

Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26



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Our Directorate Improvement Plan

Introduction

Fife's Education and Children's Directorate is one of the largest in Scotland. We strive to provide high quality education and social work services to children, young people and families.

All children and young people matter regardless of race, age, sex, gender, disability or family circumstances. We want to ensure that all children and young people experience an inclusive, equitable and supportive environment that encourages them to have a strong voice in their learning and development.

The Directorate Improvement Plan that follows aligns with a number of other strategic plans that support the Directorate's work, and contributes to delivering the Plan 4 Fife, enabling the Directorate to continue working to achieve our purpose of **Improving Life Chances for All**.

Partnership and collaboration with a range of other agencies and services – including: the wider Fife children's services partnership, the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC), and other national and local bodies – is key to ensuring positive outcomes for all.

The Directorate Improvement Plan sets out, at a high level, the challenges and barriers faced by children and young people in their lives and learning and how our services plan to address these. It outlines our key strategic priorities and actions to provide direction across the Directorate describing how, collectively, we aim to improve the outcomes and experiences of all of Fife's children, young people and their families over the period 2023-26.

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

Our communities, children and young people and our services

The geography of Fife

Fife has a mix of urban areas, small towns and rural areas. Overall, the proportion of each type resembles the geography of Scotland.

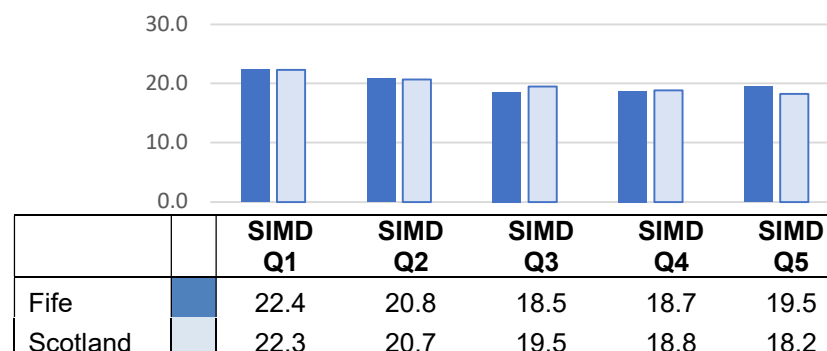
Area	Urban	Small towns	Rural
Fife	64.1%	17.7%	18.2%
Scotland	71.7%	11.2%	17.1%

However, Fife's main urban areas (Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Glenrothes and the Levenmouth area) lack the scale and structure of settlement seen in and around Scotland's four largest cities (classified as large urban areas).

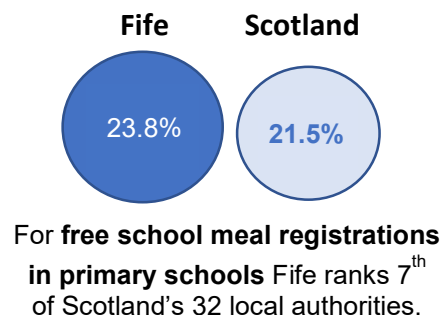
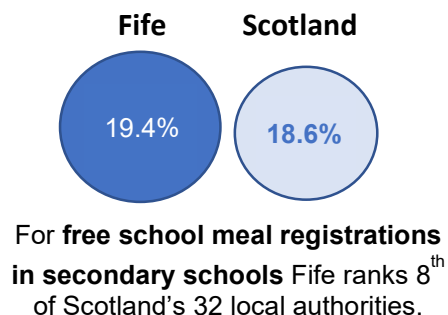
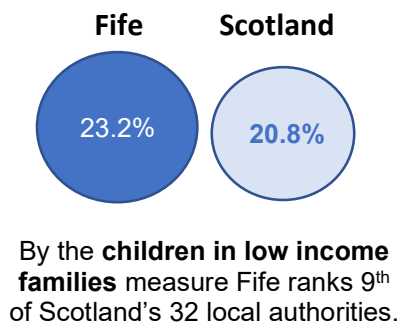
Area	Large urban	Other urban	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Access-ible rural	Remote rural
Fife	0.0%	64.1%	17.7%	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%
Scotland	37.8%	33.9%	8.6%	2.6%	11.6%	5.5%

Area deprivation in Fife (SIMD)

The table below shows the geographical distribution of school pupils in Fife and Scotland, based on the SIMD Quintile where they live. SIMD Q1 areas are the most deprived in Scotland, SIMD Q5 areas are the least deprived. The profiles of Fife and Scotland are very similar.



Measures of child and household poverty



Why are the SIMD profiles of Fife and Scotland similar, if Fife has higher levels of child poverty?

In general, SIMD over-represents poverty in large urban areas and under-represents poverty in other types of area. Fife's lack of any large urban area means that it's levels of child poverty are not fully represented by its share of SIMD quintile 1 (SIMD Q1) areas.



Children & young people we support

- 71,746 children and young people, aged 0-17 years.
- 748 Children Looked After.
- 136 children on the Child Protection Register.
- Approximately 3,000 children and young people supported by social work at any time.
- 6,452 registrations for early years provision.

- 49,621 pupils in Fife schools (27,367 in primary, 22,095 in secondary and 159 in special schools).

The table below gives further information about some key groups of interest within the total cited above.

Group	Number	%
With an additional support need	14,438	29.1
Living in SIMD Quintile 1	11,116	22.4
Speaking English as an Additional Language	2,916	5.9
Minority Ethnic	2,827	5.7
Assessed as having a disability	1,063	2.1
All school pupils	49,261	100.0



How we support our children & young people

- 13 children and families social work area teams, plus additional teams providing specialist support.
- 174 FTE senior and main grade social workers, and 124 FTE social work assistants and other qualified staff.

- 156 schools in Fife (133 primary schools, 18 secondary schools and 5 special schools).
- 3,656 FTE teaching staff (1,815 primary schools, 1,653 secondary schools, 99 special schools and 89 centrally employed).



Note on data sources

- Data on schools, school staff, pupil numbers, early years provision – taken from annual census returns for the start of the 2022/23 session (Scottish Government).
- Data on population numbers taken from the June 2021 Mid Year Population Estimate (NRS).
- Data on children & families social work provision taken from CLAS census return of 31 July 2022 (Scottish Government) and annual local authority staffing returns (SSSC) and management information (for involvements).

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

Our Directorate Purpose and Our Values

The Education and Children's Services Directorate was established in 2014, bringing together a wide range of council services for children, families and communities in Fife.

In its first year, the Directorate developed a common purpose statement: **Improving Life Chances for All**. The Directorate's purpose was reviewed by leaders from across the Directorate's services and teams, as part of the Directorate Improvement Plan 2021-23. It was assessed as continuing to provide a clear statement of our shared goal: working together to improve life opportunities for children, young people and families across Fife, with a particular focus on closing the equity and equality gap faced by many disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.



The Directorate also has an established set of shared values, to inform the way that our services are developed, designed and delivered – and to provide a clear framework to influence practice and inform decision-making. They are:

- **Compassion** - *showing empathy, sensitivity, kindness, understanding, a non-judgemental attitude, and actively engaging to help and support every child.*
- **Ambition** – *being ambitious for every child and doing all that we can to remove challenges or barriers to their happiness, development, learning and achievement.*
- **Respect** – *acknowledging and upholding the dignity and rights of every child, being inclusive and celebrating diversity, actively listening and giving a voice to every child.*
- **Equity** – *fairness, justice, without bias or discrimination – removing or mitigating the impact of any barriers that children may in their lives, enabling all to thrive and flourish.*

