their families. We know that their experiences help to shape the right response in order to achieve the greatest outcomes for them. That is why it has been so important to engage with them in developing our strategic plans, to inform service development and to identify the greatest priorities for them. Within this report we describe examples of progress, achievements, innovation and working practices in regard to children's rights over the past three years.

### Rights Respecting Schools

The UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award supports schools across the UK to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture. The Award recognises achievement in putting the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) at the heart of a school's practice to improve wellbeing and help all children and young people realise their potential. Schools work through a stepped process of assessed accreditation in three strands.

Schools involved in the Rights Respecting Schools Award work towards the recognition that they have embedded children's and young people's rights in their school's practice and ethos. Schools are required to implement three evidence-based strands that cover the leadership of the school, knowledge and understanding of children's rights, ethos and relationships and the empowerment of children and young people.

There are three levels to the Award:

- Bronze: Rights Committed
- Silver: Rights Aware
- Gold: Rights Respecting

The journey to Gold: Rights Respecting, the highest stage of the Award granted by UNICEF UK, can take three to four years. Silver and Gold accreditations are valid for three years, after which time schools must be re-accredited.

In Aberdeenshire we have over a hundred schools engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools programme. The upcoming incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law and Scottish Government's commitment to fully funding this programme for the next three years suggest this number will continue to grow.

Current level of RRS Engagement in Aberdeenshire at October 2022.

Registered	Bronze	Silver	Gold
29	47	24	15

### Preparing for Incorporation

An action plan for Education has been produced to support schools and other learning environments prepare in advance of the UNCRC (Incorporation) Bill coming into force.

Information has been prepared and presented to the Area Committee's and the Corporate Leadership Group on what UNCRC incorporation will mean for Aberdeenshire council. Further to this, presentations and documents have been created and stored in a SharePoint to support staff in ensuring they are paying due regard to the UNCRC in their day-to-day practice.

An Integrated Impact Assessment, which includes Children's Rights and Wellbeing, has been developed with associated guidance. This means that any policy, strategy or guidance that is being considered by council officers must now go through the screening process to consider its impact on children's rights. Youth consultation guidance has been produced to support council officers to consult with young people as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment process.

We continue to create more opportunities to engage with children and young people, to hear their views and opinions and to get their feedback on how we are doing. The following link is to a short video of an event where children and young people came together with multiagency colleagues in September 2022 to talk about tackling poverty and inequalities. The day held lots of interactive opportunities for conversation alongside fun, confidence building and fostering supportive relationships.

[Over2Youth22.mp4](#)

**Inverurie Community Campus**  
**Saturday 24th of September 2022**  
**11am-3pm**

Food   Activities   Workshops   Info Stalls   DJ Group   Bands  
 Inflatables

Free and open to all

TP&I

We have listened to the views and experiences of children and young people about living in care and leaving care. Their voices have informed our corporate parenting plan, improvement work and will ultimately shape future service delivery.

### **Aberdeenshire Children's Rights Service**

The Children's Rights Service is there for children and young people up to the age of 26 who are looked after or who have left care. They also support children and young people going through child protection processes where there is a concern of a risk of harm. The Children's Rights Service is there to help children and young people to better understand their rights and responsibilities when being looked after or living away from home or when going through child protection processes. They support children and young people at meetings to make sure they can participate and be listened to. This empowers young people in a world where they often have very little control over what happens and is important to promote their resilience and self-confidence.

The Children's Rights Officers also work with other professionals to help them understand children's rights and support them to uphold them.

The Children's Rights Service can:

- Support children and young people to understand their rights.
- Support children and young people to understand the importance of having their voice heard.
- Support children and young people to understand the processes they are involved in and the decisions that are made about them.
- Support children and young people to share their views at meetings and case conferences and with the agreement of children and young people, if beneficial, within core group meetings.
- Support children and young people to understand how their views were taken into account and the decisions that were made.

The Children's Social Work Service have employed a Children's Rights Officer who solely provides children's rights support within child protection processes. This is an independent social work service who can support and advise all children subject to Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM's) of their right to be safe, to be well looked after, to express their views and be listened to. The designated Children's Rights Officer meets with the child or young person and supports their right to be listened to, to remain safe and to ensure adults make decisions that are best for them. They can help the child (age 5 upwards) with their views and share these with adults with the child's permission. They also provide direct support to young people at meetings. The Children's Rights Officer also helps the child understand the decisions and recommendations that are made at CPPM's.



The Children's Rights Service have worked with children and young people to develop a leaflet describing the support available when going through child protection processes and have worked with the YPOC (Young Peoples Organising and Campaigning) group on various projects and campaigns. You can read more about their work further down in this report.

As well as their main remit of supporting looked after children and young people with their rights, the Children's Rights Service have been able to support children in the community who have had a number of challenges in health, education and socially. Many of these challenges are due to income poverty, material deprivation, exposure to discrimination and social stigma; all of which impact on the young people's sense of self-worth. Work to support these young people and to advocate for their rights means that they feel less marginalised and more positive about their future.

#### Hearing the views of the pre-verbal child

Aberdeenshire Health Visiting teams have undertaken a successful test of change to hear the views of babies and very young children. This [crib sheet](#) was developed to support health visitors to have discussions with families regarding their health and wellbeing needs and the effects they can have on their children. The tools are designed to focus the discussion, record keeping, report writing and case supervision ensuring consideration is given to the **voice and views of the child**.

