Community Planning Aberdeen

Aberdeen City's Children's Services Plan 2026-2031 easy read

This plan explains how we propose help improve the lives of Aberdeen's children, young people, and families over the next 5 years, sharing our goals and the actions we will take to achieve them by 2031

Our Children’s Services Plan 2026-2031

Our Children's Services Plan 2026-2031 is the first part of our aim to achieve our ten-year outcome set in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-36 that: 95% of young people are vulnerable or live in our most deprived communities will go on to education, employment or training when they leave school.

Our Vision

We want every child and young person in Aberdeen to achieve their potential.

We want to make sure that children and young people have the best possible chance to do well, feel safe, be healthy, and reach their goals, no matter where they live or what challenges they face.

Our aim is to close the gaps that make life harder for some families.

How we will do this

We will:

- Work together as one team across schools, health services, community groups and other partners.
- Listen to children, young people, and families about what they need.
- Make changes across the whole system so support is easier to get and given at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Provide focused to support to those children, young people and families most in need of help.

Why this matters

When children and families get the right help at the right time:

- Children can learn better.
- Families feel stronger and safer.
- Young people can achieve more and plan for their future.
- Fewer children need crisis support or care.

Our Priorities

From the plan, our main focus areas include:

Attainment and Transitions
Helping children and young people do well in school and move confidently into adulthood.

Empowered and Resilient
Supporting wellbeing and helping children to feel safe and involved in their community.

Best Start in Life
Helping young children grow, learn, and stay healthy.

We will pay special attention to children, young people and families who need extra support, such as those in areas of high deprivation, care-experienced young people, young people with disabilities, and minority ethnic groups.

Priority 1: Best Start in Life

Helping young children grow, learn, and stay healthy.

Why this matters

When children are healthy, safe, and supported from the start, they are more likely to grow well, learn confidently, and feel happy. A strong start can prevent problems later in life and help families feel more secure.



What we need to do

- Make sure young children and their parents get health checks and early help when they need it.
- Support parents of children who have additional needs to get access to help as early as possible.
- Support families so they know where to go for advice, food, childcare, or emotional help.
- Make early learning settings fun, safe, and welcoming for every child.
- Reduce the effects of poverty on young children’s health and development.

How we will do it

- We will provide our most vulnerable families with a personal case worker helping them to access the supports they need.
- Do more to help families waiting for a neurodevelopmental diagnosis.
- Bring health, early years, and family support services closer together so families get help quickly.
- Work with nurseries, family centers, health visitors, and community groups as one team.
- Provide clear information so families know what help is available.
- Listen to what parents and carers say they need and use this to shape services.

How we will know we have made a difference

- More children from deprived areas meet their development milestones.
- Families tell us that they can get help earlier and more easily.
- Fewer young children need emergency or crisis support.
- Children arrive at nursery and school ready to learn and take part.

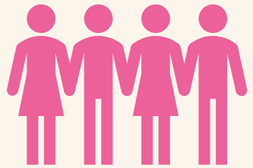
Priority 2:

Empowered and Resilient

Supporting mental wellbeing and helping families stay strong.

Why this matters

When children are healthy, safe, and supported from the start, they are more likely to grow well, learn confidently, and feel happy. A strong start can prevent problems later in life and help families feel more secure.



What we need to do

- Improve support for children and young people's mental health.
- Help families build confidence, skills, and connections in their communities.
- Make sure support is available early so small worries don't become big problems.
- Pay special attention to families who face greater challenges, such as those living in deprived areas or care-experienced young people.

How we will do it

- Safe spaces will be designed with young people for young people at risk of substance use, criminal exploitation and not completing school.
- Professionals will be on site at the safe spaces offering person centred activities and information, including support for boys to form healthy and respectful relationships.
- Work with schools, youth workers, health services, and community teams to offer easy-to-reach mental wellbeing support.
- Offer family programmes that help with parenting, relationships, and understanding children's needs.
- Give young people real opportunities to share their views and shape services through participation groups and youth voice activities.
- Strengthen links to community spaces, clubs, and activities that help children feel they belong.

How we will know we have made a difference

- More young people feel safe resilient and empowered
- Waiting times for mental health support get shorter.
- Families report feeling stronger and more supported.
- Young people take part more in community and school activities.

Priority 3:
Attainment and Transitions

Helping children and young people do well at school and move confidently into adulthood.

Why this matters

Doing well at school and having the right support when moving between stages of life (such as starting school, moving into secondary school, or preparing for work) helps young people build bright futures. Good transitions stop young people feeling lost or unsure about what comes next.



