

ITEM No ...6.....

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 19 AUGUST 2024

REPORT ON: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PLAN 2023-27 PROGRESS UPDATE

REPORT BY: AUDREY MAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 221-2024

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides Committee with the first 6-month update on progress with the Children and Families Service Plan 2023-27. The plan was approved by Elected Members on 4 September 2023 (report number 185-2023).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee notes progress being made in respect of the Improvement Plan and requests the Executive Director to provide a further update in 6 months.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Children and Families Service Plan aligns with the City Plan 2022-32 and Council Plan 2022-27. As such, it outlines 6 priorities which aim to contribute towards reducing child poverty and inequalities in income, education, and health.

4.2 Since the plan was approved by Elected Members in September 2023, the service has worked both internally with partners and with children, young people and families to progress a range of associated actions. Some key developments include:

4.2.1 **Actively listening and flexibly responding** - all but one secondary school now has a Champions Board for care experienced children and young people, with young people at the other school having access to Boards. At their request, the young people have participated in Columba 1400 Leadership Academies, where a facilitator said: 'Your hopes for this week were to become better leaders and make friendships . . . you have achieved this with flying colours'. The positive impact on young people's outlook has been noted by Education and Social Work teams. To enhance 1:1 engagement, the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app has been rolled out across the service, with an average of 18 Social Workers using the technology each month. A review of advocacy services led by a partnership of Dundee Independent Advocacy Support (DIAS), Partners in Advocacy (PIA), Advocating Together and Who Cares? has commenced. Initial work has clarified eligibility/referral criteria before making proposals on how shared resources can be maximised and reporting arrangements streamlined. Over the next 6 months, priorities include supporting all schools to achieve at least a Bronze Award in Rights Respecting Schools in 2024-25. The service will also use MOMO to conduct surveys of children and young people's experiences in Child Protection processes to inform improvements. The service will actively engage with the Champions Boards and City-Wide Pupil Voice group about what matters to young people in our city and respond appropriately.

- 4.2.2 **Improving children and young people's health and wellbeing** - the service continues to directly deliver or commission a range of services to promote health and wellbeing, details of which were provided, Article IV of the Minute of Meeting of the Children, Families & Communities Committee of 4 December 2023, Report No 359-2023 refers. A further report will be submitted in late 2025. In addition, a School Age Childcare Early Adopter Project has so far involved 76 families and 96 children receiving additional support to reduce barriers to access. A Welfare Officer will now be co-located in 4 Secondary Schools. To build the capacity of family-based support for care experienced children and young people, actions progressed over the last 9 months have included a focus on children and young people in Kinship Care, such as enhanced support from the What Matters to You initiative and Place2B parenting support sessions. A review of Foster Care recruitment, retention and support facilitated by The Lens has led to the development of a new website, increased out of hours support to carers and group support sessions for carers. A review of approaches towards vulnerable adolescents will lead to the development of a co-located multi-agency service in April 2025. The balance of family-based versus residential care for care experienced children and young people has increased to 90.3% above the national average of 89.2% and there have been no new admissions to secure care for 18 months.
- 4.2.3 As outlined in the Annual Report on Our Promise on 23 October 2023 (report number 295-2023), the service has also been coordinating the allocation of Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) with the Children's Service Planning Partnership (CSPP). This funding was provided to CSPPs by the Scottish Government as part of its response to the Independent Care Review to promote transformational change in the design and delivery of services. Locally, the CSPP received £894k per year up to March 2026 and supported stakeholders to develop bids which met the criteria in the context of key city-wide challenges and priorities. A third tranche of allocations was finalised in March 2024 and a total of 16 organisations have now been awarded funding for initiatives which include a focus on streamlining access to early support, early years, child healthy weight, vulnerable women, adolescents, children with a disability, school attendance and literacy and numeracy. In conjunction with partners, the service is supporting organisations to deliver against agreed input, throughput and outcomes. Further detail on all bids and their relationship with City, Council and Service Plan priorities are attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2.4 **Improving educational outcomes for all** - work to extend or modernise the learning estate has focused on the East End Community Campus, the Harris Academy Extension and funding arrangements for a Western Gateway Primary School. Maintenance and upgrading works across other sites have resulted in the highest level of condition and suitability in recent years. In respect of care experienced children and young people, Craigie Cottage was opened in late August 2023, Reid Square was commissioned as a Supported Accommodation facility for older care experienced young people and care leavers in January 2024 and Fairbairn Street Young People's House was re-provisioned as a Supported Accommodation facility in May 2024. Within Primary and Secondary Schools, over half have now achieved the Digital Schools Scotland Award; a Pedagogy Team has provided 10 schools with intensive support and another 16 with additional support; there has been a focus on improving confidence and consistency in the moderation and assessment of literacy and numeracy; work on a review of Additional Support Needs provision has commenced and is informing a new Inclusion Strategy; and a Strategic Equity Fund Plan for 2024-26 has been developed to promote effective use of all Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding over the next 2 years. St Ninian's Primary School were graded 'very good' by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education for 'raising attainment and achievement' (published May 2024).
- 4.2.5 **Improving sustained positive destinations for all young people** – the service contributed towards the Council-wide review of Youth Participation which was approved by the City Governance Committee on 22 April 2024. This review led to an agreed Action Plan under the 6 themes of Early Identification; Tracking and Monitoring; Integrated Approaches Towards Data; Post School Opportunities; Engagement with Communities and Families; and Additional