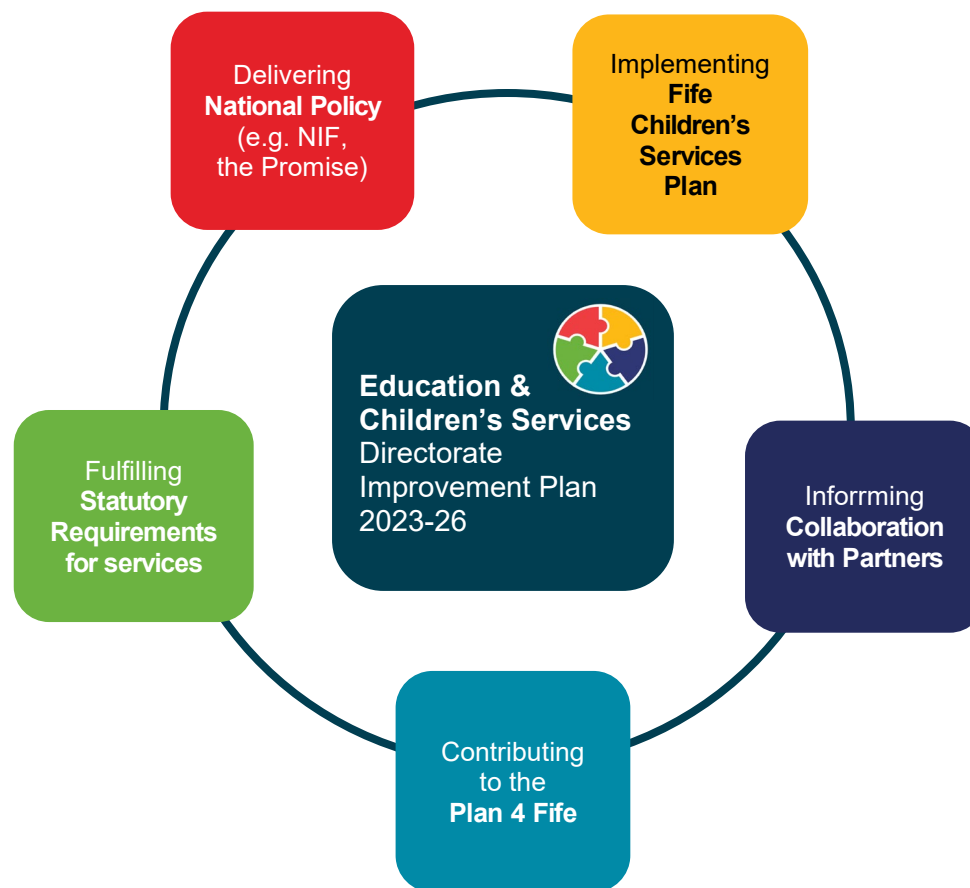
The Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26 provides a basis for the Directorate to continue striving to achieve our purpose, and to further develop services that reflect our shared values.

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

The Role of Our Plan

The Directorate Improvement Plan provides a basis for working with a range of partners at national and local level, enabling the Directorate to:

- Deliver **national policy**, including: the Promise, Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Whole Family Wellbeing and the National Improvement Framework for schools.
- Support the implementation of the **Fife Children's Services Plan**, for which the Directorate provides a lead on behalf of Fife Council.
- Fulfil key **statutory requirements** for the planning and delivery of services.
- Inform **collaborative working** with other Council services and wider partners to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of children, including: Corporate Parenting, Child Protection, Children's Rights, and actions to mitigate Child Poverty.
- Inform Fife's participation in the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) for schools and early learning settings.
- Describe the Directorate's contribution to the **Plan 4 Fife**, Fife's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.



Our Directorate Improvement Plan

The structure of our Directorate Improvement Plan for 2023-26

The last three-year strategic planning period for children's services in Fife – from 2020 through to 2023 – covered a period in which we saw the impact of a major, global pandemic (the Covid-19 pandemic) and the beginnings of a period of recovery.

In developing the current Directorate Improvement Plan, we have sought to identify the most significant challenges and barriers to life opportunities faced by children, young people and families in Fife. Page 13 provides an overview of these. Many of these challenges reflect a need to focus on core aspects of service delivery – to help sustain and further strengthen recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. They also reflect the importance of ensuring that – as outcomes and experiences improve for children, young people and families across Fife – these also reflect a significant improvement in equity and equality.

In order to help ensure a clear focus for this work, the Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26 is structured in the form of separate improvement plans for:

- The Education Services (including early years settings, schools and specialist provision)
- Children and Families Social Work.

The following pages set out these Improvement Plans.



Improving life
chances for all

Education Service Improvement Plan 2023-26

The Fife Education Service supports the learning and development of children and young people across all ages, regardless of their individual need.

The Education Service oversees, quality assures and supports provision in the early years and primary, secondary and special school sectors, as well delivering a range of specialist provision for learners.

The Service contributes as a lead partner to the work of the Fife Children's Services Partnership, which oversees joint working across wider children's services to improve the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families in Fife.



Further details can be found in the Fife Children's Services Plan (<http://www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023>)

Review of wider evidence

A key element in developing the Education Service Improvement Plan was work undertaken to review educational outcomes for children and young people in Fife. This work contributed to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that was undertaken to support development of the Fife Children's Services Plan 2023-26. Further details regarding the JSNA can be found in pages 6-10 of the plan (see: www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023).

The table on the following page summarises some of the key challenges highlighted by the wider evidence base on educational outcomes reviewed in developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Overview of current scorecard outcomes

The table below shows outcomes across a range of key measures for school education in Fife. The data reflects the most recent data published at national level (generally, for 2021/22 outcomes). The data on the left provides a comparison with the national average for Scotland. The performance quartile figure on the right is based on a poverty-adjusted benchmark comparator, which allows for influence of poverty on educational outcomes (see appendix 1 for further details).

	Outcomes compared with Scotland			Benchmark
	Fife	Scotland	Gap with Scotland	Performance quartile
Level 4 numeracy - by end S4	89.5	87.9	1.6	1
Level 5 numeracy - by end S4	61.5	61.6	-0.1	2
Level 4 literacy by end S4	92.1	92.0	0.1	2
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Literacy	68.4	70.5	-2.1	3
Attendance - Secondary schools	88.2	89.1	-0.9	3
Initial Positive Destinations	94.8	95.7	-0.9	3
Follow-up Positive Destinations	92.1	93.5	-1.4	3
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Numeracy	74.8	77.9	-3.1	3
Level 5 literacy - by end S4	70.3	74.5	-4.2	3
Attendance - Primary Schools	93.0	94.0	-1.0	4
3 or more Nat 5 passes by end S4	51.7	61.3	-9.7	4

There are some core strengths in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Overall, outcomes tend to sit close to the poverty-adjusted benchmark comparator. Aspects of attendance and wider achievement reflect a particular, continuing challenge.

Key challenges identified through our review of outcomes

Health & Wellbeing

- School data shows a significant increase in the number of young people with additional support needs related to family issues and **mental health**.
- We are seeing increasing issues in school relating to **relationships & behaviour** (e.g. self-regulation, distressed behaviour, violence and aggression and bullying).
- **Staff wellbeing** is an important contributor to an effective and improving education system.
- Further developing our partnership approach to **family support** will enable better support for distressed young people and improved whole family wellbeing.

Attendance & Engagement

- **Non-attendance** is a key factor in lower attainment and achievement. It has seen a sustained decline for a number of years and was adversely affected by the Covid pandemic
- **Non-attendance** is increasing significantly for young people with additional needs related to **family and mental health issues**
- **Engagement and meaningful participation** are key for effective service design and delivery. This includes children, young people, families and staff.
- **Partnership working** across children's services is key to improving whole family wellbeing and engagement. It will be important to strengthen the links between schools and wider partnership work and planning.

Achievement

- Achievement of CfE ACEL levels (ACEL) fell during the Covid pandemic and the **attainment gap** widened. In the past two years we have seen the beginning of recovery for CfE declarations in stages P1, P4 and P7.
- Numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5 are above benchmark attainment by end of S4.
- Although literacy at SCQF level 4 is above benchmark attainment by the end of S4, attainment for literacy at SCQF level 5 is below benchmark attainment.
- Measures of **cumulative attainment at National 5 by end of S4** are significantly lower than national comparators
- Evidence from cohort studies (e.g. Growing Up in Scotland) shows that closing the attainment gap requires **early intervention and appropriate, sustained support** – effective tracking and monitoring is key to achieving this

Positive Destinations

- Have been consistently below national rates of **positive destinations** over a number of years – and remain below national outcomes.
- Have begun to close gap with national for positive destinations, **with most schools seeing improvements** in 2022.
- Now matching national outcomes for SIMD Q1 and have been **closing the equity gap** for other aspects of disadvantage.
- However, a **significant equity gap** in outcomes remains.