What we need to do

- Improve learning for all children, especially those who need extra help.
- Support young people as they move into secondary school, further learning, training, or jobs.
- Reduce the gaps in attainment between children from different backgrounds.
- Support care-experienced young people and vulnerable groups to achieve positive destinations.

How we will do it

- Young people will be offered on-going, meaningful work experience opportunities provided as part of the curriculum.
- Offer extra help in learning for those who need it, including tutoring, mentoring, and targeted programmes.
- Support families to understand school expectations and how to help at home.
- Make sure young people with additional needs get tailored support during big transitions.

How we will know we have made a difference

- More young people achieve qualifications and feel ready for the future.
- More young people move into positive destinations such as college, work, training, or apprenticeships.
- Gaps in attainment between children in deprived areas and others begin to close.
- Young people say they feel supported and prepared during transitions.

Children's Rights:

Embedding UNCRC

Making sure that all children and young people understand and influence decisions that affect them.

Why this matters

We are committed as a partnership to ensure we uphold and embed the Untied Nations Rights of the Child in all that we do. Doing this will ensure that young people have a say and meaningfully influence the actions and decisions we make now that will affect them throughout their childhood and when they become adults.



What we need to do

- Link our Plan to the Articles of the UNCRC.
- Ensure everyone in our partnership remains committed to involving children and young people as far as possible in work that will affect them.
- Make sure that all groups of young people have an opportunity to influence the activities of the Plan, especially where that means making extra effort to gather their views.

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How we will do it

- We will work with our current participation groups of young people.
- We will make every effort to ensure that hard to reach groups children and young people have an opportunity to voice their opinion and get involved in our work.
- Create methods that will enable the views very young children to be recorded.

How we will know we have made a difference

- Children and you people tell us that they feel able to contribute to our work.
- More young people are engaged in consultations and the improvement work in the Plan.
- Children and young people report that they feel confident to speak up and challenge us when they feel they are not being listened to.

UNCRC stands for: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. To learn more about the UNCRC and its specific articles you can find details here: UN Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC) - UNICEF UK

Care Experience:

Keeping The Promise

Helping those have experience of Care to have the same outcomes as their peers.

Why this matters

Children and young people who have experience of being in care can find growing up difficult. Many don't get the kind of support and opportunities that many children and young people take for granted. We are committed to ensuring that we do everything we can to ensure care experienced children and young people grow up to be happy, secure and successful adults.



The Promise is a National commitment to make sure that all of those that have experience care get all the support they need to thrive : The Promise Scotland

What we need to do

- Support families with experience of the care system to receive all the support they need.
- Make sure all our staff and services understand and take into account the extra needs of those who are care experienced.
- Reduce the gaps in attainment between children who are care experienced and their peers.
- Support care-experienced young people achieve positive destinations
- Make extra effort to make the voice of care experienced people influences our actions .

How we will do it

- Make sure care experienced young people get high quality support for their mental and physical health.
- Provide targeted educational supports for Care Experienced children and young people.
- Support and help strengthen family connection.
- Ensure care experienced children and young people are given the opportunity to influence the decisions that affect them.

How we will know we have made a difference

- Care experienced children and young people report that they feel their mental and physical health needs are being met.
- More children and young people in care able to remain with their family.
- Positive feedback from children and young people about their experiences of care
- Improved educational outcomes for care experienced young people.
- An increase in the number of children and young people in care who feel their views were taken into account about the decisions that affected them.

Child Poverty:
Improving Life Chances

Reducing the impact and risk of poverty for children, young people and families

Why this matters

Children and young people are among the most likely to have challenges in reaching a positive destination when leaving school and transitioning into adulthood. Supporting the families, children and young people facing poverty at the earliest possible stage ensure that we can give them the best possible chance to succeed in both childhood and adulthood.



What we need to do

- Support the parents of babies and young children who live in or are at risk of being in poverty as early as possible.
- Helping families to pay bills and get access to all the financial support they are entitled to.
- Give parents sustained work opportunities.
- Provide excellent and affordable childcare options.
- Make sure young people get the best possible outcomes in their education.
- Support those young people who need most support, transition into adulthood.

How we will do it

- Work with individual families to help them get all the financial support they can.
- Make sure that parents are given opportunities for childcare and getting work.
- Provide extra health and education support throughout childhood.

How we will know we have made a difference

- Fewer children being in poverty.
- More parents in work.
- More families reporting they can pay for their bills and food.
- More young people that successfully going on to education, employment and training when they leave school.

Find out more

You can read the full Children's Services Plan here:
Aberdeen City Children's Services Plan 2026-31

If you'd like to find out more about our Children's Services Board and our activities, you can visit our website:
Children's Services Board - Community Planning Aberdeen

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