



# Children's Services Plan 2020-2023

## Consultation Document

*Thank you for taking part in the consultation on the  
Children's Services Plan 2020 - 2023 for Aberdeenshire.*

***We are keen to hear your views.***

This document is serving as a bridging document between the last Children's Services Plan and the new Children's Services Plan. Please read through the whole document first so you have the complete picture before answering the consultation questions - see link at the end of this document. This consultation is for Aberdeenshire children, young people and families and those who work in Aberdeenshire to support those children, young people and families in Aberdeenshire.

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**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



**NHS**  
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**Aberdeenshire**  
**Community Planning Partnership**



**Aberdeenshire**  
**Health & Social Care**  
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**CHILDREN'S REPORTER**  
**ADMINISTRATION**

## **Introduction to Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan**

**Within Aberdeenshire, accountability for planning and delivery of Children's Services is with our GIRFEC Partnership who consist of the following partners who work with children, young people, parents and carers across Aberdeenshire.**

In 2017, we launched our Children's Services Plan for 2017-2020 which outlined our vision:



*Our commitment to Aberdeenshire's children and young people, is to provide you with the right support, in the right place, at the right time. By helping you reach your individual potential and goals, we will work together to make Aberdeenshire the best place in Scotland to grow up. //*

And the purpose of our improvement actions must support the Scottish Government's overall aim to:



*Safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. //*

## What is Wellbeing?

**The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential and ensures that children's rights and every child and young person's wellbeing is promoted. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be:**

Each child's wellbeing is unique. Key wellbeing indicators make it easier for children and families and the people working with them to discuss how a child or young person is doing at a point in time and if there is a need for support. Wellbeing is influenced by children's individual experiences and changing needs as they grow.



A range of experiences can have negative effects on young people. This might be one of the 10 recognised Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or other adversities such as bereavement or bullying, or where a family is affected by illness, disability or poverty. Each child should be helped to reach their full potential as an individual.

Our previous Children's Services Plan was developed by listening to what children, young people, parents, carers, and people who work helping families told us. We listened to what you told us about your experiences, and what is most important to you.

Our plan demonstrated how all services in Aberdeenshire will work together to plan and provide the best support. It says what we will do to help improve children and young people's wellbeing in Aberdeenshire.