Equity and Equality

- Poverty and other forms of social disadvantage remain barriers for children, young people and families that cut across across all educational outcomes.
- Outcomes are generally, poorer for a number of groups of learners (disability, young carer, ASN, etc) and significantly poorer for children those facing with **multiple forms of disadvantage**
- Outcomes are generally significantly poorer for **care experienced children** and children on the **child protection register**
- It is important to recognise and value the **diversity** of our children, young people and families. Our approaches must be anti-discriminatory for those with **protected characteristics**.

Our focus for improvement for 2023-26

In order to address the challenges highlighted on the previous page, the Education Service Improvement Plan addresses four key improvement priorities for the period 2023-26:

- Priority 1 – Improving **Health & Wellbeing**
- Priority 2 – Improving **Attendance and Engagement**
- Priority 3 – Improving **Achievement** (including literacy and numeracy, as well as wider achievement)
- Priority 4 – Improving **Positive Destinations**

For each of these outcomes there are significant differences in outcomes relating to equity and equality. These include – for example, differences in outcomes relating to measures of poverty or deprivation (SIMD, registration for free school meals), Additional Support Needs for learning, or being care experienced.

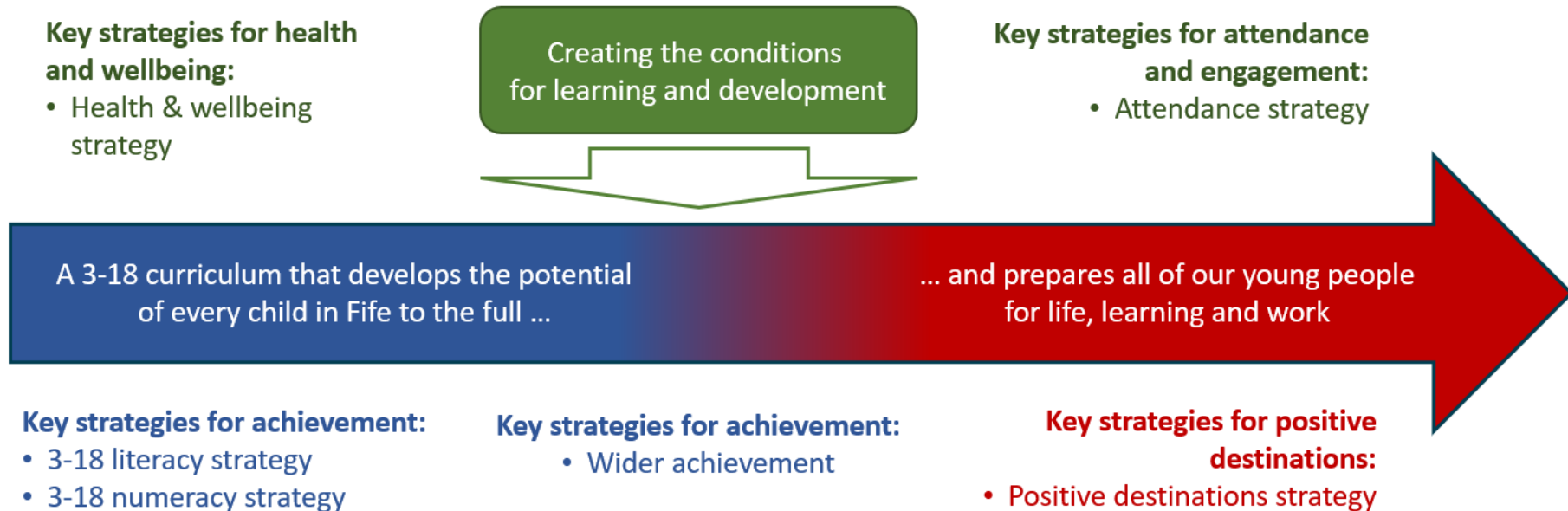
For this reason, **Equity and Equality** is recognised as a cross-cutting challenge which will need to be addressed across all of our improvement activity. Central to addressing this challenge will be work to promote the rights of our children and young people.

The pages that follow provide an outline of our planned improvement actions to address the challenges highlighted above.

Our key strategies to support improvement

In order to provide a framework for strategic planning and improvement across priority areas within the Education Service Improvement Plan, the service has identified a number of key strategies to ensure continuing improvement.

These are summarised in the figure below.



Whilst strategies and policies have already been developed across these areas, the aim is to create a simpler, more coherent strategic framework which ensures that:

- Fife's 3-18 curriculum meets the needs of all learners into the future, supporting every child and young person to develop skills for learning, life and work.
- There is a clear description of the way that work undertaken by the Education Service supports the Plan 4 Fife in delivering a socially just, sustainable and equitable Fife (for example, through work to close the equity gap in educational outcomes and by embedding Learning for Sustainability within the curriculum).
- There is a more focussed narrative about key strategies for improvement, supported by SMART measures of impact.

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 1 – Health & Wellbeing

(A full **Health & Wellbeing Strategy 23-26** accompanies this Improvement Plan)



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this? (Outcome)	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
<p>Improving Mental & Physical Wellbeing (Anxiety, Confidence, Self-Harm & Body Image)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people, staff and their families have increased access to support for their mental health with greater focus on targeted support for groups vulnerable to poor mental health including care experienced, LGBT+ and children with Additional Support Needs. • Increased capacity and confidence of adults who support young people at universal and additional levels, building their understanding of their own, and of children and young people's mental health needs. • Improved use of data to enable the development of targeted resources to inform approaches to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people and staff. • Increased access to sport & physical activity for our most vulnerable and / or disadvantaged children & young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission, support and promote programmes and tools to support mental health and wellbeing, nurturing approaches, develop emotional literacy and regulation across schools and communities (e.g., Kitbag, The Decider Skills, Seasons for Growth and Peer Mediation). • Pilot mental health multi-agency triage system in secondary schools for a 6-month period providing a single point of access to the most appropriate in-service to meet Children Young People's needs. • Extend parent engagement wellbeing development and participation sessions. • Continue roll-out of 'See Me See Change'. programme across secondary schools to encourage pupils, staff and the wider school community to develop and initiate actions to address mental health stigma and discrimination. • Ensure transition programming from Early to Primary, Primary to Secondary and Secondary to Positive Destinations includes elements of wellbeing. • Increase the range & quality of sport, physical activity & wider wellbeing opportunities across all schools with a focus on equality, diversity & inclusion within our practice. • Establish and maintain relationships with partners & key stakeholders to improve children & young people's likelihood of lifelong participation in sport & physical activity, and to improve / maintain a positive mental & physical wellbeing. 	<p>Outcomes Health & Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Wellbeing Indicators</p> <p>Health & Wellbeing Survey 2025</p> <p>Active Schools My Sport Data</p>	<p>Wellbeing Governance Group</p> <p>QIO H&WB Health & WB Leads</p>