A records audit undertaken prior to this test of change showed that 50% of the records audited were child focused and 50% were not. Comments from the auditors included:

*No analysis into what observations and assessment are telling the reader about babies' behaviour and the impact of what these behaviours are telling the reader about development, bonding, and attachment and how this information gives insight into how the child is reviewing their world.*

*Routine health promotion delivered, and parental reporting of child documented. No observation of child's behaviours or cues.*

*Parental mental health focus but no discussion on impact on child and whether any behaviours exhibited to say if bonding and attachment affected.*

*Maternal concerns expressed and alleviated/actioned. No record of child's presentation during contact, no record of parental-child interaction.*

*Parental health focus but with acknowledgement of potential impact on child. No observation of the child documented. No information on behaviours of child or responsiveness of parents and child's responsiveness to this.*

Further records audit 6 months after the implementation of the test showed that 84% of the records audited were child-focused and 100% confirmed use of the three questions in the test. Comments from the auditors included:

*Evidence of parental awareness of babies cues.*

*SHANARRI referenced in assessment and child's behaviour such as laughing, gurgling, cooing and noticing things documented as being observed.*

*SHANARRI and crib sheet referenced as assessment, behaviours such as smiling and responded positively to care and vocalising when pleased documented as observed. Crib sheet lists example of what makes child smile/giggle.*

*Loves their hands, happy vocalising. Heard Mums views regarding medication documented and information about weight.*

*Linked to crib sheet and SHANARRI. Child's presentation documented. Discussed what child was curious about during visit, how parent was responding to child and holding child. Discussed what child enjoys and positive relationships developing.*

In February 2023 parents and caregivers were asked to complete a survey in response to the test of change. There were four respondents at that time, and they were asked three questions:

**How important it is for your baby to build connections and relationships?**

- Strongly agree (3)
- Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (-)
- Disagree (-)
- Strongly disagree (-)

**How your baby communicates with you even though they can't yet speak (e.g. when they are hungry/tired/bored)?**

- Strongly agree (2)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (-)
- Disagree (-)
- Strongly disagree (-)

**How you respond to your baby's needs (e.g. hungry/tired/bored) when they communicate these with you?**

- Strongly agree (3)
- Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (-)
- Disagree (-)
- Strongly disagree (-)

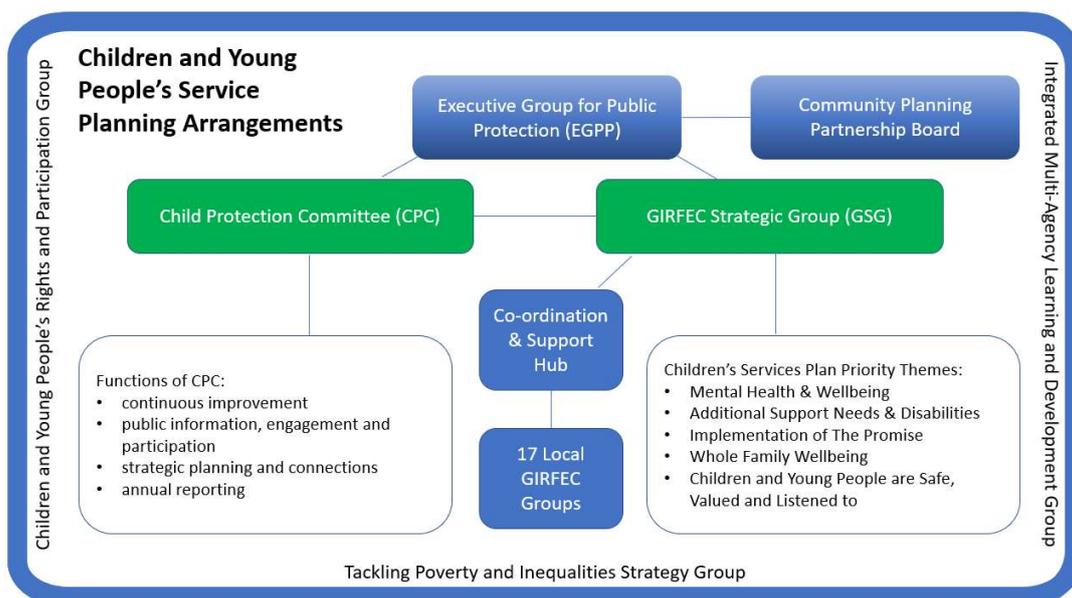
The next step for Health Visitors is to write a report and do a poster presentation for celebrating excellence around the views of the child. The work will also be taken to the record keeping group to have it formally added to the notes.

## Nurturing Environments

Banchory Academy provides a Wellbeing Hub within the school. This creates a nurturing environment, such as the S1 nurture group, in order to support young people to access education. In the S1 example, targeted S1 pupils receive breakfast and engage in 'table chat' with each other. This supports them to build relationships and trust. The Hub follows the 6 principles of nurture in the way it meets the needs of the young people.

## 2. General Measures of Implementation

I have the right to have my rights made a reality (Article 4)



Our Local Children and Young People's Services Planning arrangements act to provide robust mechanisms of governance, quality assurance and scrutiny, with services delivered by a dedicated and motivated workforce united in pursuit of our common goal:

*'To improve wellbeing and get it right for every child and young person in Aberdeenshire.'*

Each group has representation from key public authorities, strategic partnerships, and Third Sector organisations, with each making a unique contribution to local partnership arrangements.

## Youth Participation and Engagement

Youth participation in Aberdeenshire, is all about putting children and young people in the centre of policy and practice. We do this by creating and supporting ways in which children and young people can get involved in decision-making, at the individual, community, local authority, and national level. Aberdeenshire's Youth Participation Structure includes all the different groups below:

### **Specific Interest Groups (SIGs)**

Specific Interest Groups meet over shared experiences, identities, or a particular area of interest. These include Looked After children and young people in our LAC Factor, and Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group (YPOC), LGBT Rights, New Syrian Scots, Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, Aberdeenshire Youth Bank, Young Carers, and our Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) Young Advisors.

