

# Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2021-23



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# Our Directorate Improvement Plan

## Introduction

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

The Directorate works in partnership with a range of other agencies and services, including: the wider Fife children's services partnership, the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC), and national and local agencies delivering justice services.

The Directorate Improvement Plan sets out how we will work to improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people and families in Fife over the coming two years, and how we will help to ensure community safety and public protection.

It 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 vision: **Improving Life Chances for All**.



**Carrie Lindsay**  
Executive Director  
Education and Children's Services  
Fife Council

# Our Directorate Improvement Plan

## Our Vision 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 vision: **Improving Life Chances for All.**

The Directorate also established a set of shared values, to inform the way that services were developed, designed and delivered – and to set a provide a clear framework for staff behaviour. They are:

- **Compassion,**
- **Ambition,**
- **Respect,**
- **Equity.**

The Directorate Plan 2021-23 provides a basis for the Directorate to continue working to achieve our vision, and to further develop services that reflect our shared values over the coming year.



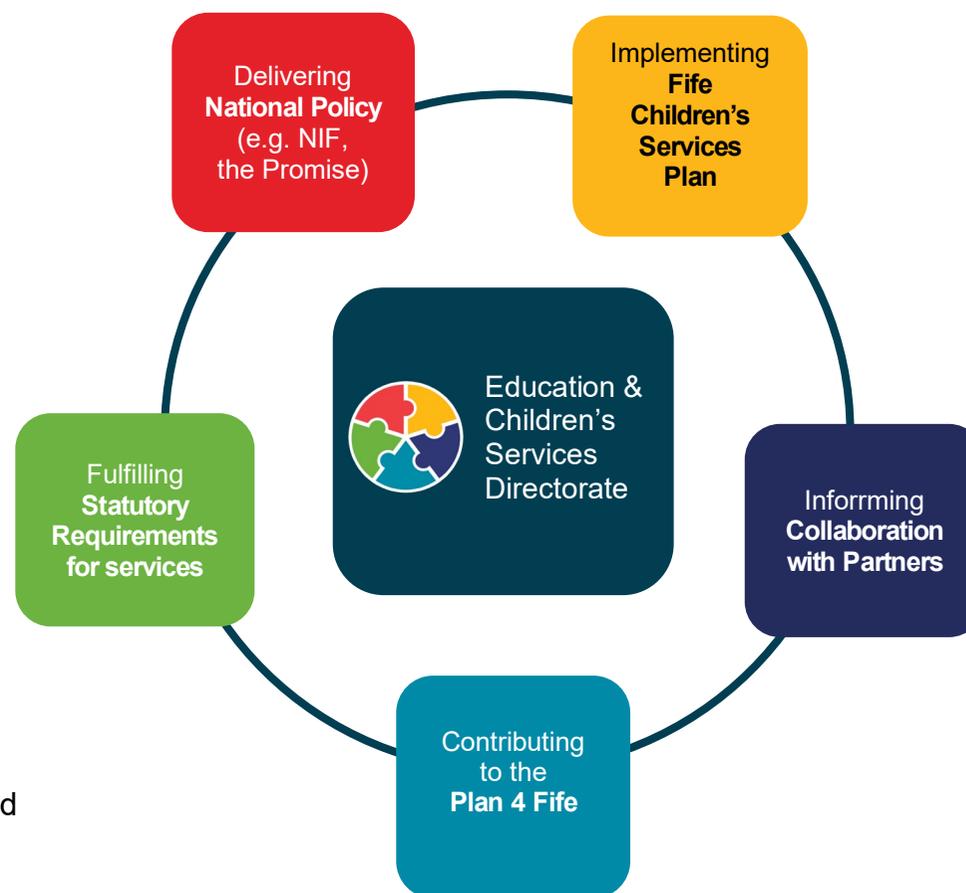
# Our Directorate Improvement Plan

## 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) 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 a range of **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 the work of Justice Social Work with partners to promote community safety & public protection.
- 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.

Progress in delivering the Directorate Improvement Plan will be reported through the Directorate's Annual Performance Report (which incorporates the Standards and Quality Report for schools in Fife) and through a range of other statutory reports, including: the Children and Families Performance Report and Criminal Justice Performance Report.



# The Context for Our plan

## National Policy

The voice and rights of children have been recognised as an important issue in Scotland for many years. This is reflected in many aspects of our national approach to children's services. For example:

- The policy framework of **Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)** is based on the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**.
- **Children's rights reporting** is a legal requirement, with children's services partnerships needing to provide a regular account of the ways in which they are promoting and giving effect to children's rights.
- There is a focus on improving the **engagement and participation** of children, young people and families in many policy areas.

However, despite this, there is clear evidence that the voice of children and young people is often not being clearly heard, and that children's services are often failing to engage children, young people and families in meaningful ways. For example:

- Poor attendance remains a significant barrier to achievement for many children.
- And, as the **Independent Care Review (2020)** noted "the experience of far too many children and families is of a fractured, bureaucratic, unfeeling 'care system'".

In order to address these challenges, nationally, there a clearer and stronger focus is emerging on the voice and rights of children, through policy developments like **The Promise**, and the **incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots' law**.



# The Context for Our plan

## Reviewing Our Vision and Values

It is now seven years since the Education and Children's Services Directorate was founded. Many of the challenges facing our children's services remain (for example, the continuing need to improve equity and wellbeing). However, much has also changed, not least as a result of the ongoing Covid pandemic.