<p>Staff Wellbeing – Workload & Relationships & Behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of positive relationships and behaviours between staff, children and young people in all educational settings. • Improved use of data to enable the development of targeted resources to promote practice which helps to ensure that children, young people and staff feel safe and happy in educational settings. • Improved Education employee experience through equitable workplace practices, inclusion and engagement using Our People Matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote attendance through wider achievement and wellbeing, celebrating and recognising the success of learners through increased wider achievement opportunities across Secondary schools. • Work in partnership with key stakeholders to devise systems and processes for tracking and developing the skills for learning life and work that derive from a wide range of activities including sport, mentoring, coaching, entrepreneurship, voluntary work or fundraising. • Ensure wellbeing improvements are evidenced in school and Early Learning Centre improvement planning. • Implement the national recommendation of ensuring Education leadership staff have the opportunity to engage with colleagues in a supportive and collegiate approach to professional reflection, learning and development, within a confidential professional relationship to reflect on the experiences and impacts of work, on wellbeing. • Develop the professional learning programme for all headteachers at all stages of their career with a focus on universal, additional and intensive support for wellbeing. • Implement wide-ranging and high-quality strategies to promote positive relationships and behaviours in all educational settings, between children, young people and staff including Anti Bullying Policy, Social Media Policies & Curricular Resources related to Gender Based Violence (MVP) • Monitor and evaluate impact (Performance Info) more effectively in H&WB and ensure this is communicated more effectively. • Analysis of H&WB Survey shared with partners and localities with accompanied support to develop actions locally for improvement and improve targeted PSE (Personal & Social Education) delivery. 	<p>Staffwise Sep-Nov 2024</p> <p>Evidence from ELPs/LPs during Session 23-24</p>	<p>Wellbeing Governance Group</p> <p>Relationships & Behaviour Strategy Group</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Education Service employee experience through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working to ensure all staff are aware of, confident to and actively supported in completing, the feedback activities relevant to them. - acting on the feedback provided to us. • Ensure our practitioners have confidence that people policies and procedures are applied fairly and in consideration of individual situations. • Ensure our practitioners feel encouraged and supported to identify & undertake development activities in support of their role, career aspirations and wellbeing to ensure professionalism. • Implement reviewed PSE skeleton overview across Fife with associated guidance and expectations. 		
Effects of Poverty on Wellbeing - Widening of Health Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved support for adults delivering the Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood (RSHP) resource to children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of and communication about the RSHP resource by providing support to schools, parents and carers. • Develop a forum on glow for RSHP. Share and discuss ideas on delivery from teachers, partners can share further support materials e.g. video links, policy updates etc. • Resources being developed by the RSHP National Group - Fife to follow model and utilise developed resources. 	<p>Outcomes Health & Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Wellbeing Indicators</p> <p>Children & Young People Health & Wellbeing Survey 2025</p>	<p>Wellbeing Governance Group</p> <p>Childrens Services Wellbeing Group</p>
Lack of Awareness of H&WB Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to Health & Wellbeing advice, support and information through the development of a H&WB Hub enabling children, young people and staff to support their health and wellbeing and guide others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a new service level communications strategy to ensure communications are consistent across all educational settings and central teams. • Consider additional funding to support a H&WB post connected to the creation and sustainability of a H&WB Hub in partnership to ensure internal and external partners can access resources. 		Wellbeing Governance Group

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 2 – Attendance & Engagement



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this?	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
Ensure universal approaches to addressing attendance are fully implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date policy. • Recording systems consistently understood and applied. • Effective use of data to monitor attendance by staff in schools and centrally. • Processes to address attendance issues in place, understood and applied. • Build Quality Improvement capacity and capability so staff have knowledge, skills and confidence to lead improvement activity. • Reduce exclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh Fife Education attendance policy. • Schedule attendance strategy group meetings. Consider Terms of Reference + links to strategic planning groups. Invite representatives across the partnership. • Promote attendance resources pack. • Clear strategic messaging to schools on expectations surrounding attendance (policy). • Establish Quality Assurance mechanisms to ensure implementation of policy. • Implementation of Agreed Reduced Attendance/flexi-schooling processes. • Include online lesson coding in resources. • Understand better reasons for exclusions. Review and refresh exclusion policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy updated and evident across Local Authority. • Consistent approaches in relation to attendance. • Quality Assurance processes and supporting documentation in place. • Schools are actively tracking and reviewing attendance data. • Working Time Agreement includes improvement work on improving attendance. • Attendance is a standing agenda item at cluster/school meetings. • Reduction in exclusions. 	Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)
Ensure universal approaches to addressing attendance include learners with specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review systems and recording processes for managing attendance, including coding of online lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement effective and transparent recording systems processes. • Develop training strategy to build practitioner confidence working with new systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common transparent systems of managing and recording attendance. • Practitioners confident in using revised systems. 	Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)

<p>provision (Pupil Support Service, Learning with Care, Home Educated, Gypsy & Traveller Education, residential schools) and vulnerable groups (e.g., edge of care, displaced people).</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate attendance data for Pupil Support Services, home education, online lessons, Approved Reduced Attendance / flexi-schooling. 	<p>Quality Improvement Officer (Equity)</p>
<p>Ensure we understand better reasons for low and non-attendance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake review of data on attendance. • Use Quality Improvement tools and techniques to understand our processes better (cause and effect, force field analysis, process mapping) and ensure we are aligning change ideas to root causes of low/non-attendance. • Review overall strategy for managing low and non-attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focussed range of evidence - Power BI. More high level than Quality Improvement tools. • Professional Learning to equip staff with the Quality Improvement knowledge, skills and confidence to drive improvement work focused on attendance. • Implement systematic use of tools such Promoting Attendance Toolkit. • Build on National and International research. Conduct literary review and instigate local research. • Map/review attendance/family support workers role and impact. 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of Quality Improvement tools (e.g., fishbone, process map, driver diagram) by schools to understand systems and root causes for low attendance. • Involvement of Young People and families in understanding root causes to low attendance. • Tracking attendance data over time (school/stage/targeted group/Young People) to test and learn what works. <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of systematic improvement work focused on attendance (improvement posters). • Demonstrable improvements in attendance at (stage/target group/individual level). 	<p>Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)</p> <p>Improvement Co-ordinator (Quality Improvement)</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of improvement journey – what has been tested, learning and impact. <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance at school/Local Authority level. Integrated attendance/family support model (No Wrong Door). 	
Contribution of parents/carers and partners to support attendance universally and intensively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make explicit links between attendance and safeguarding. Address how to support learner attendance when schools have exhausted all resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review missing in education processes and understating of purpose. Review attendance policy with parents/carers and partners to ensure continuum of support from universal to intensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refreshed and embedded missing in education process, built into overarching attendance policy. Refreshed attendance policy with clear roles and responsibilities for all partners including timescales. 	Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 3 – Achievement



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this?	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
<p>Improve opportunities for the progressive development of learner skills, knowledge and attributes through wider achievement opportunities across the BGE and Senior Phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider current Fife LMI, National DYW (Developing Young Workforce) policy (including the Careers Education Standard) and the recommendations from national independent reviews and policy decisions (Hayward & Withers) to determine how this will be implemented across Fife's schools and early learning centres. • Develop a Fife core approach to Wider Achievement which supports the progression of learner skills, knowledge and attributes. • Develop Wider Achievement pathways with ongoing opportunities for recognition/ accreditation/ celebration. • Establish expectations and guidance at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Wider Achievement & Skills Strategic Steering Group – Cross Sector representation. • Wider Achievement & Skills Strategic Steering Group develop a clear rationale, set of aims, expected impact and actions to ensure a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people. • Include Fife members of National co-design groups (Profiling, Interdisciplinary Learning, Learner Pathways) and Fife participants of SEIC (South East Improvement Collaborative) Learner Pathways and Positive Destinations programme to inform strategy development. • Sub-group established to consider the four capacities from a Fife learners' lens and Labour Market sector information to inform a potential Fife Wider Achievement core approach. • Audit Wider Achievement programmes across Fife's Schools and Early Learning Centres and their impact on improving learner outcomes. • Identify and map out core Wider Achievement pathways that maximise outcomes for learners and build progressively (3-18). • Ensure effective Wider Achievement transitions to enable learners to begin to build a relevant personalised pathway reflecting strengths and areas for development. • Build on cluster and locality best practice models to scope out opportunities for a shared focus on 	<p>Rationale & Action Plan completed.</p> <p>Feedback from children, young people, parents, other services and employers.</p> <p>Core approaches to Wider Achievement are adopted across Fife schools and EYCs.</p> <p>Completed Audits and summary of findings to inform next steps.</p> <p>Four capacities and LMI are reflected in school and EYC planning and policy (unique to each context).</p> <p>Exemplification of example Wider</p>	<p>Education Manager, Quality Improvement Officers – Curriculum & DYW</p> <p>Education Support Officers (STEM/ Learning for Sustainability/Outdoor Learning/ Curriculum)</p> <p>Wider Achievement Senior Coordinator</p>