### **Pupil Participation Forum (PPF)**

Aberdeenshire's Pupil Participation Forum is a youth-led group of 68 young people, consisting of ambassadors from seventeen secondary schools across Aberdeenshire. They are regularly called on to consult on matters related to their education and have created a guide for schools on how to improve pupil participation.

### **17 Community Youth Platforms (CYPs)**

There are 17 community youth platforms across North, Central and South Aberdeenshire. These were established across Aberdeenshire in 2017 and aim to provide young people with opportunities to discuss the issues which matter to them, in their local community.

### **Aberdeenshire Youth Shadow Management Team (AYSMT)**

Aberdeenshire Youth Shadow Management Team consists of Youth Council Executive Members, who have been elected to take on an office bearer role or are members interested in particular issues. They meet with Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Leadership Team, which consists of the Directors for Education & Children's Services, Infrastructure, Health and Social Care, Business Services and the Chief Executive.

### **Aberdeenshire Members of Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs)**

There are 7 Aberdeenshire MSYP's, who are democratically elected for a 2-year term and represent: Banffshire and Buchan Coast, Aberdeenshire East, Aberdeenshire West, North Angus & Mearns. The MSYPs role is to represent young people from Aberdeenshire and they actively campaign on youth issues, such as championing young people's Rights through the Right Here, Right Now national campaign. They seek to build links with local councillors and MSPs to benefit young people, and an MSYP representative also sits on Aberdeenshire's Youth Shadow Management Team.

### **Aberdeenshire Youth Council (AYC)**

Aberdeenshire Youth Council consists of democratically elected representatives from all youth participation groups in Aberdeenshire, including the Pupil Participation Forum, Community Youth Platforms, and Specific Interest groups.

### 3. General Principles of the UNCRC

I have the right to protection against discrimination. This means that nobody can treat me badly because of my colour, sex or religion, if I speak another language, have a disability, or are rich or poor (Article 2)  
All adults should always do what is best for me (Article 3)  
I have the right to life (Article 6)  
I have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12)

The pandemic, the cost of living crisis and other world events have had an enduring and far-reaching impact on child poverty, children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, and the safety and development of children. The challenge to recover cannot be underestimated, however within that context we have an obligation to raise the profile of children, young people and families' needs and a great opportunity to further promote and embed children's rights.

#### **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

The EAL Service have been advocating at a strategic level to ensure the needs of families who speak EAL are represented.

*'I wanted to say a huge thank you for coming and supporting us yesterday. You actually did most of the work! I now have a better understanding of how such meeting with translators work and think that the whole process went smoothly. Thank you so much!'*

Primary school HT on support given by the EAL Teacher

Some examples of this work so far include influencing the developing autism strategy and ensuring that translated information is available on things such as free school meals and applying for school places. The service has also been advocating for the use of interpreting and translations services to support families and schools in communicating important information.

#### **Support in School**

In 2021-22 the Pupil Participation Forum (PPF), with support from Four Pillars, created a pronoun document to support schools to approach pronouns with sensitivity. The PPF continue to be a consultative mechanism on what young people think about a range of issues in school. They have also been involved in policy consultations on inclusion, behaviour and anti-bullying.

The PPF have begun working on new themes that they have identified as important - Cultural Diversity and the Stigma of Poverty with a view to creating school surveys and resources to highlight these issues with school staff and pupils.

Learner Participation training has been delivered to school staff to ensure meaningful participation in education is developed in our schools using both HGIOURS and Learner Participation 3-18 as sources.

Online sessions called “Wee Blethers” have been established to support young people to reflect on Children’s Rights within their establishment.

Youth Consultation guidance has been created to support Council Officers in consulting young people as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process.

### **The Children’s Rights Service**

During COVID-19 lockdowns the service continued to support young people to help them to have a voice. Meetings moved online with the team communicating with children and young people via Teams meetings as well as WhatsApp, texts and phone calls. Cards were sent to young people in ‘out of authority placements’ to remind them of the service and how they could get in touch. Monthly Teams calls with young people were set up in one ‘out of authority placement’. In this way, the team were able to continue to support young people at their meetings and ensure their voice was listened to.

### **YPOC group (Young People’s Organising and Campaigning Group)**

This section has been written by member of the YPOC group, supported by the Children’s Rights Service.

*We are a campaigning group of care experienced young people and we meet monthly at Inverurie Family Centre. We have some fun, have pizza and use our own experiences to make things better for other young people who are looked after and care experienced. Laura, Kate, Anne and Laura, Anne from the Children’s rights team and Lynne from Who Cares? help us with booking a room and getting us to and from our meetings and help us think about and explore what’s important to us and what we want to change.*

*Our latest campaign is all about stigma and challenging this. Stigma is feeling judged and feeling others are treating you differently because you are in care. We need our corporate parents to understand this and to challenge Stigma.*

*So we met with our corporate parents last year and told them some of the myths around being in care and how important it is to challenge these and change people’s attitudes. We invited our corporate parents to a Twilight event that we organised that included some cakes and bakes we had made and a raffle. It’s good meeting our corporate parents so we can tell them what it’s like for us and they can challenge discrimination too if they come across it.*

*Also, one of us did a case study with everybody around Stigma. And we asked the adults there to think about the issues and how teachers and pupils need to understand what it feels like to be care experienced.*

*Some of us have also met with the Education Committee to tell them about our recent campaign on Stigma. This was good and we felt listened to and think they know a bit more about what we go through and they can try and change people's attitudes too. We felt that the councillors listened to what we were saying and were in agreement that education professionals, career advisors, along with many other agencies required more knowledge and possibly training re: this matter. During this session we felt empowered and valued.*