Over the coming year, the Directorate will be undertaking a review of our Vision and Values – in consultation with children, young people, families and staff – in order to ensure that they:

- Recognise the needs and aspirations of children, young people and families across Fife.
- Enable us to promote and give effect to the rights of all children and young people.
- Continue to reflect the underlying values of all Directorate staff.
- Support the delivery of important areas of National Policy, such as the Promise.
- Clearly articulate our shared purpose for the period of recovery and reform ahead.

The review will encompass all aspects of the Directorate's work. In particular, the review will aim: to ensure that the updated vision and values reflect the contribution of all staff, including those working in the Criminal Justice Social Work service; and that future Directorate Improvement Plans better integrate improvement planning for this service.



# The Context for Our Plan

## The Challenges we Face

The Education and Children's Services Directorate plays a lead role in the Fife Children's Services Partnership, working with a range of partners to promote, support and safeguard all aspects of wellbeing for children and young people in Fife.

Over the course of the past year, the Children's Services Partnership has undertaken a wide-ranging review of available quantitative and qualitative evidence about the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families in Fife. This has helped inform the development of both the **Fife Children's Services Plan 2021-23** and the **Directorate Improvement Plan 2021-23**.

An overview of the evidence from this review – including evidence about the Directorate's contribution – can be found in the **Fife Children's Services Annual Report 2020-21**. The appendix to this plan sets out a summary of key messages about outcomes for the Directorate.

The review highlighted that, before the Covid pandemic, significant progress had been made across a range of measures:

- In improving overall outcomes for children and young people.
- And in closing the equity gap between outcomes for the most and least disadvantaged.

However, there is also evidence that the Covid pandemic has had a significant and adverse impact on children, young people and families. This has affected both overall outcomes and the equity gap in outcomes, for a number of measures.



The key messages identified in the review of evidence about Fife are in broad agreement with national research on the impact of the Covid pandemic. These highlight the importance of a number of factors for the coming period of recovery:

- The need for a **targeted response**, with a focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.
- The value of **trauma-informed and nurturing approaches**, recognising the particular needs of vulnerable children and young people.
- The importance of friendship and relationships, and of enabling children to re-establish and further develop their **networks of support**, and of supporting the **wellbeing of children, families and staff**.
- The role of **choice and participation**, recognising the varied needs of children and young people, and allowing them greater voice in identifying how their needs are met.
- The importance of **mitigating the impact of poverty**, recognising that the Covid pandemic has had a negative impact on overall levels of poverty; and specific issues like food poverty and inequalities in digital access/opportunity.

The Directorate's Priorities for Improvement for 2021-23 seek to address these challenges.

These priorities – and the strategic actions that we have identified to help address them – are closely aligned with the priorities for improvement and strategic actions for improvement set out in the **Fife Children's Services Plan**. They also align with those contained in other key strategic plans to which the Directorate contributes – such as the **South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) Improvement Plan**.



# The Context for Our Plan

## Our Focus for Improvement and Improvement Priorities for 2021-23

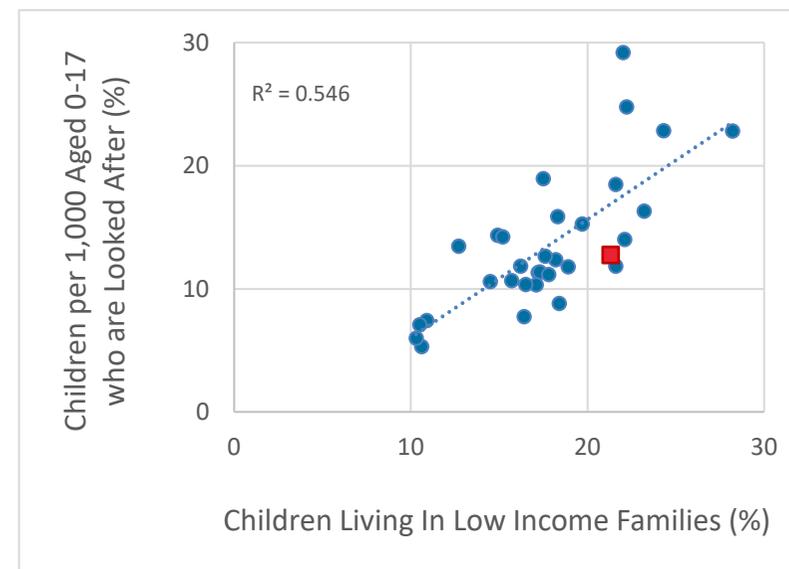
Evidence about the outcomes and experiences of children in Scotland consistently shows evidence of an equity gap, with the least disadvantaged groups of children having better outcomes than the most disadvantaged. This equity gap is evident using a range of statistical indicators of disadvantage, including measures of: household income, child poverty rates, benefit levels, and levels of employment.

The influence of disadvantage / poverty on outcomes is evident in data for the number of looked after children (see the figure on the right). This shows a clear correlation with levels of child poverty for the area in question.

Similarly, data for measures of child development and learning (such as levels of attainment) show a clear equity gap.