	<p>stages to ensure that all children and young people experience a broad, coherent and progressive programme of wider achievement opportunities.</p>	<p>employability sectors that are unique to geographical areas and related skills and knowledge that will be key for learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share guidance on the establishment or development of a broad, coherent and progressive wider achievement programme across stages. • Design approaches to sharing good practice and moderation of programmes/ outcomes related to Wider Achievements across the totality of the curriculum to develop of the four capacities. • In line with national guidance, develop approaches to tracking and monitoring children and young people’s skills development and engagement in Wider Achievement opportunities. 	<p>Achievement Fife learner Pathways Wider Achievement Guidance completed, shared with ELCs and Schools.</p> <p>Evidence of implementation in Standards & Quality Reports, Learning Partnerships and HMIE Inspections.</p>	
<p>Strengthen universal support across settings for children and young people with additional support needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and embed a clear Fife wide professional learning strategy for staff in all sectors, which builds confidence in staff adapting universal approaches to their context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Learners’ Service (SLS) will continue to deliver a robust PL offering for all Support for Learning Staff (SfL) led by the Principal SfL teachers (other services support delivery when appropriate) throughout session 23/24 • The partnership between SLS and the Professional Learning Team will aim to enhance the collection of information regarding the evaluation and effects of this program on SfL staff, their practice and the impact of C/YP. • SLS and EP Service will create an additional core approach around fostering inclusive environments and social communication, underpinned by the CIRCLE and SCERTS framework. • Simultaneously SLS and EP service will review the existing universal professional development offerings for staff throughout 	<p>C/YP on the cusp of placement to an enhanced provision, remain in their mainstream setting.</p> <p>Feedback from staff, demonstrating increased confidence in their practice.</p> <p>Improved evidence of robust planning to meet all of the needs of learners.</p> <p>Exemplars of good practice that can be shared with others.</p>	<p>Supporting Learners Service – Headteacher</p> <p>Professional Learning Team</p> <p>Educational Psychology Service</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a suite of tools to support the assessment and planning of need from universal - intensive. • Provide enhanced quality assurance tools to identify expectations within our provisions. 	<p>23/24 aimed at supporting C/YP with additional support needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLS, EP and PL services will continue to support the PL offerings for Pupil Support Staff across Fife, building on the work completed during the summer project. • Develop a specific training offer to support approaches for neurodivergent learners in conjunction with the Educational Psychology Service over 2023/24 • Connect this refreshed programme with the existing PL team universal offer which is aimed at supporting secondary BGE to meet learning needs in S1-S3 through the use of the Workshop for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy approaches. • Extend the current PT/DAS support network for secondary schools, potentially into SEIC, to reflect on the role in raising attainment and sustainable approaches to learning and teaching, to include PTs in mainstream who have a support role. • An explicit commitment to professional learning within the Directorate's ASL strategy • The steering group for Assessment and Planning for additional support and wellbeing needs will implement their calendar of actions with a focus on streamlining paperwork, refreshing CSP guidance, training and delivering core messages in session 23/24. • SLS will support the ASC provisions to embed the use of the ASN Planning toolkit in session 23/24. Extend this to the Secondary DAS provisions from August 2024. Extend the use 	<p>Early intervention training resulting in less applications to enhanced settings at the point of transition.</p>	
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		<p>of the core planning tools for mainstream use, where appropriate, from August 24.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the HGIOASL toolkit during 2023/24 to provide clear expectations against core quality indicators across all provisions. 		
<p>Continue to close the poverty-related attainment gap within the BGE and into the Senior Phase in literacy and numeracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment across all stages within the BGE (Broad General Education), particularly at points of transition, e.g., P7-S1. • Continue to ensure core approaches to learning, teaching and assessment of Literacy and Numeracy are embedded across all schools, e.g., SEIC Literacy Early Years Resource, Workshop for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy. • Strengthen approaches to moderation across all stages within the BGE, at school, cluster, local authority and SEIC level. • Review approaches to course choices at BGE into Senior Phase to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and improve universal, targeted & intensive school engagements and professional learning for schools and practitioners across all sectors, based on core pedagogical approaches, including the effective use of quality improvement methodology. Target points of transition, e.g., Nursery to P1 and P7 – S1, and the quality of learner’s experiences in literacy and numeracy across learning in S1-3. • Implementation of the Strategic Equity Fund Plan Year 2, 3 & 4, including the establishment and scaling up of key projects targeting support based on attainment and attendance data, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raising Attainment Principal Teachers (Literacy & Numeracy) - Principal teacher posts for identified clusters to work across schools to plan targeted support in literacy and numeracy, to build capacity in the use of core approaches and to support moderation of national standards of achievement. ○ Virtual Classroom and Tutoring - Develop an offer of 1-1 tutoring and virtual learning to strengthen-engagement of children and young people in learning and to improve school attendance and engagement in learning. Initially targeting children at P6 and P7- 	<p>CfE Attainment across P1, P4, P7 & S3 – improving trends in percentages of children and young people achieving expected levels and further closing of the attainment gap between Q1 and Q5.</p> <p>Feedback from staff, children and young people, and parents on the impact of approaches.</p>	<p>Achievement & Attainment Reform Strategic Group and all associated Steering Groups.</p> <p>Strategic Equity Fund Steering Group</p> <p>Professional Learning Team</p> <p>Strategic Sector Groups</p> <p>3.1 Networks</p> <p>Subject Networks</p> <p>BGE Tracking Steering Group</p> <p>Assessment & Moderation networks (QAMSOs)</p> <p>Early Years Quality Improvement Networks</p>

	<p>ensure continued development of literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a BGE Tracker across all sectors with consistent approaches to recording, monitoring, analysing and reporting on children's progress. 	<p>Quintile 1 and 2 with attendance of between 50-79%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Literacy Quality Improvement writing bundle will target P5 and then P4 cohorts below 60% 1st level writing attainment. Deliver tailored Writing Pedagogy engagements with targeted schools. Embed the use of Fife's Writing Assessment & Moderation Resource for primary and secondary BGE. ○ Numeracy - Support spread of Conceptual Understanding of Numeracy Approach in targeted clusters with secondary PTCs. Develop class level support for assessing and describing achievement of a level in the BGE at P1, P4, P7, S3. • BGE Tracking Steering group to complete design and piloting of BGE Tracking System. Implementation of BGE Tracking system across all sectors over 2 years followed by ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of tool to improve planning and assessment of children's progress. • Strengthen Assessment & Moderation networks across all localities, through involvement of links from every school, and maximising the expertise of quality assurance and moderation officers (QAMSOs) across schools and clusters. 		
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Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 4 – Positive Destinations



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this?	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
Strategic approach to improving initial and sustained destinations for all young people in Fife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise current processes in place. Increase the use of datasets and tracking and monitoring procedures across all schools. Build capacity across the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) system to ensure consistency of approaches at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data sessions for all relevant practitioners Data workshops with partners Moderation and review of data Promote and review data highlights and next steps. Engaging with SG and Insight data Workshop with DHTs and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Coordinators to review data and extract key messages for schools, risk groups. Review and monitor stretch targets for attendance and also positive destinations, consider strategies and cohorts within this. Outcomes meetings in place for all schools in line with improvement planning and actions for improvement, priorities with a focus on leaver data and identification of gaps. Focus on sustained destinations in both follow up activity and wider participation. Identification on target groups – S4 summer leavers, S5 winter leavers and S3 who are not engaged or attending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PD data Attendance data Positive trend of L&N stretch targets in line with school targets Improved outcomes for young people in line with stretch targets: Power BI and Insight training offered and taken up by all secondary schools and relevant central team staff. Tracking of priority groups 	EM (Positive Destinations)
In order to close the gap, an active focus on those young people who require additional support to engage in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of those young people who fit into these categories – attendance, engagement, SIMD Q1, ASN, Care Experience, FSM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritising sign up and engagement with DYW programmes. Engaging with S4 summer leaver data, working with Opportunities for All (OfA) teams and partners to deliver programmes which maximise impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor programmes and track to PD status. Identify those in risk groups with early interventions noted. 	EM, QIO (Positive Destinations)