*We are going to be working with musicians from the Youth Music Initiative to develop our Stigma campaign further so watch this space.*

*Our last Campaign was called 'Coming into Care and moving placements' and we produced a DVD and Guide using our own experiences. We wanted to give guidance to the adults involved in supporting children and young people at this time. It tells adults what they can do to make things easier for children and young people going through this experience. Coming into care is a very scary time for children and young people and we need to be supported with lots of things to make this better for us.*

*We drew on own experiences and also surveyed other care experienced children and young people, to create a guide and a DVD which we hope will improve the experience for children who come into care or move placement in future. Our main things we thought would improve things for us are:*

- 1. Care experienced young people should be involved in the recruitment and training of social workers and family support workers.*
- 2. Care experienced young people should be involved in the recruitment and training of foster carers.*
- 3. All foster carers should have a book with pictures of their house, family and any pets, and local schools or better still a short video, so that we have some idea where we are going to live and who will be there.*
- 4. All children's homes and residential units should provide a photo book or a video that we can see before we move there so that we know what to expect.*
- 5. There should be a checklist of all the things that social workers should do before we come into care or move placement based on this report.*

*This was finished just before lockdown and we launched it online where we invited our Corporate Parents to watch the DVD and answer any questions. This was a really great event that we organised and gave our corporate parents lots of ideas as to how things should change to make things better for us. We also set up an online workshop with children and families teams and review managers to show them the DVD and talked about what needs to change to make things better for us. This was a really good discussion of what changes they need to make.*

*And we asked if there were social workers who wanted to work alongside us to develop a checklist for social workers to use when we come into care so that we are much more*

*supported, and our views are taken into account. This is now being used widely by children and family social workers.*

*Also some of our ideas within the guide about wishing to find out who and where we are moving to with a picture book or video about foster carers and children's homes have been taken on board. So foster carers can give social worker a booklet about their family to share with us, which helps us be more prepared if we move or come into care.*

This is a really important statement from the group:

***“Our campaigns change attitudes and also what adults can do to change to support us better. And changing the systems too, that’s important to us.”***

#### 4. Civil Rights and Freedoms

I have the right to have a name and a nationality (Article 7)

I have the right to an identity (Article 8)

I have the right to find out things and say what I think, through making art, speaking and writing, unless it breaks the rights of others (Article 13)

I have the right to think what I like and be whatever religion I want to be, with my parents' guidance (Article 14)

I have the right to be with friends and join or set up clubs, unless this breaks the rights of others (Article 15)

I have the right to a private life. For instance, I can keep a diary that other people are not allowed to see (Article 16)

I have the right to collect information from the media – radios, newspapers, television – from all around the world. I should also be protected from information that could harm me (Article 17)

I have the right to education (Article 28)

I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way (Article 37)

I have the right to help if I have been hurt, neglected, or badly treated (Article 39)

Public Health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 restricted the ability for children and young people to meet with peers, family members and the wider community. During periods of lockdown children and young people were less visible to professionals and that caused concern for those known to be vulnerable and for children who may have become vulnerable as a result of the wider impacts of the pandemic.

It was important to ensure that children and young people were aware of the support available to them and that they were receiving essential information in an accessible way. We

collaborated as a partnership and used virtual platforms that children and young people were familiar with to promote important messaging, such as virtual schools platforms and social media. While none of these measures removed the risk of restricted movement and reduced visibility they did provide mitigation.

Civil rights and freedoms are discussed, promoted and exemplified in schools through the Rights Respecting Schools programme and also through work schools are doing on Children's Rights and Learner Participation. The principle of dignity is implied in all interactions between children and young people (rights holders) and adults (duty bearers) of rights in schools.

Social work services, schools other education settings, the EAL service, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and North East Scotland College (NESCOL) all worked in partnership to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children by offering as broad and relevant educational experiences as possible to enable the young people to move on to positive destinations.

Banchory Academy reintroduced school clubs as soon as possible and this was highlighted as a strength by pupils in their SHANARRI questionnaires. The use of specialist teachers in the ASN Learning Centre supports bespoke units of delivery in senior phase which allows pupils to engage at a level appropriate to their stage and not their age.

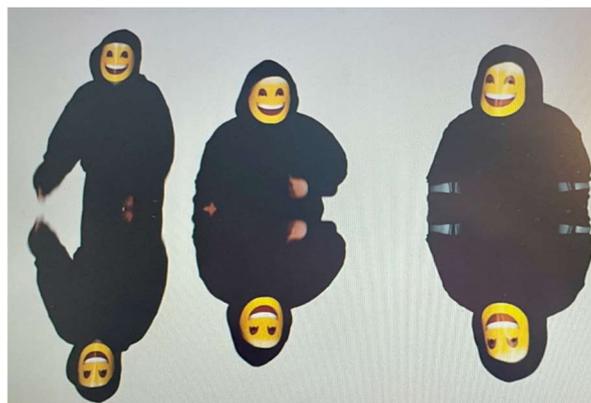
## 5. Violence against Children

I have the right to help if I have been hurt, neglected, or badly treated. (Article 39)

I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way. (Article 37)

I have the right to education. (Article 28)

The PPF have participated in a national Child Protection Scotland consultation to create a film for young people called Speak up. One of the members of the PPF was interviewed for Radio Scotland about their involvement in the campaign.



## Child Protection Resources

The Children's Rights Service have worked with children and young people to develop leaflets and posters to ensure that all children and young people have information about their rights when they are going through child protection processes. You can see the [leaflet](#) and [poster](#) here.

## Bairns Hoose

A Scottish Government programme of work is underway to fulfil a commitment that all children in Scotland who have been victims or witnesses of abuse or violence, as well as children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm, will have access to a 'Bairns Hoose' by 2025. Translated from the Icelandic Barnahaus (child's house) model, a Bairns Hoose will provide child focused, trauma informed, child protection care and recovery within a child friendly environment, improving children's experience of the criminal justice system and preventing re-traumatisation.