However, it is clear that the relationship between disadvantage / poverty and outcomes is complex. Generally speaking, children facing multiple forms of disadvantage are significantly more likely to have poor outcomes than those facing fewer forms of disadvantage. This is evident (for example) in the data on levels of attainment (see the table on the next page).

It is clear that – if we are to close the equity gap in outcomes significantly – then we must have a targeted focus on those facing multiple forms of disadvantage and the greatest barriers to life opportunities, including our care experienced children and young people.



**Figure.** Correlation between children who are looked after and children living in low-income families, across Scotland's local authorities. The data for Fife is shown by the red square box.

For the reasons outlined on the previous page, the Education and Children’s Services Directorate will have a **targeted focus on Fife’s most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, young people and families** over the coming two years. This will include our care experienced children and young people, those on the edge of care, those with a need for Additional Support with Learning and those facing multiple forms of social disadvantage / poverty. It should be also be noted that there is a significant overlap between these groups.

These families face the greatest stress and are likely to have been significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic. They are also those most likely to need the type of support that will be generally required to support recovery from the Covid pandemic (as summarised on page 7).

Focusing on improving outcomes for these children and young people, will help us to build a more effective, resilient and sustainable system of support for the future. This will also help to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

In order to achieve this aim, the Directorate has adopted the following **Priorities for Improvement** for 2021-23:

- **Delivering the Promise**
- **Closing the Attainment Gap**
- **Improving Opportunity**
- **Supporting Wellbeing**
- **Empowering All**

The Plan also includes a review of improvement actions for Justice Social Work services.

	Numeracy	Literacy	Number of pupils
<b>All P1, P4, P7 pupils</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>63.2</b>	<b>12586</b>
Speakers of other languages	65.4	54.8	673
Living in SIMD Quintile 1	57.8	50.4	2984
Registered for free meals	49.6	42.4	2461
Children with ASL need	45.3	35.6	2271
Care experienced children	37.8	30.1	196

*Figure. The percentage of children in primary stages P1, P4 & P7 who had achieved the expected level of the curriculum. Data shows attainment for a number of groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.*

	Numeracy	Literacy	Number of pupils
<b>Non-care experienced</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>12387</b>
Not in any other group	81.1	76.0	6838
In 1 other group only	62.6	54.6	3429
In 2 other groups only	49.7	41.4	1682
In 3 or more other groups	37.7	29.0	438

*Data shows how the attainment of non-care experienced children and young people varies with the number of disadvantaged groups to which they belong (living in SIMD Quintile 1 and/or being registered for free meals and/or having a need for additional support with learning and/or speaking a language other than English).*

# Our Plan for Improvement

## Delivering the Promise

### Context

Quantitative measures of outcomes for care experienced children and young people show a significant gap in outcomes in comparison with their peers. Qualitative feedback also highlights the lack of child-centred and systemic support for children as they encounter services, leading to a negative experience for many individuals.

We will work to Deliver the Promise – as a Directorate and lead agency within the Fife Children’s Services Partnership – to improve the experiences and outcomes of: those who experience care, those who may be described as on the ‘edge of care’, and those who have a requirement for additional services to support them to live safely at home.



The actions that we will take	How we will monitor & report our success
<p>We will raise <b>awareness</b> of the requirements of the Promise and related policy issues across the Directorate, to ensure professionals across our directorate see their roles and responsibilities within this and the collective culture which is required to succeed with the commitments of The Promise.</p>	<p>We will survey Education and Children’s Services’ Directorate staff members, to ensure that they are aware of the Promise and related policy areas, like the UNCRC and The Child Poverty Act.</p> <p>This survey evidence will be reported in our <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>
<p>We will continue to deliver and develop our <b>Belonging 2 Fife strategy</b> to ensure that an increasing proportion of children who require social work support can be maintained safely at home.</p> <p>Improvement work using 4DX with the wider children’s services partnership will contribute to this aim.</p>	<p>We will increase the number of Fife children supported safely at home/with family (<b>4DX scorecard measure</b>).</p> <p>Progress in improving the balance of care towards supporting more children safely at home will be</p>

	reported in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> .
<p>We will continue to develop our <b>Learning with Care Strategy</b>, to ensure that the learning of all care experienced young people is appropriately supported. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing any barriers to engagement for care experienced young people.</li> <li>• Ensuring that care experienced young people receive the support they need to maintain their progress in learning.</li> </ul>	<p>We will monitor the engagement of care experienced young people with learning:</p> <p>We will improve the attendance of care experienced children and young people (<b>scorecard measure</b>)</p> <p>We will improve the attainment of care experienced children (<b>scorecard measure</b>)</p> <p>Monitoring, and taking actions to improve, exclusion rates for Care Experienced Young People. These will be reported in the <b>Directorate Annual Report</b>.</p>
<p>We will lead, contribute to, and support work within the Fife <b>Children’s Services Plan</b> to “Deliver the Promise”, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of 4DX, to improve early and effective intervention at the additional stage, by ensuring that scaffolding is in place to maintain children safely at home.</li> <li>• Work to ensure early &amp; effective intervention through better single-agency planning and assessment, to support improving outcomes through the Child Wellbeing Pathway.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress in partnership working to support delivery of the Promise will be monitored by the Children’s Services Partnership Group and reported through the <b>Fife Children’s Services Annual Reports</b>.</p>

# Our Plan for Improvement

## Closing the Attainment Gap

### Context

Before the Covid pandemic, there were significant differences in attainment for the most and least disadvantaged children across Scotland. The attainment gap had closed in Fife for a range of measures before the pandemic, but evidence suggests that: the impact of the pandemic has been particularly pronounced for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children; the attainment gap has widened again for some groups of children, as a result.