## Strategic Direction

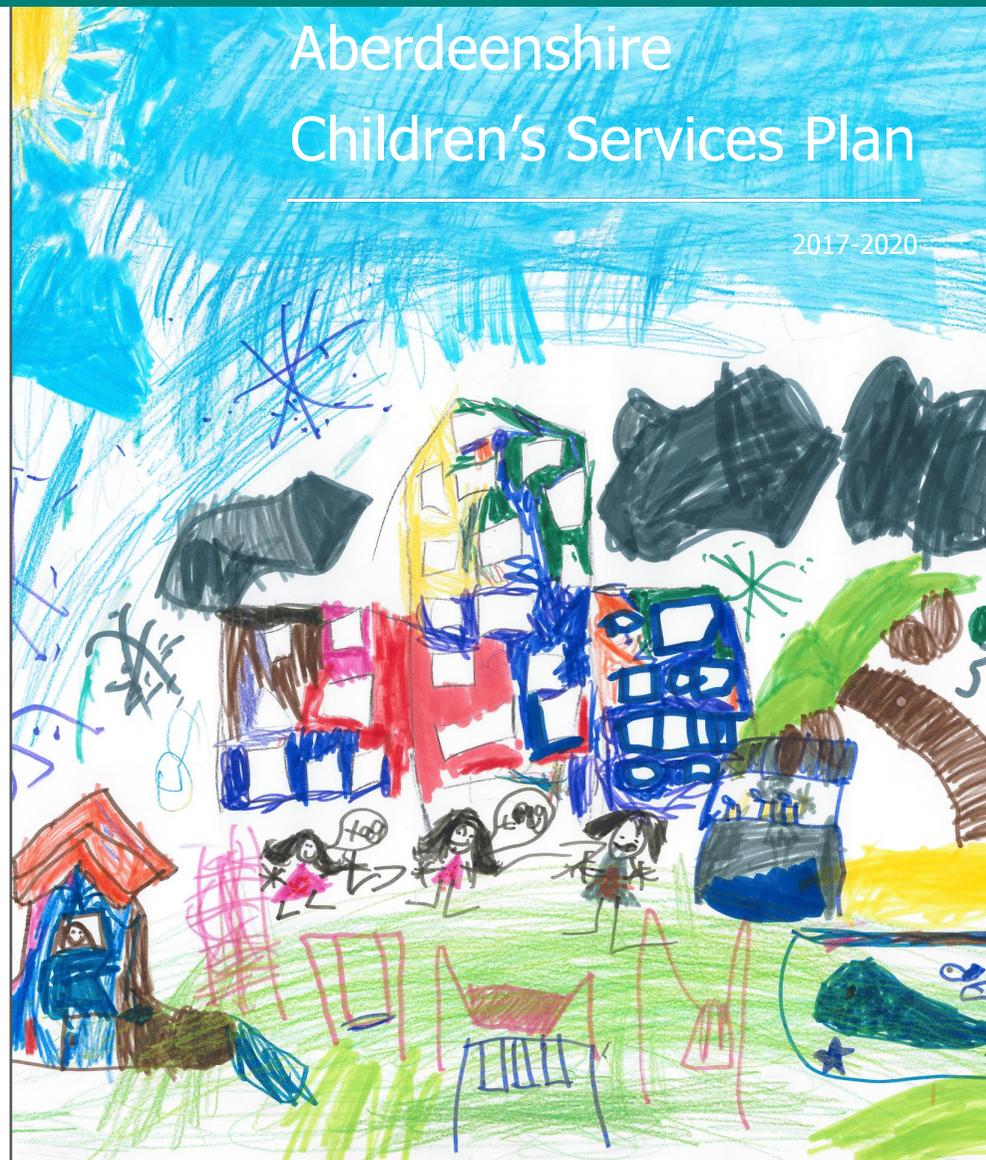
**The Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 sets the strategic direction and objectives of the Children's Services Plan to improve wellbeing for children and young people in Aberdeenshire for the next three years and will work as a road map for achieving these goals.**

In 2017, we identified the following priorities:

- #1.** Providing help for care experienced children & young people (called Corporate Parenting)
- #2.** Making sure children and young people aren't affected by their own, or someone else's drug or alcohol use
- #3.** Supporting children with a disability and their families
- #4.** Making sure children get the best start in life by giving the best support to families in the early years (children aged 0 to 8 years old)
- #5.** Helping children & young people enjoy great mental health and wellbeing.

# Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan

2017-2020



## Providing help for care experienced children & young people (called Corporate Parenting)

**Our looked after young people told us that a good corporate parent is:**



*When Aberdeenshire Council and people who work there act as our parent and takes responsibility for doing everything that a good parent should do, for looked after children and care leavers* //

**The work of the Corporate Parenting Leads group has focussed on the following 5 priorities:**

1. Voice of the child - Children and young people are at the heart of decision making in relation to all aspects of their lives and are supported to make their views and wishes heard.
2. Placement stability - young people will be supported to feel safe and secure in their placements and involved in their wider communities.
3. Health of looked after children & care leavers – we will ensure that children looked after and care leavers have access to good health and wellbeing services and are enabled to become responsible for their own health and wellbeing. They will know their health history responsible for their own health and wellbeing. They will know their health history, in particular when leaving care.
4. Education – we will ensure that children looked after have the best opportunities to fulfil their potential, and that we have high aspirations for their futures, with the right support being offered, at the right time.
5. Care leavers – we will prepare young people for further education, employment and independent living, ensuring they have suitable accommodation, and are able to live independently with limited but accessible and appropriate support, and experience greater stability.