The ethos and model of Bairns Hoose is about how multiagency partners work together in a trauma informed, rights respecting, way to support this population of children and young people. We have started these collaborative planning conversations with partners across Grampian. Any Bairns Hoose service will need to take account of the diversity of need, and the geography and demography of Aberdeenshire to ensure that it meets the needs of the children it requires to support. In Aberdeenshire we are considering the need to wrap around a child and family in-situ concurrent to physical buildings, in order to provide the best support.

## 6. Family environment and alternative care

I have the right to be given guidance by my parents and family (Article 5)

I have the right to live with my parents, unless it is bad for me (Article 9)

If my parents and I are living in separate countries, we have the right to get back together and live in the same place (Article 10)

I should not be kidnapped (Article 11)

I have the right to be brought up by my parents, if possible (Article 18)

I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated (Article 19)

I have the right to special protection and help if I can't live with my parents (Article 20)

I have the right to have the best care if I am adopted or fostered or living in care (Article 21)

I have the right to a good enough standard of living. This means I should have food, clothes and a place to live (Article 24)

I have the right to have my living arrangements checked regularly if I have to be looked after away from home (Article 25)

I have the right to help if I have been hurt, neglected, or badly treated (Article 39)

### **Support for Parents**

In order to support parents, information sessions on the UNCRC have been organised by Education Scotland and co-hosted by Aberdeenshire Council staff. A parent's leaflet has been created and piloted in one school with further training and information sessions planned as we near incorporation.

Aberdeenshire Case studies of good practice in Parental Engagement and Family Learning during COVID-19 were published in Education Scotland's [What Scotland Learned](#)

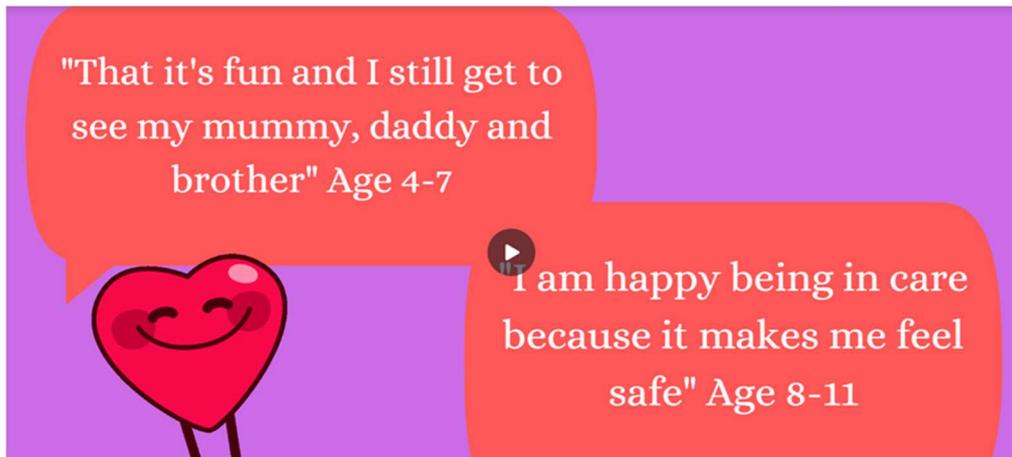
Parents and young people were asked to participate in a survey to inform what we could learn from lockdown and the results were built into recovery planning in education.

### **Families in need of additional Care and Support**

CELCIS partnered with Coram Voice to bring 'Bright Spots' to Scotland and piloted the two surveys in 2021-22 with three Local Authorities in Scotland. After applying, Aberdeenshire was one of the three Local Authorities chosen. The Bright Spots Programme seeks to measure children's subjective wellbeing, ensuring their voices are heard and properly represented. In February/March 2022 all children in care aged 4-18yrs and young people who have left care were asked to take part in an online survey to find out how they felt about their lives.

203 children in care responded to the survey from a total eligible population of 298: a response rate of 68%. Children and young people with different living arrangements were all well represented in the survey, with 43% living with foster carers, 23% living with kin, 17% in care at home, and 13% living in residential settings. 64 young people responded to the survey from a care leaver population of 156: a response rate of 41%.

Children and young people shared what is working well for them in their lives and what areas need improving. This helped inform our updated corporate parenting plan and we have already taken action to address some of the key issues highlighted. For example, young people who have left care told us that transitions, particularly those involving leaving care continue to be challenging and required improvement. We have heard our young people and are committed to addressing this, ensuring we get transitions right for future young people due to leave care. We have formed a working group which seeks to review the transition process, ensuring each young person experiences a transition that is tailored to their needs, at a time when they are ready, that they have equal opportunities to resources and are fully supported by workers they share trusting relationships with.



Children and young people in care told us that although many have had their social worker for over 1 year, relationships could be improved, particularly in the aspect of nurturing trust. This has resulted in us identifying a piece of work which will focus on the relationships shared between children and their workers and the quality time spent with one another. We plan to consult children and young people who attend our twilight sessions about what they think social workers could do to build trusting relationships with them, and gain their views about how this would happen i.e., what does quality time look like with a social worker? How often do they think social workers should see them? In parallel to this, we intend to undertake an audit, looking at a random sample across Aberdeenshire. This will help determine the level of contact being had with children, the relationships shared and the language used in case recordings. This may result in us making recommendations about how we can improve this for children and young people to ensure they share meaningful contact with workers in a way that will nurture a sense of trust and care and ensure records that are held about them are written in a way that is personal and respectful.