Closing the attainment gap is a key part of Fife Council’s recovery and reform agenda, led by the Education and Children’s Services Directorate. Our ambition is to ensure a steady and sustained improvement in attainment and a closing of the attainment gap over the coming years, enabling Fife to achieve the National Improvement Framework stretch targets by 2024/25.

The actions that we will take	How we will monitor & report our success
<p>Good <b>Health and Wellbeing</b> is key for children to achieve. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase universal and targeted support for the emotional wellbeing of children and young people;</li> <li>• Strengthen Family Support Work in the community;</li> <li>• Enhance our nurturing approaches to ensure children and young people have better engagement with learning.</li> </ul> <p>These actions will specifically focus on supporting early learning settings &amp; schools to close the attainment gap and will supplement our wider actions to <i>Support Wellbeing</i>.</p>	<p>We will improve the percentage attendance rate of pupils, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils (<b>scorecard measures</b>).</p> <p>We will undertake a Wellbeing Census in 2021/22 and analyse and identify actions from the key results of this survey in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>
<p><b>Equity</b> in education is a right for all children and young people. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address poverty-related barriers to learning, through the use of targeted/ disproportionate support;</li> <li>• Further develop our Learning with Care Strategy to improve attainment and positive destinations outcomes for care experienced children and young people;</li> <li>• Reduce exclusions, as well as further developing our attendance strategy;</li> <li>• Strengthen approaches to supporting children with autism through increased training of staff.</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> will include an overview of outcomes for children and young people facing multiple forms of disadvantage and will set out a baseline for measuring improved outcomes in future years.</p> <p>We will increase the percentage attendance of care experienced pupils (links to <b>scorecard measure</b> for <i>Delivering the Promise</i>).</p>

	<p>We will increase the percentage attendance of children living in SIMD Quintile 1 (SIMD Q1) (<b>scorecard measure</b>).</p>
<p><b>High Quality Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment</b> is as a key enabler of improved attainment. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed robust approaches to Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Moderation in both the Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase of schooling;</li> <li>• Improve the use of data to support tracking and monitoring of pupil progress in primary schools;</li> <li>• Ensure that a coherent and robust approach to tracking &amp; monitoring of literacy and numeracy through the BGE phase of secondary school is in place across all high schools; this will provide a consistent basis to benchmark pupil progress across all stages of learning.</li> <li>• Improve transitions in learning, including both Nursery to Primary Stage 1 and Primary to Secondary Stage 1;</li> <li>• Continue to enhance the Digital Literacy of both staff &amp; children;</li> <li>• Scale and spread, evidence-based, targeted approaches to improving both Literacy and Numeracy.</li> </ul>	<p>We will increase the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of Curriculum for Excellence for both Literacy &amp; Numeracy (<b>scorecard measure</b>).</p> <p>We will increase the percentage of care experienced children who are achieving the expected levels of Curriculum for Excellence for both Literacy &amp; Numeracy (links to <b>scorecard measure</b> for <i>Delivering the Promise</i>).</p> <p>We will increase the percentage of children living in SIMD Q1 who are achieving the expected levels of Curriculum for Excellence for both Literacy &amp; Numeracy (<b>scorecard measure</b>).</p> <p>The <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> will include an overview of SQA attainment for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including those with a need for Additional Support for Learning.</p>
<p><b>Engagement &amp; Participation</b> of children and young people is a prerequisite for learning. We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop our Attendance Strategy, through the use of universal &amp; targeted approaches;</li> <li>• Improve the quality of Flexible Education Agreements to increase engagement in learning;</li> <li>• Encourage innovation in the curriculum to ensure meaningful and relevant learning pathways for all children and young people.</li> </ul>	<p>We will improve the percentage attendance rate of pupils, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils (<b>scorecard measures</b>).</p> <p>We will improve the percentage of care experienced school leavers who enter a positive destination from school (links to <b>scorecard measure</b> for <i>Improving Opportunity</i>).</p> <p>We will improve the percentage of school leavers living in SIMD Q1 who enter a positive destination from school (links to <b>scorecard measure</b> for <i>Improving Opportunity</i>).</p> <p>The <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> will include an overview of our work: to improve attendance in specific targeted areas; to improve the quality of Flexible Education Agreements; and to encourage curriculum innovation.</p>

# Our Plan for Improvement

## Improving Opportunity

### Context

Significant progress had been made, before the Covid pandemic, in improving post school destinations for school leavers and the participation of 16–19-year-olds in the Fife local economy. The Covid pandemic had a significant and adverse impact on the destinations of leavers in August 2020 in Fife, as in other parts of Scotland. The economic impact of the pandemic is projected to continue, with a disproportionate impact on young people.

Employability is a key part of Fife Council’s recovery and reform agenda, led by the Education and Children’s Services Directorate. Our ambition is to ensure a steady and sustained improvement in the proportion of Fife’s young people in education, employment and training – particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups – enabling Fife to achieve the National Improvement Framework stretch targets by 2024/25.