<p>activities related to successful post school destinations, including expanding the offers available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of opportunities to address attendance and engagement opportunities. • Targeted approaches identified with partner interventions. • Identify revised No One Left Behind (NOLB) funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition support for S4 summer leavers, link to 16+ teams, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), College, partners. • Measure impact of current activities and partnerships in terms of engagement, numbers, link to destinations as appropriate as well as school and pupil views. • Develop locality approaches for DYW initiatives utilising Labour Market Information (LMI). • Working towards the achievement of PD stretch target for 2023/24 of 95.2%. • Increase in number of bespoke packages to support improvements in destinations across Fife. • Increase in No One Left Behind (NOLB) impact across our young people. • All schools have participated in gathering pupil voice to inform Fife practice and partner activity. • Improvement in follow up sustained destination data and participation of 16–18-year-olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for partners to engage. • Identify gaps in provision. • Monitor impact of programmes across schools and cohorts as well as partner provision. 	
<p>Personalised and intensive support to allow young people to access a range of opportunities in school, including wider achievement and accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification of groups/cohorts. • Tracking and monitoring of potential leavers. • Priority groups in terms of risk groups, S3 cohorts, S4 summer leavers, S5 winter leavers. • Development of opportunities to engage young people. • Devise systems and processes for tracking and developing the skills for learning life and work that derive from a wide range of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing support and challenge across a proportionate model, with focus on priority schools of DYW and PD. • Develop locality-based test of change for Wider Achievement taking cognisance of LMI and targeted cohorts. • Targeted support for groups who are not improving. • Identification of programmes and wider achievement opportunities with identified skills and progression pathways. • Map out Wider Achievement across the SCQF to maximise accreditation tariff points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of young people requiring support from senior phase but also BGE. • Tracking and monitoring of this group and impact of inputs. • Improvement in accreditation data. • Impact on those in risk groups. • Viable WA models that can be upscaled across localities. 	<p>EM, QIO (Positive Destinations) Senior Active Schools Coordinator</p>

	wider achievement opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive promotion of volunteering and entrepreneurship. • Strategic approach across the school. • Pupil support input and planning for this group. • Partner interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased tariff points for learners linked to involvement in WA. • Increased numbers of learners involved in volunteering and entrepreneurial activities. 	
Development of partnership working to ensure collaborative solutions for improved and sustained positive destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Destination Partnership Group with clear roles and responsibilities alongside partner contribution and expectation. • School participation in SEIC and National Initiatives. • Planned review of EasyP as an effective mechanism to ensure reduction in negative destinations. • Links to Enterprise and Employability Directorate and other partners strengthened to support young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of DYW calendar for 2023/24 with inclusion of activity and targets for Universal, Additional and Intensive approaches as well as KPI measures • Partnership meeting to review leaver data from 2022 in line with the use of the datahub to support and develop a strategic approach to the use of data for improvement. • Partnership approach to complete update of leaver data to support improved sustained data in April for publication in June. • Wider use of gathering pupil views to review the school session in terms of destinations, DYW and employability. • Identification of S4 summer leavers, S5 winter leavers and S3 as priority groups; planning underway for this • Identification of actions for schools to monitor sustained destinations for pupils in line with April data gathering and June publication. • Improve DYW links to schools and outcomes of young people linked to destinations as a main focus area to ensure impact is proven. • Increased business engagement through Young Persons Guarantee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DYW data and KPIs to be included. • Destinations Partnership Group ensures a focused offer of activity with all partners aligned in shared aims. • Pupil focus group overview findings 	EM, QIO (Positive Destinations) Opportunities for All Coordinator

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigorous monitoring of NOLB outcomes and Fife approach of EASYP • Consider wider scope of 16+ key worker team as a full partnership approach. 		
Creation of a range of universal and bespoke learning pathways, including wider achievement provision and accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of work-related learning (WRL) across partnerships. • Creation of a collaborative approach to WRL, supported by guidance and practice documents. • Clear link to improving positive and sustained destinations. • Development of employability within in all secondary schools • Develop targeted approaches to ensure the work experience entitlement for all school leavers. • Develop accreditation pathway for work experience and volunteering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in WRL and Work Experience group, leading planning in schools • Work Related Learning partnership strategy group in place to support a Universal, Additional and Intensive model across BGE and Senior Phase • Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) in Fife group in place to review and improve the offer and delivery of FAs to all secondary schools; partner membership across schools, college and council engaged in this; also, to consider the lowering of withdrawals and improved marketing – to be reviewed and revised for 24/25 • FA Quality Assurance check on practice and process, including time allocation for delivery and approaches by the 10 Frameworks. • Embedding Career Education Standards within the curriculum rationale and design in all secondary schools • Increase in young people engaging in the apprenticeship family as part of the SCP and post school opportunities. • Creation of a work experience policy, supported by relevant accreditation. • Focus on volunteering within schools, supported with accreditation as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in work related learning within the curriculum in schools. • Development of WRL approach and guidance across Fife. • Increase in Fife DYW KPIs. • All schools engaged in CES activity from S1-S6 • Increase in FA and MA numbers. • Increase in number of FAs offered and delivered across Fife. • Increase in those completing FAs successfully. • Increase work experience placements for leavers. • Increased presentations for Work experience SQA / Saltire etc. • Increase in number of Modern 	QIOs ESO

			Apprenticeships (MAs) taken up by school leavers. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase number of young people engaged in volunteering	
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How we will work to improve Equity and Equality

In a world that is so varied, equality and diversity must be promoted throughout our schools.

Equality and diversity is the concept of accepting and promoting people's differences, in line with the Equality Act (2010). The fundamental goal when promoting equality is to raise awareness and make sure that all individuals are treated equally and fairly, regardless of their personal characteristics.

The national discussion paper - ***All Learners in Scotland Matter: The National Discussion on Education*** - May 2023 highlights that:

“Education needs to include learning about all forms of diversity, discrimination, and disadvantage for children and young people and for education workers and support staff, including attention to curriculum, teaching and learning resources, and to diversifying the workforce.”

Our aim is to create an inclusive learning environment – a safe place without prejudice – where learners have the opportunity to thrive. Successfully teaching and raising awareness of diversity works to highlight individual characteristics and traits that make people unique rather than different.

All key strategic areas of work across the directorate have a responsibility to ensure that their work maintains a focus on equality and diversity. It must reflect an ambition to close the gap in outcomes and experiences for a range of targeted groups.

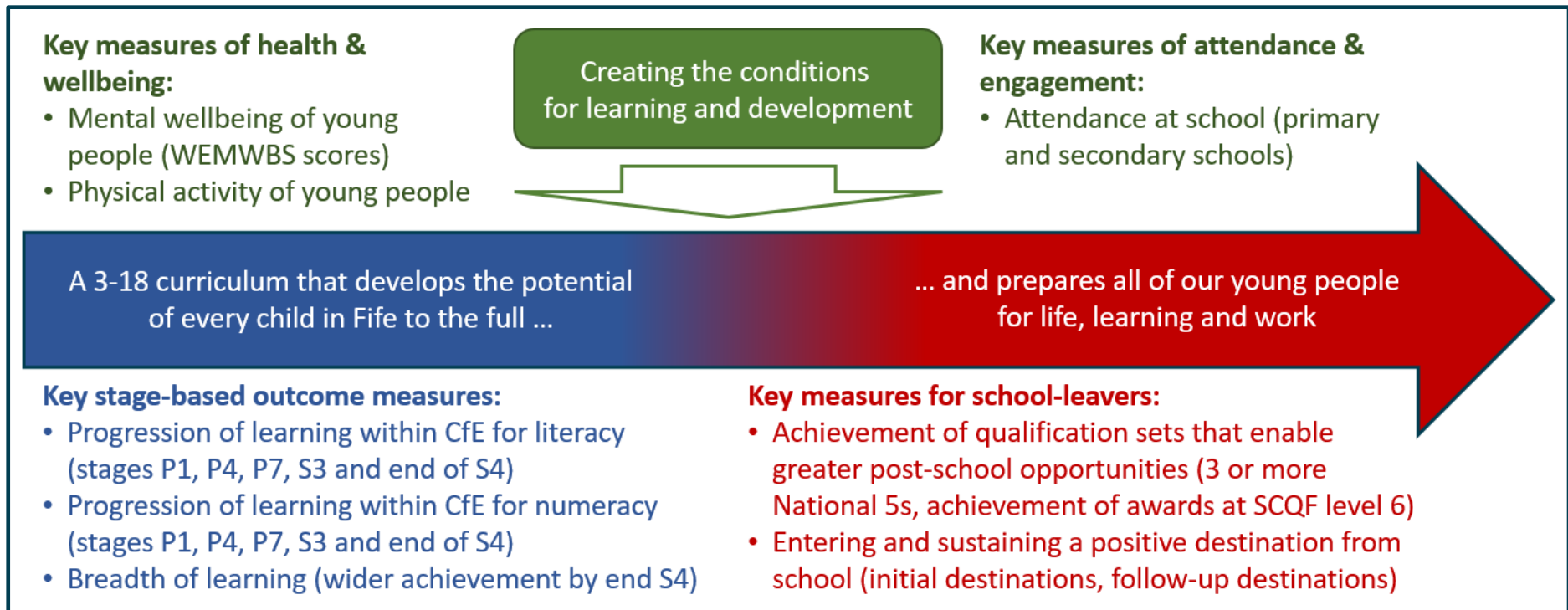
Key actions that we will take to progress this are:

- Develop systems and processes to support the monitoring of outcomes for pupils with protected characteristics.
- Monitor general progress in improving outcomes for children and young people affected by issues of equality and diversity.
- Work across the wider directorate team towards meeting the requirements and recommendations of Teaching in a Diverse Scotland (Nov 18).
- Support and develop all leaders understanding of the requirement of the Equality Act (2010).