# #1

### Over the last 3 years we have achieved the following:

- We have celebrated the successes of CEYP individually and as part of a bespoke 'Celebrating Success Event' which will be repeated every three years
- We have recruited a Virtual Head Teacher to support attainment in education for CEYP
- CEYP have been consistently involved in service improvement, recruitment and training.
- Young people's voices are heard individually in relation to their own lives and collectively in relation to service planning and improvement
- No young people at the point of leaving care have been placed in a B&B accommodation
- We have supported an increased number of care leavers to sustain their own tenancies and increased choice for care leavers through a suite of supportive accommodation for care leavers
- We have worked with our care leavers to support a return to the Service at times they most need support and have seen an increased up take in this offer.
- We have increased the number of young people being supported to remain in their placements under continuing care beyond 18 years of age
- We have provided bespoke work experience opportunities for CEYP to increase their confidence and skills in the workplace
- We have developed training for anyone working with CEYP to enable a better understanding of the challenges they face and how we work together to support and improve outcomes
- We have invested in mentoring for CEYP through MCR Pathways with positive feedback on direct impact on wellbeing.
- We are prioritising mental health screening and support for CEYP when first accommodated resulting in earlier intervention and support

### Our next plan will be built on the 5 foundations of the Care Review:

**Voice** - Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.

**Family** - Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

**Care** - Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.

**People** - The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

**Scaffolding** - Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

## ***Making sure children and young people aren't affected by their own, or Someone else's drug or alcohol use.***

### **The work of the Substance Misuse Thematic Group has focussed on the following three priorities:**

- Improving information and supports available to children, young people, and families
- Supporting collaboration between adult and children's services to address the impact of substance use on families
- Addressing workforce development needs in relation to supporting children, young people and families in relation to substance use.

### **Over the last 3 years we have achieved the following:**

- A range of public health resources and local information on alcohol and substance has been produced and is available to frontline staff to signpost and/or refer parents to drug and alcohol services
- Aberdeenshire Young people have been supported to create what their own social media messages about the risks associated with drugs and alcohol
- Police Scotland are delivering SLIDE in schools to raise awareness of the risks of drug use and involvement in Serious and Organised Crime.
- Use of the Fearless helpline is being promoted amongst school pupils and parents.
- In collaboration with Crew 2000, Police Scotland School Liaison Officers co-produced materials which reflect the new drugs available to young people to be delivered across all schools in Aberdeenshire.
- Drug awareness training and intervention workshops were delivered in Peterhead Academy and are due to be rolled out to six further schools.
- Further local delivery of drug awareness/information events have taken place in schools across Aberdeenshire to support parents and communities understand, signpost and tackle drug and alcohol related issues.
- A Corra Foundation funded project has been established in Inverurie Academy to work directly with young people as an early intervention initiative.
- Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership has funded a Diversionary Project delivered by Police Scotland in Central Aberdeenshire for young people who are at risk of school exclusion or have been excluded from school and are known to be at risk due to drug and alcohol issues.

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- A multi-agency represented Operational and Strategic Oversight Group has been established in relation to the impact of Serious Organised Crime relating to drug supply and associated risks to children, young people, vulnerable adults and our communities in Aberdeenshire.
  - Targeted joint social and police early intervention and prevention initiatives at annual summer Games and Shows providing direct intervention and in some situations follow on provision of support to young people seen to be affected by drugs and alcohol.

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**Next Steps:**

Whilst we have made significant strides to improve our approach to supporting children, young people, families, schools and communities to be safe places, free from the impact of drug and alcohol harm, we are not there yet and further work is required.

Our next three year plan will build on the foundation work described above to develop locally informed practice and more effective ways of working with our children, young people and families including:

- Workforce Wide Training Needs Analysis to inform the development of a tiered learning and development suite of resources to support the increased knowledge and skills of our workforce..
- A Children's and Young Persons Needs Analysis inform what our children and young people require at each stage in their development and growth to be safe from the impact of drugs and alcohol.
- Support the continuation and expansion of the Police Scotland Diversionary Project to locations in North Aberdeenshire.
- Support the continuation and expansion of the ADA Early Intervention Initiative in targeted Secondary School locations.
- Using the public health approach to support six pilot schools to be safe places, free from the impact of drug harms through a series of workshops and training events delivered by Crew 2000 to teachers, young people and parents.
- School resources and lessons plans to be developed in collaboration with Crew 2000 and our young people to reflect Aberdeenshire trends and to replace the out of date "PSE" model.
- Develop networks of peer educators to work in their school localities
- Roll out all of the above across the whole schools system in Aberdeenshire in the next three years.