The actions that we will take	How we will monitor & report our success
We will support the Plan4Fife in leading <b>economic recovery</b> by working with partners – including Fife college, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and employers – to prioritise support for young people, ensuring that a range of opportunities are embedded for young people across secondary schools.	We will work with all partners to maintain, and further improve, levels of participation among 16–19-year-olds in the Fife economy ( <b>scorecard measure</b> ).
We will review approaches and processes to ensure that all young people receive <b>personalised support</b> , enabling them to access appropriate learning pathways; these will provide appropriate opportunities for wider achievement, leading to a positive destination from school.	We will improve the proportion of young people leaving school and entering a positive destination from school ( <b>scorecard measure</b> ).
We will actively focus and target resources towards <b>vulnerable and disadvantaged young people</b> , to provide the access they need in the simplest way possible. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care experienced and looked after young people (supporting work on <i>Delivering the Promise</i> and <i>Closing the Attainment Gap</i>).</li> <li>• Young people with a need for Additional Support with Learning (ASL). We will ensure that the ASL review is fully implemented, by: supporting transitions into</li> </ul>	We will improve the proportion of care experienced young people leaving school and entering a positive destination ( <b>scorecard measure</b> ). We will improve the proportion of young people with a need for ASL leaving school and entering a positive destination ( <b>scorecard measure</b> ).

<p>adult services and college opportunities, and delivering training across schools to help meet learners needs across universal, additional, intensive levels of support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people living in SIMD Quintile 1 (supporting work on <i>Closing the Attainment Gap</i>).</li> <li>• Others, including Winter and Christmas Leavers, and Young Carers.</li> </ul> <p>We will support this targeted approach by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that a robust and consistent approach to planning and tracking is in place across all schools.</li> <li>• Supporting a local reflection on needs and opportunities, through the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) People and Place groups.</li> <li>• Further developing support for Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), improving joint working of college link staff and 16 plus workers with the employability team in the Enterprise &amp; Environment Directorate.</li> </ul>	<p>We will improve the proportion of young people living in SIMD Quintile 1 who leave school and enter a positive destination from school (<b>scorecard measure</b>).</p> <p>Progress in improving post school destinations for other vulnerable and disadvantaged young people (including winter and Christmas leavers, young carers) will be reviewed in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>
<p>We will work to ensure <b>parity of esteem</b> for vocational and academic learning pathways. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support schools – working with colleges, employers, higher education, parents &amp; young people – to increase opportunities for wider achievement through an improved curriculum offer for learners. This will equip young people with key skills for the future economy, informed by an understanding of the needs of the Fife economy (e.g., STEM areas).</li> <li>• Ensure that a series of learning pathways are in use in secondary schools to help young people understand and realise a range of education &amp; training options.</li> <li>• Review the range of qualifications available to young people to support them in following these learning pathways and developing key skills.</li> <li>• Support the development of appropriate curriculum rationales, designed and developed by schools, to reflect their own unique context.</li> </ul>	<p>We will review the availability and achievement of Foundation Apprenticeships in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p> <p>We will review work to ensure parity of esteem in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>, using a range of data, including School-College Partnership performance data.</p> <p>We will improve our capacity to report on the contribution of the ECS Directorate to developing the skills needed for the Fife economy – and the economy of the wider city deal region – strengthening the evidence of our impact covered in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>
<p>We will use the learning gained throughout the Covid pandemic to develop our approach to <b>Digital Learning</b>. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop our use of online learning platforms (e.g., e-Sgoil and Scholar).</li> <li>• Scope the use of digital learning to support the curriculum offer to learners in particular subject areas and stages (e.g., Advanced Higher courses enabling entry to the most selective HE courses).</li> </ul>	<p>Progress in developing our approach to Digital Learning will be reviewed in our <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>

# Our Plan for Improvement

## Supporting Wellbeing

### Context

Emotional wellbeing and mental health were a significant concern for young people before the pandemic, as was the negative impact of work-related stress on staff. The pandemic has further increased the stresses on young people and staff. The pandemic has also had a negative impact on the opportunities for children and young people to play and be physically active.

Supporting the emotional and physical wellbeing of children, young people, families and staff is a priority for the recovery period.

The actions that we will take	How we will monitor & report our success
<p>We will work to support the <b>Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health</b> of our children, young people, families and staff. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to grow the application of Fife’s <b>Our Minds Matter Framework</b>, extending its reach to take account of the requirements of the new <b>Community Mental Health Framework</b>.</li> <li>• Continue to develop our delivery of the wide-ranging, high quality early interventions and additional supports we can provide to meet young people’s needs. This will include the continued development of <b>Fife Schools’ Counselling Services</b>.</li> <li>• Continue to embed the principles and key actions relating to our <b>Staff Wellbeing Strategy</b> to ensure staff have access to advice in relation to promoting wellbeing as well as appropriate additional supports when they are needed.</li> </ul>	<p>We will report to Fife’s Education and Children’s Services Sub-Committee on the progress in relation to the continued application of the Our Minds Matter Framework.</p> <p>We will report on our understanding of young people’s wellbeing needs and the actions we are taking to meeting these in our <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p> <p>We will gather feedback from young people on their ability to access help and suitability of that support.</p>
<p>We will <b>improve the range of data</b> we currently gather and use. This will enable us to ensure we respond appropriately to the diverse wellbeing needs of children, young people and staff, during the recovery from Covid.</p>	<p>We will work with partners to develop shared, multi-agency <b>minimum data sets</b> for key health themes for young people: a) Physical Activity and Healthy Weight, b) Mental Health and Wellbeing, c) Drugs and Alcohol, d) Sexual Health and Child Sexual</p>