How we will measure our progress in improving outcomes – The Education Service Scorecard

The figure below provides an overview of the measures that will be monitored on the Education Service Scorecard. These have been chosen to provide:

- Performance measures across the key strategies of the Education Service.
- A long-term framework for measuring our progress in improving outcomes for children and young people.



These measures will provide the basis for reporting to Education Scrutiny Committee, including:

- Reports on particular strategies and outcomes throughout the year by relevant lead officers.
- An annual progress report on the improvement plan priorities, which will inform an updating of the improvement plan for each school year by the lead officers for each of improvement priority.

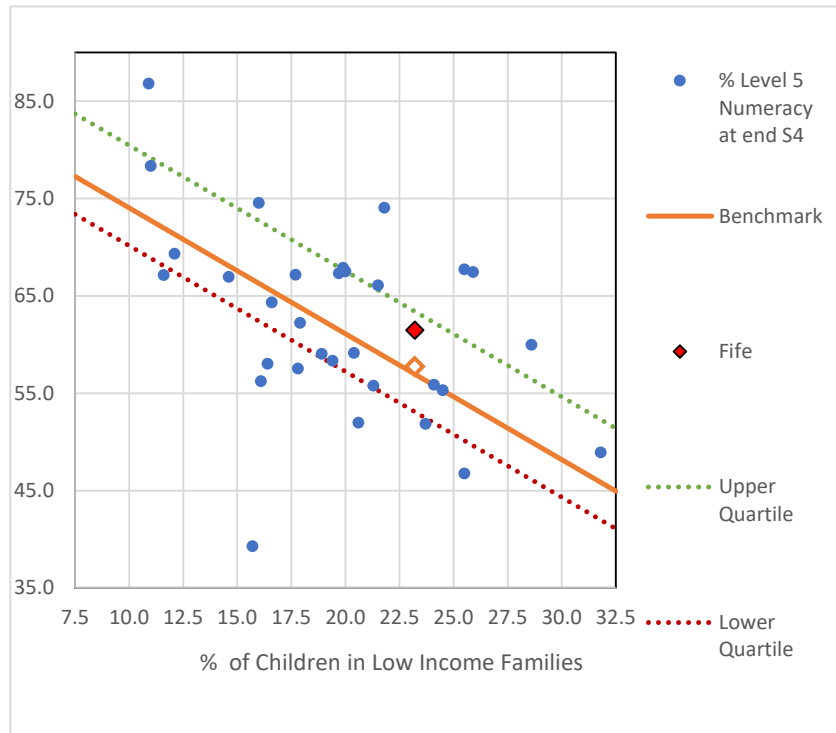
Our approach to supporting further improvement

The Education Service is committed to using proven and high-quality improvement approaches to support continuing improvement across Fife schools. In order to further this aim, the service:

- Is a member of **EFQM** – the improvement organisation. The service is using the EFQM model to develop a self-evaluation framework to inform and help prioritise further service improvement. It is also using opportunities provided by membership of EFQM to learn from the experience of other, similar organisations across Scotland and sector-leading organisations from across the world.
- Works in partnership with the **Children and Young People’s Collaborative (CYPIC)** to strengthen our use of a range of quality improvement tools and approaches, within classroom settings and at a system level. Our work with CYPIC is well established and has led to significant success at the National Quality Improvement Awards. We are now working to improve the impact that this work has at a system level – through improving the way that we plan and deliver scale and spread of improvement.
- Is a partner in the **South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)**, working with schools in Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders to share learning and to support improvement in every type of early learning and school setting.



Appendix 1: A poverty-adjusted view of educational outcomes



The figure on the right shows a scatterplot of data for Scotland's 32 local authorities. The data in this case is for the percentage of S4 learners achieving an award in numeracy at SCQF level 5; this data is plotted against a standard measure of child poverty (Children in Low-Income Families).

As can be seen, there is a general tendency in the data for local authorities with low levels of child poverty to have higher attainment (towards the top-left corner of the plot), and for local authorities with high levels of child poverty to have lower attainment (towards the bottom-right). The relationship between child poverty and outcomes seen here is generally apparent for educational outcomes of all forms.

The solid orange line through the data (running from top-left to bottom-right) shows how expected outcomes vary with child poverty. The dash green and red lines reflect upper and lower quartile outcomes on the same poverty-adjusted basis.

In terms of raw numbers, outcomes in Fife for numeracy at SCQF level 5 are almost exactly the same as the national average (Fife 61.5%, compared with Scotland 61.6%).

However, the figure above enables us to allow for the influence of poverty on outcomes. On this poverty-adjusted basis, Fife's outcomes (shown by the solid, red diamond) are close to the upper quartile of performance (the green dash line) and above the national average (the solid orange trendline through the data).

Given the levels of child poverty in Fife, we would "expect" outcomes in line with the open orange diamond (directly below Fife's data, but sitting on the solid, orange trendline). The open orange diamond provides a "like-for-like", benchmark comparator figure for Fife; it reflects the national average outcome, given the levels of child poverty seen in Fife. On this basis, Fife is performing above national outcomes (Fife 61.5%, compared with a benchmark outcome of 59.1%).

The table below shows Fife’s current performance across a range of educational outcomes on this poverty-adjusted benchmark basis.

	Outcomes compared with Scotland			Poverty-adjusted benchmark			
	Fife	Scotland	Gap with Scotland	Benchmark outcome	Gap with benchmark	Performance quartile	
SCQF level 4 numeracy - by end S4	89.5	87.9	1.6	86.2	3.3	1	
SCQF level 5 numeracy - by end S4	61.5	61.6	-0.1	59.1	2.4	2	
SCQF level 4 literacy by end S4	92.1	92.0	0.1	91.2	0.9	2	
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Literacy	68.4	70.5	-2.1	68.8	-0.4	3	
Attendance - Secondary schools	88.2	89.1	-0.9	88.8	-0.7	3	
Initial Positive Destinations	94.8	95.7	-0.9	95.5	-0.7	3	
Follow-up Positive Destinations	92.1	93.5	-1.4	92.9	-0.8	3	
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Numeracy	74.8	77.9	-3.1	76.5	-1.6	3	
SCQF level 5 literacy - by end S4	70.3	74.5	-4.2	72.7	-2.4	3	
Attendance - Primary Schools	93.0	94.0	-1.0	93.9	-0.9	4	
3 or more Nat 5 passes by end S4	51.7	61.3	-9.7	59.0	-7.3	4	

The measures shown in the table above reflect standard, national measures for educational outcomes across the improvement priorities in this Education Service Improvement Plan (see page Edu|23).

Appendix 2: Glossary

The table below defines abbreviations used in the text of the Education Service Improvement Plan.

ASN	Additional Support Needs.
AART	Awareness Raising and Response Training (Child Protection).
BGE	Broad General Education - (Age 3 to end of S3)
CARM	Care and Risk Management Guidance.
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence.
CSWO	Chief Social Work Officer.
CP	Child Protection.
CPC	Child Protection Coordinator <u>or</u> Child Protection Committee dependent on context.
CPPM	Child Protection Planning Meeting. (Previously CPCC – Child Protection Case Conference).
C&YP	Children and Young People.
CYPIC	Children and Young Peoples Improvement Collaborative
DCPC	Depute Child Protection Coordinator.
DO	Development Officer.
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce.
ELC	Early Learning Centre.
EP	Educational Psychology/Educational Psychologist
ESO	Education Support Officer
EYLO	Early Years Lead Officer.
FMR	Free Meal Registration
HWB	Health and Wellbeing.
JII	Joint Investigation Interview.
IRD	Initial Referral Discussion.
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender/Transsexual people.
LMI	Labour Market Information
MVP	Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme (see: educationmvp.co.uk)

NOCC	Notification of Cause for Concern.
NOLB	No One Left Behind
PD	Positive Destination/s
PSE	Personal and Social Education.
QAMSO	Quality Assurance Moderation Support Officer
QIO	Quality Improvement Officer
RSHP	Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood education (see: https://rshp.scot/)
SCIM	Scottish Child Interview Model.
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SLS	Support for Learners Service
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SW	Social Work.
WEMWBS	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales
WRL	Work Related Learning



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Children & Families Improvement Plan 2023-26

Children & Families

Our highest priority is the protection of children who may be at risk of harm, and the support for families to allow children to remain at home wherever possible. Where this is not in children's best interests, our focus is on providing the best quality of alternative care for children and young people.