In order to share the results of the surveys with children and young people, a video was produced with a group of young people. It's a really valuable watch and you can find the link [here](#).

In Aberdeenshire, twilight sessions have been facilitated for children and young people. This is an opportunity for those living in care across the local authority area to come together to engage in fun activities and meet some of their corporate parents. The aim of these sessions is to ensure children and young people have a say in service delivery and what we, as their corporate parents can do to improve their experiences of living in care. There has been interest shown by Corporate Parenting Leads from across a variety of services to be involved in helping facilitate these sessions. To date two have been held, the first by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the second by NESCOL at Fraserburgh College. We will continue to roll these out across Aberdeenshire, with the support of varying Corporate Parenting Leads and venues.

## **Children's Rights Service**

The Children's Rights Service have had the privilege to work alongside children and young people with experience of child protection processes to set up a new service in Children's Rights. Using the UNCRC as the foundation, when securing a 0.5 WTE post to provide children's rights support to children and young people going through child protection processes, the team immediately began working with young people to co-produce and co-design this new service. Article 12 'Having a Say' was really important in the approach to developing this service with children and young people. Their experience, feelings and voice have been fundamental in every aspect of how this was set up and also how the new service continue to run.

Beginning in the summer of 2022 the team met 11 children and young people aged 5 to 21 and asked them 2 questions.

1. How was the child protection process for you?
2. Is there anything that would make it better?

Some young people shared that going through child protection processes was a difficult, stressful and confusing time. All of them thought it would be really important to have someone just for them, to help them to understand child protection processes and language and to help them express their views at all stages of the process. They also wanted support to help them understand the decisions made at child protection meetings and again, to support them to give their views. Knowing about our service at the earliest time was really important for them.

Taking the views that young people had shared, a proposal was developed and subsequently approved by senior managers. The new service began in August 2022. Some young people continued to be involved in developing the service by helping to design posters and leaflets, videos and an avatar to make sure that as many children and young people know about the service as possible.

To date the service has been really busy and it is clear that it is welcome by children and young people who need it. An evaluation is underway and preliminary feedback demonstrate how important it is for children and young people to have someone there 'just for them' at meetings and to make sure their voice is heard.

*'It's been fun but also important. I am so proud to have been part of this to help other children' (young person involved in developing the service)*

## **Taking a Strength-Based Approach**

In Garioch and Upper Marr Health Visitors have just commenced a new pilot with Educational Psychology to use Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) to enhance a strength-based approach. This [presentation](#) describes what VIG is and how it is used.

This work will contribute to the report and poster presentation for celebrating excellence around the views of the child.

## Support through Education Settings

Wellbeing Hubs provide nurturing environments as well as support to access uniforms, sanitary products and food.

There is a Family Learning working group that provides support to families at Banchory Academy. The group is in its early stages but is currently working on supporting families to understand how to use Microsoft Teams.

## 7. Basic Care and Welfare

I have the right to life (Article 6)

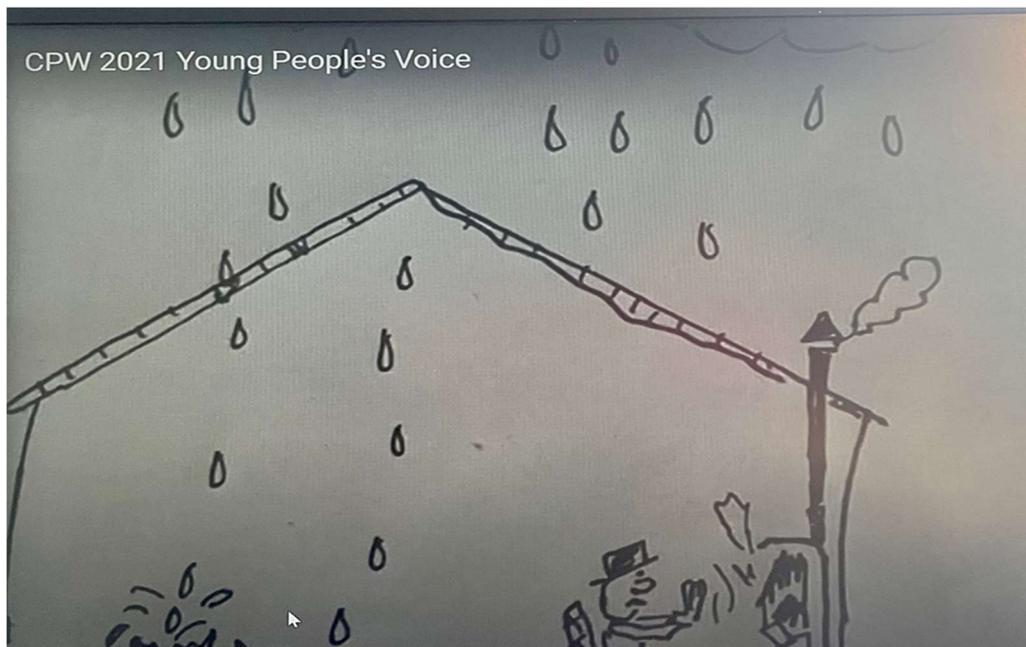
I have the right to be brought up by my parents, if possible (Article 18)

If I am disabled, either mentally or physically, I have the right to special care and education to help me develop and lead a full life (Article 23)

I have a right to the best health possible and to medical care and to information that will help me to stay well (Article 24)

I have the right to help from the government if I am poor or in need (Article 26)

I have the right to a good enough standard of living. This means I should have food, clothes and a place to live (Article 27)



## Poverty and Inequalities

During Child Poverty Week 2021, a series of events and activities took place to hear the voice of children, young people and families. This video demonstrates the very wide impacts of poverty and inequalities on families. This moving video lets us hear some of the voices heard during that week: [CPW 2021 Young People's Voice - YouTube](#)