Support Needs. Both Heads of Service in the Children and Families Service are leading aspects of the plan and full updates will be provided in spring 2025. Some interim work has involved work with Career Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Education Scotland. It has included a re-designing of My World of Work, work with SDS to offer individual, group and whole class engagement and a targeted approach towards promoting the improved engagement of some young people with SDS. New Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) coordinators have been appointed to 7 schools. The latest data on positive (initial leaver) destinations published in February 2024 shows that nationally the proportion of young people in a positive destination has increased from 95.7% to 95.9%. Locally, there has been a steeper increase of 1.7% to 95.6%, just 0.3% behind the Scottish average and the highest on record for the city. In April 2024, 92.4% of Dundee's 2022/23 school leavers were still in a positive post-school destination. This is an increase of 0.8% from the previous year and is the highest-level to date. A focus of the Youth Participation plan is to ensure initial positive destinations are increasingly sustained.

- 4.2.6 **Improving early intervention and community support in the justice system** - the service continued to work with partners to establish an approach which involves people who commit offences receiving proportionate supervision and/or punishment across different parts of the justice system. In 2023-24, 92 people were Diverted from Prosecution by the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service as an alternative to a Court sentence. This was an increase of 15 from the year before. The service also provided voluntary support to 122 people on their release from a short-term prison sentence, an increase of 11 from the year before. Over the last 3-4 months, the service also worked with the Scottish Prison Service, Police Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnership and other partners to successfully implement the Scottish Government Early Release Scheme. Locally, this involved 20 short-term prisoners released a few months before the due date to reduce population pressures in prisons. Eligibility criteria excluded sexual offenders and perpetrators of domestic abuse. A Governor veto for any other person considered to present a high risk of harm also applied. Further information on the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan in general will be provided to the City Governance Committee on 18 November 2024.
- 4.2.7 **Supporting workforce and families to feel valued, confident, and competent** - this has continued to be a key priority, and service-wide forums have promoted an integrated approach between Education and Social Work teams. The service has held cross-service Leadership Learning Together Days. These days have been welcomed by staff and led to key work being progressed. For example, Education and Social Work leaders have contributed towards a new Cluster School/Social Work team approach; joint planning and support to children and young people on return from external residential care; and the current development of a joint response to requirements under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Scotland) Act 2024. Across the service, Quality Conversations are being implemented and Trauma Informed Practice training has been rolled out to all staff. Staff in all sectors continue to have access to quality Career Long Professional Learning which is impacting positively on their practice. Nursery and school leaders continue to work closely with senior leaders in the centre and the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change to develop and implement Every Dundee Learner Matters collaborative improvement strategy; across Social Work, an action plan to implement a new national Newly Qualified Social Worker Scheme (NQSW) from October 2024 has been developed; and within specific Social Work teams, new Risk Assessment training to strengthen support to vulnerable adolescents has been rolled out.
- 4.3 Some further highlights from the last 9 months include Millview Cottage Children's House being awarded the Outstanding Residential Care Service in the Scottish Social Services Awards in November 2023 and 100% of all Dundee City Council nurseries being graded Good or higher across all quality indicators inspected by the Care Inspectorate during the 2023/24 inspections.
- 4.4 In April 2024, the service was also shortlisted as a finalist in the UK-wide Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2024 for its approach towards supporting care experienced children and young people under Our Promise.

4.5 The plan includes 36 performance indicators and in 16 progress is already being made or remained at 100%; 3 remain the same; 14 have declined; and information is not yet available for the remaining 3. Some indicators will be updated following the Insight (national benchmarking tool) update scheduled to take place late September 2024. A full analysis of all indicators will be provided in the next 6-monthly report.