Social Work staff work closely with colleagues in other services and agencies in providing an integrated approach that seeks to meet the range of different and complex needs that vulnerable children and their families experience.

The Service contributes as a lead partner to the work of the Fife Children's Services Partnership, which oversees joint working across wider children's services to improve the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families in Fife.



Further details can be found in the Fife Children's Services Plan (<http://www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023>)

Introduction

Poverty and the legacy of COVID-19 continue to impact on children's rights, resulting in lifelong consequences linked to children and young people's health, social connections, early development, education, play and learning. When poverty is combined with other issues such as mental health problems, domestic abuse or substance misuse – the outcomes for children can be poor and the challenges of parenting overwhelming.

For the reasons outlined above, our Children's and Family Social Work Services Plan will continue to have a targeted and early intervention focus on Fife's disadvantaged and vulnerable children, young people and families – this includes our care experienced/looked after children and young people, those on the "edges of care", those with additional support needs and those facing multiple forms of social disadvantage.

This plan builds on our achievements from previous plans and ensures that our commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and young people remains central to all that we do.

5 high-level themes act as the pillars of our plan:

- Relationship-Based Practice
- Early and effective whole system approach
- Partnership
- Continuous Improvement
- Workforce Development

Our plan is underpinned and informed by legislation, The Promise, GIRFEC, National Child Protection Procedures and our own Belonging to Fife Strategy. To support our plan, there is a strong emphasis on partnership working – we know that working together with families and other stakeholders is more effective and ensures that our finite resources are used effectively.

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 1 – Relationship Based Practice



- We will continue to develop our relationship-based practice approach - ensuring that our assessments and interventions reflect strengths and vulnerabilities within families.
- This will create opportunities for families to understand and take ownership of safe decision making and planning for children.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Build resilient family networks to improve care and support for children. At the beginning of each intervention, we will work with families to build a realistic family plan to meet each child's needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will establish a Relationship-Based Practice Group that will drive and develop the ongoing implementation of relationship-based practice across our teams. 	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More children and young people will remain safely living with their families – the balance of care will shift from foster care and residential care towards children “looked after” at home or with family members. • Children and families will be empowered to make “family led” decisions, which will improve children’s lived experiences. 	C&F data analysis Evaluation and feedback activity
Listen to the voice of children and parents and reflect them in our assessments and plans - they will be fully involved in decisions made about them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will re-assert social work values across all areas of our work, ensuring children’s rights are front and centre of everything we do. 	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families will develop confidence, resilience and resources to find solutions to meet their own needs. Kinship carers report satisfaction with the support 	Evaluation and feedback activity

<p>Treat families with respect - acknowledging that parents are the experts in knowing and understanding their children's needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop performance indicators to help us measure the extent to which our work with families is effective and relationship-based. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task completed 	<p>Evaluation and feedback activity</p>
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Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 2 – Whole System



- We will offer early and effective support to children and families.
- Children and young people will be supported to live at home or with extended family.
- When children’s needs and circumstances change, it is important any transition of care is managed sensitively.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
<p>Ensure that early help is easily accessible and offers good quality, solution-focused support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will review our “front-door” policies/practice - ensuring that we are managing referrals effectively. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families will benefit from timely and effective interventions in response to their needs. 	<p>Data analysis of referral outcomes and referral sources</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the context of delivering “whole family support”, we will undertake a mapping exercise relating to existing family support services. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families will grow in confidence/resilience and provide secure boundaries and greater opportunities for their children and young people. 	<p>Data analysis of referral outcomes and referral sources</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to promote the principles of The Promise and The Belonging to Fife Strategy in social work practice. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families and staff are able to articulate/ acknowledge that children’s needs are at the centre of practice and planning. 	<p>Audit activity and surveys of families/staff</p>

<p>Ensure that children in care maintain links with immediate and extended family and opportunities for returning home or to extended family, are kept open and explored thoroughly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to strengthen our assessments, care plans and reviewing processes for children “looked after” away from home - exploring opportunities for reunification with family at the earliest opportunity. 	<p>December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The balance of care will shift in favour of children and young people “looked after” by extended family 	<p>Data analysis and Audit activity and surveys of children and their families</p>
<p>We will minimise the number of changes of social worker in each child’s journey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that any transitions are planned, managed sensitively and consider the views of the child or young person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are consistently seen and seen alone, with their lived experience fully understood. • Children and young people tell us that they enjoy meaningful relationships with their social worker. 	<p>Data analysis and Audit activity and surveys of children and their families</p>

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 3 – Partnership



- The Children's Services Partnership is committed to the principles of inclusion and relationship-based practice with children and young people – endeavouring to keep children at home with their family, in school and accessing the normal range of community services.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Ensure that all children, young people and their families benefit from receiving the right support at the right time and for as long as they require it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to implement the National Guidance for Child Protection. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer children and young people are subject to statutory interventions. • Children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect and feel safer. 	Data analysis Surveys of children and their families
Improve the health, well-being and educational outcomes of Fife's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to embed the refreshed GIRFEC policy. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are happy, healthy and receive an inclusive education where they can learn and achieve. 	Surveys of children and their families

<p>Ensure that young people leaving care experience a successful transition into “independent” living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to refresh and revise our Corporate Parenting Plan. • With other corporate parents, we will develop more effective ways in which to meet to the needs of young people leaving care. 	<p>September 2023</p> <p>August 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range and choice of tenancy/housing support on offer to young people is developed. 	<p>Data analysis</p> <p>Surveys of children and their families</p>
<p>Involve children and young people in the design and development of partnership improvement work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a Participation and Engagement Framework for the partnership. 	<p>December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can evidence the impact/influence children and young people have had on service development 	<p>Evidence of influence on service design and delivery</p>

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Priority 4 – Continuous Improvement



- We will develop a culture of continued learning, reflection and innovation at all levels of the service.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Ensure that any service improvement/developments are informed by the voices of children, young people parents and carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate Mind of My Own outcome data – ensuring any developing themes are identified. 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families benefit from high quality social work support and challenge that addresses their needs. • Service delivery and design has been influenced by children and young people. 	Data analysis and surveys of children and their families
Learn from: audits, quality assurance, self-evaluation exercises, feedback, complaints and learning reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will coordinate a calendar of quality assurance activity across the service - this will drive practice improvement and develop a 'high support - high challenge' culture. 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice continually develops and evolves based on learning from children and families and from ideas and innovation. 	Data analysis and surveys of children and their families

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 5 – Workforce



- We recognise that our workforce is the foundation to our success.
- Our workforce is skilled, experienced, effectively trained and delivering high quality relationship-based practice which improves the lives of Fife’s vulnerable children, young people and families.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Think creatively relating to how we recruit and retain good quality experienced practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to review the skills, experience and competence of our workforce and support opportunities for career development. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families benefit from consistent and meaningful relationships with their social workers. 	Recruitment and retention analysis of data
Grow our own workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to invest in training and developing our staff. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers and other practitioners have the capacity and skills to undertake focussed work with children and families. 	Staff wellbeing survey
Retain and develop an experienced workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide opportunities for networking and sharing of effective practice. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers and other practitioners have the capacity and skills to undertake focussed work with children and families. 	Staff wellbeing survey

<p>Recover from COVID-19 and increase face to face and hybrid meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake research relating to impact of COVID-19 on assessment and planning. • Continue to work with national groups (COSLA, Social Work Scotland and the Scottish Government) in highlighting the challenges in this area. 	<p>December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of working patterns and other service data 	<p>Service activity data</p>
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