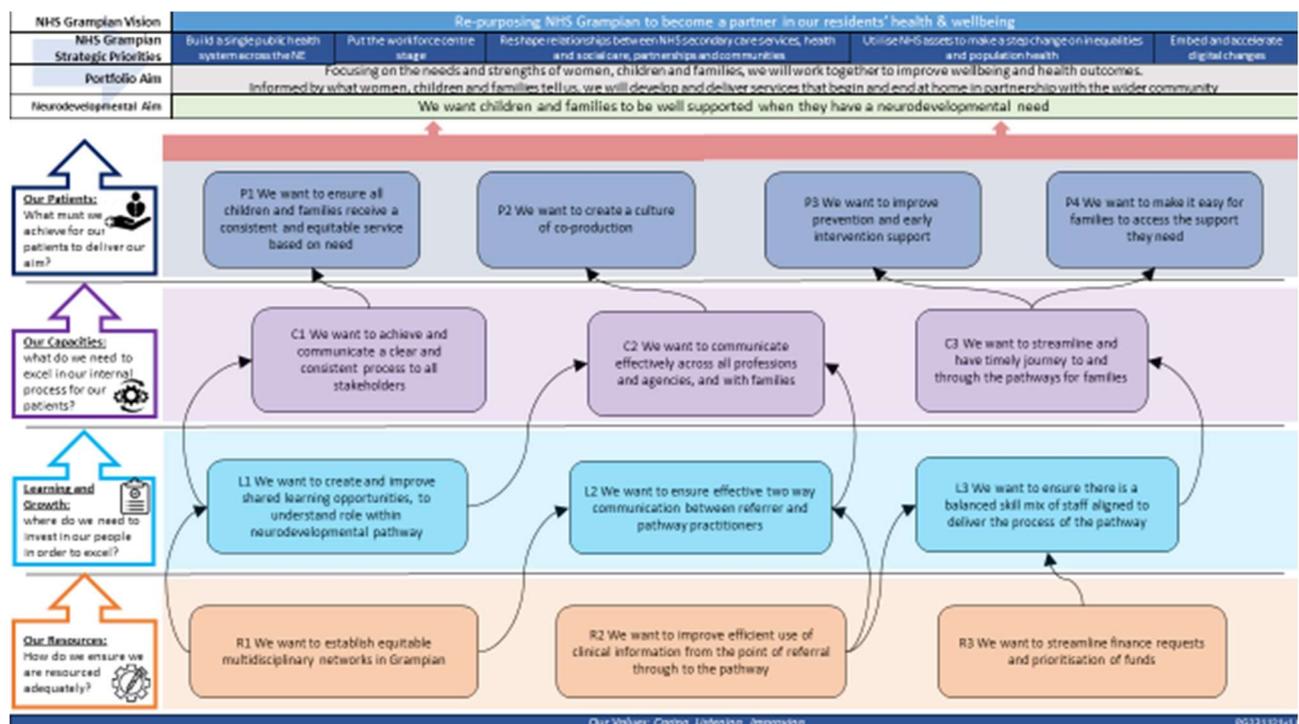
You can see what we are doing, and what we are going to do, to tackle poverty and inequalities for families in Aberdeenshire in our [Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-26](#).

## Support in Education Settings

ASL support for pupils in secondary school ranges in level of support up to intensive. This means that young people get the right support for them, when they need it. Parent Teacher Groups (PTG) provide support and advice for families who identify as clinically vulnerable.

### 7.1. Grampian's Neurodevelopmental Pathway

We have been working hard with partners to understand what we need to do to improve our neurodevelopmental pathway for the children and families that need it. Here is the strategy map that describes how we will do that.



We started by mapping our current services against the national framework and identified areas for improvement. The work to implement these changes is complex, but it is underway.

## 8. Education, Leisure and Culture

I have the right to education (Article 28)

I have the right to education which tries to develop my personality and abilities as much as possible and encourages me to respect other people's rights and values and to respect the environment (Article 29)

I have the right to play and relax by doing things like sports, music and drama (Article 31)

### Support in Education Settings

The EAL Service supports schools to support young people learning EAL to access the curriculum. The service also provides wider support to enable young people, their families and schools in navigating differences in language and culture (teaching, training, consultation, resource development and sharing, partnership working). Evidence of impact is shown in bilingual pupils' progression through language levels so that they no longer need targeted support, pupils achieving qualifications in SQA ESOL and going on to positive destinations. Some examples with feedback are included below:

EAL teachers have been teaching a number of unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, with the majority studying ESOL National 2 literacies and some good news stories:

*'The boys seem very keen and willing to learn. They pick up the new language well despite having no school experience.'*

(EAL teacher supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children).

The EAL Service has created a MS Teams sharing area for resources, advice and discussion, with now over 300 members and positive feedback on its' effectiveness:

*'I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for the comprehensive bank of resources you have provided through the MS Team Ukraine Resources for Schools. The information, resources and signposting cover every aspect and they have been invaluable in supporting us... as we enrol an S1 pupil from Ukraine' Academy PTASL*

There are many examples of sharing good practice and positive feedback from class teachers:  
*'(Your help)'s really informative and has given me lots of ideas to consider and use. I really appreciate your help and advice.'*

(Class teacher).