4.6 Over the next 6 months, the service will maintain a focus on the plan and key priorities include leading on the development of a UNCRC Action Plan, taking part in Wave 3 of the National Improving Writing Programme, with in and a review of Foster Carer fees/allowances fees/allowances.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been subject to the pre-IIA screening tool and does not make any recommendations for changes to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and agree with its content.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

Audrey May
Executive Director
Children and Families Service

July 2024

APPENDIX 1

WFWF AWARDED BIDS

Organisation	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Local Priority	Bid Focus	Impact
Alternatives Counselling	✓			Early Years, Emotional Health and Wellbeing	£88K – new mental health support to vulnerable expectant women who will struggle during pregnancy and possibly afterwards, mirroring priorities on early years, vulnerable women and CP.	O-5's on Child Protection Register and in care
Advice Infrastructure			✓	Inequalities and families at risk of harm	£108K – to reinstate the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) triage function for a coordinated partnership system and to accelerate access to services.	Maximising resources and swifter access
Dundee Bairns		✓		Inequalities, Child Poverty, Child Healthy Weight	£238k – for a capacity building approach towards child healthy weight and expansion of tea clubs in Primary Schools.	Reduce or mitigate poverty
DCC and partners		✓		Inequalities, Vulnerable Adolescents	£442k – for renovation and running costs for the co-location of a multi-disciplinary team at Crichton Street. This was the largest bid and has both CSPP commitment and SG approval.	Child protection; balance of care
DCC Discover Work			✓	School Attendance, Vulnerable Adolescents	£205k – to support coordination of approaches towards Youth Participation, by integrating into senior education leader's approach to post-school transition.	Positive Destinations/Youth Participation
DCC and Partners	✓			Child Poverty, Inequalities, School Holidays	£281K – widened, targeted and enhanced school holiday activities for children and young people in the 6 Child Poverty priority groups, mirroring priorities relating to child poverty and child protection. New partnership approach with The Yard.	Poverty and child protection

Dundee Theatre	REP		✓	Early Years, Inequalities	£156k – a new early intervention Creative Family Wellbeing Service offering out-of-hours wellbeing workshops, dramatherapy sessions and psychoeducational support for those experiencing trauma.	Poverty
DVVA (Alliance)		✓		Inequalities, School Attendance, Vulnerable Adolescents	£154k – for the coordination and maximisation of multiple volunteer services across the city, with a view to consistent volunteer development, career pathways and targeting of support.	Maximising Resources
DIAS and Partners		✓		Inequalities, School Attendance, Vulnerable Adolescents	£219k – for the coordination and maximisation of multiple advocacy services across the city. This reflects the Inequalities and Advocacy priorities and anticipates pending Human Rights requirements.	Maximising Resources
Mental Health Foundation		✓		Inequalities, Emotional Health and Wellbeing	£314K – a capacity building Together to Thrive model with NHST CAMHS and DCC to build the confidence and competence of key staff when responding to concerns in primary aged children.	Primary Age
National Literacy Trust Dundee and Partners		✓		Inequalities, Literacy	£135K – a whole family Talk and Play Together literacy initiative which builds literacy skills and strengthens family relationships, mirroring priorities on literacy, family support and transitions to secondary school.	Primary Age
TCA		✓		Early Years and vulnerable women	£662K – extended holistic support to women at risk of pregnancy and having a child removed from their care and support to their partners, mirroring priorities relating to early years, vulnerable women and child protection.	Child protection and number of children in care
The Yard and Partners		✓		Child poverty, children with a disability	£133K – new support for families with disabled children during school holidays, mirroring priorities relating to children and young people with additional support needs and a disproportionate number of children with a disability requiring alternative care.	Disability and ASN

					New partnership approach with DCC (Holiday Programme Partnership).	
The Yard and Partners		✓		Inequalities, children with a disability	£98k – for additional support provided to pupils with ASN transitioning from Primary to Secondary school, with an initial focus on the Baldragon Academy cluster.	Disability and ASN
Total Mobile			✓	Inequalities, child protection	£84k – to support DCC Children and Families Service to review shift patterns and models of working to focus support when needed most, such as evenings and weekends.	Maximising Resources
What Matters to You		✓		Child Poverty, Inequalities, School Attendance, Vulnerable Adolescents, Child Healthy Weight	£44k – for a 12-month post to support data collation, analysis and learning in the 2 pilot sites of Strathmartine and Lochee, feeding into both LCPPs. A total place whole family approach.	Maximising Resources