## ***Supporting children with a disability and their families***

**The work of the children with a Disability Thematic Subgroup has a focus on actively seeking, promoting and supporting high quality outcomes for disabled children and young people in Aberdeenshire.**

In particular, the group has focussed on the following three priorities:

- Child Protection and Disability
- Multi-agency Pathways and processes for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Post-School Transitions for Young People with Disabilities

**Over the last 3 years we have achieved the following:**

- The Wrap-Around Care Model is implemented in 6 of the 9 areas of Aberdeenshire. This has improved the range of support available to young people with complex needs in a safe environment.
- The number of children supported through a Self-Directed Support package has continued to grow, providing flexibility in the way in which families are empowered to access a range of support which meets individual need
- Development of a range of ALDO Online Learning and Development Modules including 'Understanding Sensory Behaviours (4 modules); Autism for Pupil Support Assistants and; Health and Social Care courses on Autism'
- Strengthened our commitment to 'autism friendly schools.'
- Children's Services to Adult Services Framework and Post-16 Transitions Framework in 2017
- Promotion of the use of the Autism Toolbox and the suite of guidance available for schools. These include support strategies for children and young people, supported by online learning and face-to-face training.

**#3**

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### **Next Steps:**

The service representatives of the Children with a Disability group have worked hard to achieve the aims which have been reported on over the past three years. The group is committed to further promoting and supporting high quality outcomes for disabled children and young people in Aberdeenshire.

Whilst we have made significant strides to improve outcomes for children with disabilities, we are not there yet and further work is required: Our next plan will focus on:

- Improving outcomes for individuals with autism and to contributing to the promotion and implementation of the future Aberdeenshire Autism strategy post 2021.
- We will also strive to improve outcomes for children and young people with a disability in the transition to adulthood.

To do this we will:

- Ensure the views of the child is at the heart of service design and planning
- Ensure the workstream has appropriate representation from key partners
- Continue to develop evidence-based resources around autism and anxiety
- Evaluate our online ALDO Sensory Training to assess its impact on practice

## ***Making sure children get the best start in life by giving the best support to families in the early years (children aged 0 to 8 years old)***

**The Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG) supports a multi-agency approach, working in partnership to build resilience, promote wellbeing and meet the needs of children and families. The group aims to provide guidance and support to staff working directly with 0 – 8's to ensure that they have high expectations for all children and facilitate early interventions which have maximum impact on outcomes and improve life chances.**

The EYSG aims to support continuous improvement and transformational change to positively impact on outcomes for children. In the last 3 years the agreed priorities have been:

- Develop and support early years forums
- Support language and communication skills in early years prior to starting school – not enough
- Community connectiveness to promote child's wellbeing and lifelong learning
- Parenting Support
- Play

**Over the last 3 years we have achieved the following:**

- A celebration event was hosted in Summer 2018, which shared good practice across the Early years Forums.
- The Northern Alliance as a whole has reported a closing of the gap in children's average Phonological Awareness scores between children living in the most deprived areas compared with children living in the medium and least deprived areas by the end of the P1 school year.
- The average "gaps" in children's tripod grasp and pencil control skills, which are foundations of handwriting, have been eliminated.
- 82 early years practitioners from 8 schools have been trained and supported to use Talk Boost.
- This is a targeted intervention that narrows the gap in identified children with language delay and their peers
- The Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug Programme continues to be maintained and developed across Aberdeenshire.
- From April 2018 to March 2019, a total of 4779 Bookbug Baby (and 14 Gaelic Baby), 4990 Toddler (and 4 Gaelic Toddler) and 3074 Explorer (2 Gaelic Explorer) bags were gifted to children in Aberdeenshire.