Work with parents has also been well received:

*'(the) English as Additional Language Teacher, came into school this term to meet with our bilingual families. She shared very positive messages about How to Raise a Bilingual Child and it was quite an eye opener listening to how our parents feel about their child having this 'superpower' of second language! We look forward to working further with our Bilingual Families to ensure they feel WELCOME in our school community. '*

(Primary school newsletter)

*'the best part was when at the end of the session mums came to chat to me about their situation. One of the mums said that this session changed her life. She said that she thought bilingualism was a handicap and it was delaying her daughter's development instead of being a "superpower" (as I call it)'*

Aberdeenshire Schools are engaged in the **Rights Respecting Schools programme**; an accredited programme run by UNICEF which recognises a school's achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice within the school and beyond. The programme develops the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. Aberdeenshire schools have increased their levels of involvement in this programme over the last three years. Schools who participate have reported a positive impact on school ethos, improved relationships and wellbeing leading to better learning and behaviour. Staff learn how to bring the UNCRC to life in their classrooms and the whole school environment and young people learn new skills in how to respect themselves and others and how to actively participate in the life of their school, their community and in global action.

Members of staff are now being trained to carry out accreditation visits as demand for RRS has increased due to it now being fully funded by the Scottish Government.

- There has been a consistent and regular offer in Aberdeenshire educational establishments in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 of training and information for teachers, early year's practitioners and senior leaders on both the UNCRC and what to expect as we approach incorporation. This includes how to embed Learner Participation in schools using key national documents such as HGIOURS and Learner Participation 3-18. These CLPL sessions have been developed and co-presented with Education Scotland staff and Aberdeen for a Fairer World.
- Two Aberdeenshire schools will be featured in an 'Into Headship' session on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 that will highlight their work on RRS. Banchory Academy will share their route to Silver and Strathburn Primary will share the journey they undertook in receiving their recent Gold accreditation in RRS.

Banchory Academy has introduced an LGBTQ+ focus at assembly. At Hill of Banchory the 'article of the week' resources from the UNICEF website are used in assemblies and UNCRC articles are linked to, or featured within, relevant policies, pupil groups and various other areas of the curriculum.

## 9. Special Protection Measures

I have the right to special protection and help if I am a refugee. A refugee is someone who has had to leave their country because it is not safe for them to live there (Article 22)

If I come from a minority group, because of my race, religion or language, I have the right to enjoy my own culture, practise my own religion, and use my own language (Article 30)

I have the right to protection from work that is bad for my health or education (Article 32)

I have the right to be protected from dangerous drugs (Article 33)

I have the right to be protected from sexual abuse (Article 34)

No-one is allowed to kidnap me or sell me (Article 35)

I have the right to protection from of any other kind of exploitation (Article 36)

I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way (Article 37)

I have a right to protection in times of war. If I am under 15, I should never have to be in an army or take part in a battle. (Article 38)

I have the right to help if I have been hurt, neglected, or badly treated (Article 39)

I have the right to help in defending myself if I am accused of breaking the law (Article 40)

### **Support for Ukrainian families**

The pace of change around work to support Ukrainian families fleeing from conflict has been considerable and the number of families arriving in Aberdeenshire has been growing. Bespoke training in regard to Child Protection and Corporate Parenting has been developed and rollout has begun in order to support assessment teams.

### **Support for all Diversity**

The EAL Service is in the process of producing a toolkit to support schools in being culturally responsive and places where the diversity of families' culture, language and religion are not only celebrated but are also part of learning. EAL ALDO training and in person training for school staff advocates for families to continue development of their first language and advises on how to support families in doing so. This training also supports school staff to bring diversity of culture, language and religion into learning at school.

**The** PPF are currently working on new themes that they have identified; Cultural Diversity and the Stigma of Poverty being two themes. They plan to create school surveys and resources to highlight these issues with school staff and pupils.

## Action Plan 2023 – 2026

This Action Plan has been developed to direct our preparations for the incorporation of the UNCR. The plan has been shaped around the clusters and informed by a review of the Theory of Change documentation commissioned by Scottish Government which identified 4 key change mechanisms. The Plan will be reviewed when Statutory Guidance is published in 2023.



**Policy:** policy adaptation, coordination, administrative integration and budgetary consideration

**Capacity:** building cross-sector capacity and capability to integrate rights-based ways of working

**Culture:** changing attitudes, norms, values and everyday actions

**Empowerment:** ensuring a system of information, advocacy, complaints, redress and effective remedy for children and young people

Cluster	Theory of Change	Actions
<b>General measures of implementation</b>	Policy Empowerment	We will continue to review children and young people’s governance structures to ensure that they support the implementation, sustainability and monitoring of rights-based practice and culture.
<b>General principles of the UNCR</b>	Capacity Culture Empowerment	We will share best practice and build the confidence of the workforce. We will ensure a consistent feedback loop to children and young people
<b>Civil rights and freedoms</b>	Policy Culture Empowerment	We will develop child and young people friendly resources, such as a youth led user friendly version of the children’s services plan, to ensure that children and young people have access to information that meets their needs. We will implement child friendly complaints process compliant with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance (when known).
<b>Violence against children</b>	Policy Capacity Culture Empowerment	We will continue to embed a trauma-informed approach. We will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families. We will develop a Bairns Hoose concept that meets the needs of children and young people in Aberdeenshire. We will continue to ensure children and young people’s view are heard in child protection processes.
<b>Family environment and alternative care</b>	Policy Culture	We will take a whole-family wellbeing approach to practice and policy development. We will support parenting strategies to enable generational change.
<b>Basic care and welfare</b>	Policy Culture	We will ensure practice and policy development takes account of the needs of <b>all</b> children and young people.
<b>Education, leisure and culture</b>	Policy Capacity Culture Empowerment	We will focus on the abilities and strengths of children, young people and their families. We will ensure that children and young people have opportunities to play and relax whatever their circumstances.
<b>Special protection measures</b>	Policy Empowerment	We will continue to hear the voices of children and young people facing adversities so that we can support them in the most impactful way. We will continue to improve our data systems so that we can horizon scan and be prepared to intervene early.