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APPENDIX 2

Performance Indicators

Indicators/ Measures	2021/22 Baseline	Target	Latest Data	Improve ?
% of primary 1 children classified as obese or overweight	26.6%	21.2% (2025)	23.8% (2023)	✓
% attendance of all children and young people living in SIMD Quintile 1	87%	95% (2025)	87% (2024)	-
% point difference attendance gap between children living in SIMD 1 areas and the average for SIMD 2-5	3.6	3.1 (2025)	4.3 (2024)	✗
% take up of free school meals.	62%	71% (2025)	66% (2024)	✓
% P1,4,7 pupils achieving expected CfE Level in Literacy	70.0%	75% (2023)	73.2%* (2024)	✓
% point gap in literacy in P1-7 between pupils living in SIMD 1 areas and living in SIMD 5 areas	19.9	10.3 (2025)	17.2* (2024)	✓
% P1,4,7 pupils achieving expected CfE Level in Numeracy	77%	81% (2023)	79.6%* (2024)	✓
% point gap in numeracy in P1-7 between pupils living in SIMD 1 areas and living in SIMD 5 areas	13.6	13.2 (2023)	13.9* (2024)	✗
% S3 pupils achieving CfE 3 rd Level or better in Literacy	83.6%	90% (2023)	79.2%* (2024)	✗
% S3 pupils achieving CfE 3 rd Level or better in Numeracy	80.9%	87% (2023)	76.2%* (2024)	✗
Average Total Tariff for SIMD 1	637	660 (2025)	568 (2023)	✗
% Gap in Attainment Tariff Average scores between school leavers living in SIMD 1 areas and in SIMD 5 areas	47%	43% (2025)	49% (2023)	✗
% care experienced school leavers entering positive destinations	83.3%	95% (2025)	71% (2023)	✗
% of 16-19 Years olds participating in education, employment or training	89.4%	92% (2025)	90% (2024)	✓
% of 16-19 Year olds participating in education, employment or training from SIMD1	84.8%	94.1% (2025)	87% (2024)	✓
% of care experienced children and young people in care settings within Dundee postcodes	58%	60% (2023)	61% (2024)	✓
Number of children and young people placed in external foster or external residential placements	132	125 (2023)	97 (2024)	✓
School attendance rate for care experienced children and young people at home or in kinship care	84.5%	88%	72%**	✗

% of care-leavers receiving aftercare up to the age of 26 years who are in education, training or employment	60%	70%	40% (2023)	X
Child protection re-registrations within 24 months	6%	4% (2025)	2% (2024)	✓
% of children and young people in more than 1 care placement in the past 12 months	18%	15% (2025)	26%*** (2023)	X
Total number of children in care at any one time	436	410 (2025)	379 (2024)	✓
% of case files audited rated overall as good or better	63%	85%	94%	✓
% of Young People's Houses inspected with good or better indicators in all areas of inspection	82%	100% (2024)	83% (2024)	✓
% of care experienced children and young people giving positive responses about where they live	86%	90%	TBC	TBC
% of child's plans where the voice of children was recorded	n/a	80%	64%	-
% where the child's views that were sought were meaningful to the Plan's development	n/a	70%	TBC	TBC
% of Community Payback Orders successfully completed	72%	80% (2026)	70% (up from 65% last year)	X
% of adult short-term prisoners commencing Voluntary Assistance	57%	70%	79%	✓
% of 16-20 year-old short-term prisoners taking up Voluntary Assistance	100%	100%	86% (6 out of 7)	X
% of Community Justice Social Work reports resulting in a custodial sentence	16%	8%	17% (2023)	X
% of Diversion from Prosecution cases successfully completed	77%	80%	68% (2023)	X
% of recipients satisfied with Unpaid Work placements	100%	100%	100% (2023)	✓
% of people in Unpaid Work satisfied with the support provided	92% (2019/20)	95%	100% (2021)	✓
Reconviction Rate	26.2% (2018/19)	29.5%	TBC	TBC
Average number of reconvictions per offender	0.47 (2018/19)	0.49	0.47**** (2022)	-

* Interim data – will be finalised by September 2024

** This compares with care experienced children and young people in internal Foster Care with an average 92.2% attendance and in external Foster Care an 87% attendance rate.

*** The national average for more than 1 move in the last 12 months is 17% and neighbouring local authorities are 25% and 30%. Whilst placement stability is essential moves can also be positive such as repatriating brothers/sisters and the service is carrying out a detailed analysis to inform any improvement actions.

**** Most reliable figures that are currently available relate to the pre-pandemic period in 2018-19

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