# #4

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- As a result of work with Aberdeenshire, development of Aberdeenshire Family information Service (AFIS) and ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) has been progressed to newly include Children & Families Services.
  - Early Years Strategy Group has overseen provision of training for Early Years practitioners and delivery of specific parenting programmes, namely Triple P, PEEP and Infant Massage.
  - 15 Early Years practitioners have been trained on North East Scotland Outdoor Learning Group's (NESOLG) Early Years in Nature course over 2018/2019.
  - Pop up Play sessions have been provided by partners during school holiday times
  - Aberdeenshire PoPP continues to deliver high quality parenting support to families with children with behavioural issues. Improvements reported by Aberdeenshire families are better than the national average.

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### **Next Steps**

Whilst we have made significant strides to support resilience in families and promote wellbeing, further work is required on improving early intervention to address the impact of inequality which remains a priority for Children's Services Planning.

Our next 3-year plan will focus on:

- Measuring whole-system impact on early intervention and support for children and their families to reduce inequalities and narrow the gap in educational attainment
- Further developing the professional learning opportunities to determine a consistent and collaborative approach to achieving early interventions for children and families, across the multi-agency workforce
- Continuing to build capacity within the multi-agency workforce to provide interventions that improve outcomes for children and families
- Increasing accessibility of information which promotes improved health and wellbeing, to our multi agency workforce, children and their families

## ***Helping children & young people enjoy great mental health and wellbeing.***

**The vision of the Mental Health Group is that Aberdeenshire's Children and Young people are mentally flourishing. The broad aims of the group are to:**

- Improve outcomes in all children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (with particular consideration of the most vulnerable, such as care experienced children)
- Ensure children and young people's voices are listened to when planning services
- Support increased confidence in the multi-agency workforce, parents and carers, in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and when supporting children and young people experiencing difficulties
- Improve awareness of mental health and wellbeing provision for children and young people, and how to access this
- Remove and overcome any barriers and stigma encountered by children and young people who experience mental health problems
- Ensure lifelong learning, and engagement at key stages, supports children and young people's development of skills and knowledge, with increased capacity to face the challenges of life which can impact mental health

# #5

### **Over the last 3 years we have achieved the following:**

- Senior pupils from Inverurie Academy played a key role in the creation of a film that aims to highlight the importance of Leadership in improving mental health outcomes. The film will be promoted across Aberdeenshire during 2019/2020.
- Young people from Mearns Youth Forum co-produced a Year of Young People #YOYP218 Signature Event with a theme of Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness.
- Development of the multi-agency professional learning matrix, which identifies minimum levels of mental health training for all adults who come into contact with children and young people as part of their jobs
- A presentation on Aberdeenshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy was delivered to approximately 250 cross-service managers and leaders to raise awareness of the Strategy, the tool, and the wider work of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Thematic Subgroup.
- Piloting the Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) Project across 5 Aberdeenshire Localities supporting children and young people who are experiencing anxiety that does not meet the criteria for a CAMHS referral, by using a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) informed approach.

### **Next Steps**

Whilst we have made progress in building capacity to improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in Aberdeenshire, further work is required and Mental Health and Wellbeing remains a priority for Children's Services Planning.

Our next 3-year plan will focus on:

- Measuring whole-system impact on children & young people's mental health
- Further developing the professional learning matrix which sets out core mental health professional learning recommendations for the multi-agency workforce
- Continuing to build capacity within the multi-agency workforce to support children and young people who are experiencing anxiety
- Developing a trauma-informed and responsive multi-agency workforce, which is capable of recognising where people are affected by trauma and adversity, that can respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery, and that can address inequalities and improve life chances
- Increasing accessibility of information about supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

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## ***Have your say – How to respond?***

***Complete the consultation questions online at  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CSP2023>***

*Or*

***Contact us by phone or email to find out  
about other ways to submit your views***

***Phone: 01467538029***

***Email: [equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)***