<p>For school aged young people this will centre on the implementation of the new National Health &amp; Wellbeing Census, which will gather data on a breadth of wellbeing aspects.</p>	<p>Exploitation, and as a basis for improved strategic planning. We will report on progress in developing these data sets in the <b>Fife Children’s Services Annual Reports</b> and the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>
<p>We will work in consultation with young people and families to devise and introduce actions and interventions, designed to address the needs identified from the themed health minimum data sets.</p>	<p>We will examine the impact of actions and interventions on core indicators within the relevant minimum data set themes, to establish quantitative evidence of improvement. This will be reviewed in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>.</p>
<p>To extend and enhance the range of services available to young people aged 0-26 to support them with a) distress and b) positive mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>We will work to gather service-user numbers and feedback and produce case studies for new, enhanced and extended services. These will be reported in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>. We will examine ease of access to services and user satisfaction. We will also examine impacts on core, baseline data of health indicators within the relevant minimum data set themes</p>

# Our Plan for Improvement

## Empowering All

### Context

In recent years the Directorate has worked to develop “A Better-Connected Directorate”, by promoting a more devolved and empowering model of leadership. The structures developed through this work were important in helping to establish an effective, initial response to the Covid pandemic, and have continued to evolve since.

The Directorate is looking to build on the lessons learned from our response to the pandemic, in order to further develop an empowered model of leadership and to build more resilient services and systems of support for the future.

The actions that we will take	How we will monitor & report our success
<p>We will revisit our <b>Directorate vision, values and behaviours</b> to ensure that the rights of children, young people and families are at the heart of work across the Directorate. This will help to ensure that delivering the Promise and promoting children’s rights are an integral part of reform and recovery.</p> <p>We will prepare and plan for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) bill, to ensure all areas of our work help to promote children’s rights.</p>	<p>The Directorate Plan update in 2022-23 will include a refreshed vision, values and behaviours, to support reform and recovery.</p> <p>We will survey and gather feedback from children, families and staff, to understand how well our vision, values and behaviours are evidenced in our work.</p>
<p>We will further improve the <b>participation &amp; engagement</b> of children, young people and families. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review our approaches and processes, to ensure all young people and families are meaningfully involved in decision making.</li> <li>• Increase the number of care experienced children who attend decision making meetings.</li> <li>• Ensure approaches to pupil participation and parental engagement across schools are inclusive and support the needs of all young people and families.</li> </ul>	<p>We will gather survey data and qualitative feedback on the experiences and perceptions of children, young people and families. This will be reported in future <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b>, including: Performance Reports for Children and Families Social Work, Performance Reports for Criminal Justice Social Work, and Standards and Quality Reports.</p>
<p>We will refresh our approach to <b>Corporate Parenting</b> to ensure that the voice and lived experience of care experienced young people informs our approach to Delivering the Promise. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive, 12-week review of service provision for children currently in care, to better understand their needs and the range of support that they require. This will</li> </ul>	<p>We will review data from the review of children currently in care and use this to develop an improved framework for monitoring and developing service provision. This will be reported in future</p>

<p>include services delivered by social work, education, physical and mental health services, third sector support and other partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use “Mind of my Own” digital services to hear the voice of care experienced children and young people.</li> <li>• Develop a website for all care experienced young people and adults – whether currently or formerly in care – setting out our duties to them and the range of ways in which we can support them in their life journey.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Performance Reports for Children and Families Social Work.</b></p>
<p>Working with Council partners we will further develop our approach to <b>People Leadership</b>. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build capacity and capability of the People Leadership teams in each of the 7 areas to ensure effective collaborative working and local empowerment.</li> <li>• Improve local networks of support, by better understanding the impact of our services on children and families and investing at a local level in what works.</li> <li>• Monitor the profile of care across Fife’s 7 areas to determine the level of commissioned services required at a local level. This will include data relating to: care experienced young people, those on the child protection register, and those progressing through the child wellbeing pathway.</li> </ul>	<p>We will provide an account of our developing approach to People and Place Leadership in future <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports.</b></p>
<p>We will strengthen our <b>Support for Quality Improvement</b> across the Directorate. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build capacity and capability in the use of quality improvement methodology across the Directorate. This will enable us to invest in, and scale up, successful changes quickly, based on demonstrable improvements.</li> <li>• Ensure that we are using data effectively to inform improvement planning and implementation across all aspects of the Directorate’s work.</li> <li>• Ensure improvement support from corporate teams is focussed on empowering practitioners, leaders, and teams to undertake the strategic actions needed to address our key improvement priority areas.</li> <li>• Build on learning gained from the Covid pandemic, to develop more resilient models of professional learning and collaboration – including digital approaches – that will enable a greater engagement with staff.</li> <li>• Enable Directorate staff by: supporting career-long professional learning which: develops critical thinking and enquiry, and promotes collaborative improvement; and strengthening networks to support learning and sharing of good practice.</li> <li>• Continue to strengthen school leadership models across our school communities.</li> </ul>	<p>We will provide an account of our developing approach to Quality Improvement in future <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports.</b></p> <p>We will monitor the effectiveness of our Support for Quality Improvement via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from practitioners and other staff following engagement in professional learning opportunities, to determine how fully development needs were met.</li> <li>• Feedback from staff surveys, including: Staffwise and Heartbeat, and Pulse surveys.</li> <li>• Evidence from Standards and Quality Reports of schools and early learning centres.</li> <li>• Future reviews of our School Leadership Models.</li> </ul>

# Our Plan for Improvement

## Justice Social Work

### Context

The Justice Social Work (JSW) service works in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory partners from across Fife in order to support community safety and public protection.

Improvement Proposal (Performance)	Required Action(s)	Measurement(s)
Improve service-user engagement and satisfaction.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with and learning from service-users and their families.</li> <li>2. Improve service-user questionnaire to be more accessible and user friendly.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complaints (Compliance and satisfaction)</li> <li>2. Service-user questionnaire feedback and improve engagement with SUPG.</li> </ol>
Revamp audit processes to provide measurement, scrutiny and improvement goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of more robust auditing processes.</li> <li>2. Produce quarterly performance reports to share with staff and partners.</li> <li>3. Introduce peer auditing using full management cohort on rotation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarterly reports.</li> <li>2. Comparison with national statistical measurement.</li> <li>3. Annual review and evidence-based target setting.</li> </ol>
Provide clear, realistic and achievable performance and improvement targets.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remodel practitioner led groups to include specific groups for practice and performance.</li> <li>2. Share targets with full staff group, including clear rationale and expectations.</li> <li>3. Set improvement targets for KPI, SPI and Service specific goals.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Embed culture of performance improvement amongst front-line staff.</li> <li>2. Level of 'buy-in' from Performance Group in target setting.</li> <li>3. Improvement.</li> </ol>
Review and update Manual of Practice Guidance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full revision of MPG documentation.</li> <li>2. Update remaining information and fill any gaps.</li> <li>3. Set robust process review dates with lead officer responsibility.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All documents are up-to-date.</li> <li>2. Implement version control system.</li> <li>3. Measure and ensure accessibility.</li> <li>4. Ensure review dates are met and upheld.</li> </ol>

<b>Improvement Proposal (Partnership)</b>	<b>Required Action(s)</b>	<b>Measurement(s)</b>
Improve relationships with partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actively engage with partners beyond the operational expectation.</li> <li>2. Ensure lines of scrutiny and reporting to CMT and Elected Members are robust open and accountable.</li> <li>3. Share performance reports and learning openly.</li> <li>4. Align Management group to specific partnerships to ensure open communication and consistency.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measure improvements in positive results and outcomes in cases where joint working is key.</li> <li>2. Improved working arrangements and reciprocal agreements with partners.</li> <li>3. Management reporting on operational specific links with partners or area-based alignment structures.</li> </ol>
Align future plans to wider Council and National objectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure more structured evidence of JSW actions and planning features in Council-wide planning documents.</li> <li>2. Follow links through the wider Council strategy to find elements of 'Golden Thread' in planning strategy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measure inclusion in the wider strategic planning process.</li> <li>2. Ensure that local objectives take into account national objectives and priorities.</li> </ol>
<b>Improvement Proposal (National Priority)</b>	<b>Required Action(s)</b>	<b>Measurement(s)</b>
Support Scottish Drug Death Taskforce to reduce instances of drug related death in Fife.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure equivalence of support for people in the Criminal Justice System.</li> <li>2. Focus on areas of high harm prevalence, e.g. at point of release from custody.</li> <li>3. Work in partnership to co-ordinate and maximise support.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drug related death annual report.</li> <li>2. Ensure firm links with drug services.</li> <li>3. Strengthen resources to high risk of harm areas and measure outcomes.</li> </ol>
<b>Improvement Proposal (Publicity)</b>	<b>Required Action(s)</b>	<b>Measurement(s)</b>
Build upon successful social media strategy to share success and improve links to practice & academia.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve following on Twitter and YouTube.</li> <li>2. Consider additional social media platforms.</li> <li>3. Engage with local communities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engagement and response on social media.</li> <li>2. Interest from local communities and groups.</li> </ol>

# Delivering Our Plan

## Our Directorate Scorecard

The Directorate Scorecard includes high-level measures that will help us to monitor progress for the Directorate's **five improvement priorities** over the coming two years. Progress for improvement in Justice Social Work will be monitored via a separate scorecard.

The implementation and impact of our plan will also be monitored through action planning at service and team levels. This will include a range of more operational data and more detailed actions, relating to the work undertaken by services and teams to support improvement and to ensure the ongoing delivery of core service functions. Progress of these action plans will be monitored by the Directorate Strategic Self-Evaluation Group.

Outcome measure	Current Fife Performance	Benchmark (if available)	Improvement goal
<b>Delivering the Promise</b>			
Percentage attendance of care experienced children.	89.1% (2019/20 – Fife LAC)	91.3% (2019/20 – Fife all pupils)	Increase to match outcomes of all pupils
Percentage of P1/P4/P7 care experienced children achieving the expected level in CfE: literacy	30.1% (2019/20 – Fife LAC)	63.2% (2019/20 – Fife all pupils)	Increase to match outcomes of all pupils
Percentage of P1/P4/P7 care experienced children achieving the expected level in CfE: numeracy	37.8% (2019/20 – Fife LAC)	69.7% (2019/20 – Fife all pupils)	Increase to match outcomes of all pupils
Proportion of Fife children with a multi-agency child's plan who are supported safely at home/with family (4DX improvement programme measure)	70% (March 2021)	N/A (Fife local data)	74% (By 31 March 2022)
A comprehensive review of outcomes will be provided in <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> . The Directorate will further develop its approach to monitoring and reporting of data relating to care experienced young people with the aim of ensuring: robust accountability for issues like exclusion and the provision of full-time education; and respect for the confidentiality of individuals.			
<b>Closing the attainment gap</b>			
Percentage attendance of children living in SIMD Q1	88.0% (2019/20 – Fife SIMD Q1)	91.3% (2019/20 – Fife all pupils)	Increase to match outcomes of all pupils

Percentage of P1/P4/P7 children living in SIMD Q1 achieving the expected level in CfE: literacy	50.4% (2019/20 – Fife)	Data not collected nationally in 2019/20	Improve by 6.9% p.a. to 85% by 2024/25
Percentage of P1/P4/P7 children living in SIMD Q1 achieving the expected level in CfE: numeracy	57.8% (2019/20 – Fife)	Data not collected nationally in 2019/20	Improve by 5.4% p.a. to 85% by 2024/25
Percentage of P1/P4/P7 children achieving the expected level in CfE: literacy	63.2% (2019/20 – Fife)	Data not collected nationally in 2019/20	Improve by 4.8% p.a. to 87.3% by 2024/25
Percentage of P1/P4/P7 children achieving the expected level in CfE: numeracy	69.7% (2019/20 – Fife)	Data not collected nationally in 2019/20	Improve by 3.5% p.a. to 87.3% by 2024/25
<b>Improving Opportunity</b>			
SQA attainment of school leavers	Outcomes will be reported in depth in the Annual Reports. No headline scorecard measure is included, as current data does not provide like-for-like trend data.		
Percentage of school leavers who initially enter a positive destination from school	91.9% (2019/20 – Fife)	93.4% (2019/20 – Scotland)	Match or exceed National outcomes
Percentage of care experienced school leavers who initially enter a positive destination from school	86.9% (2019/20 – Fife)	81.4% (2019/20 – Scotland)	Increase to match outcomes of all leavers
Percentage of school leavers with a need for Additional Support with Learning who initially enter a positive destination from school	87.6% (2019/20 – Fife)	89.6% (2019/20 – Scotland)	Match or exceed National outcomes
Percentage of school leavers living in SIMD Q1 who initially enter a positive destination from school	86.6% (2019/20 – Fife leavers)	90.0% (2019/20 – Scotland)	Match or exceed National outcomes
Percentage of young people aged 16-19 who are participating in the Fife economy	91.7% (Yr to March 2020 – Fife)	92.1% (Yr to March 2020 – Scotland)	Match or exceed National outcomes
The Directorate will work with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to improve our to monitor and report data relating to the post-school experiences of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including: the care experienced and those with a need for Additional Support with Learning.			
<b>Supporting Wellbeing</b>			
Outcomes to be reported in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> . As appropriate quantitative measures are identified, these will be added to the scorecard. This will include measures in the national wellbeing census.			
<b>Empowering all</b>			
A qualitative review of work to support this improvement priority will be included in the <b>Directorate Annual Performance Reports</b> .			

# Delivering Our Plan

## Our Use of Improvement Methodology

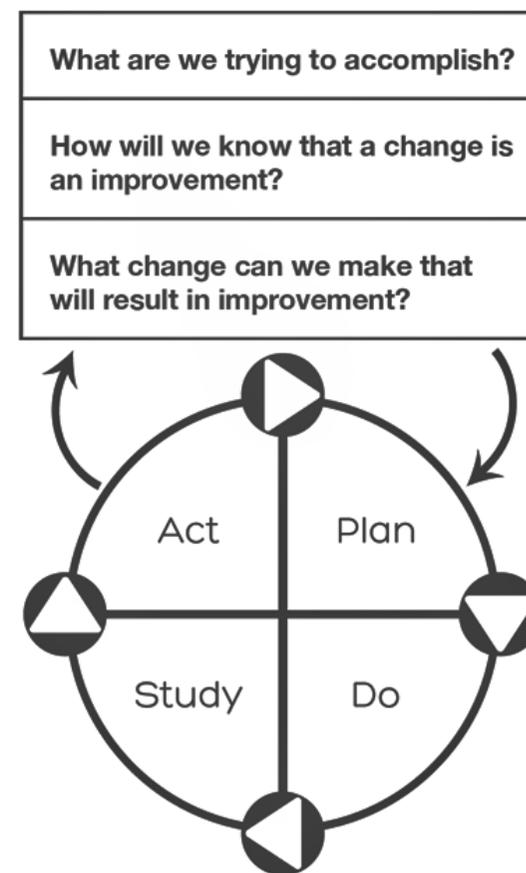
The **Children & Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC)** has been a focus for improvement work across the Directorate over a number of years.

This continues to evidence significant impact supporting staff across the Directorate's work applying the Scottish Government's 3-step Improvement Framework for Public Services - an overarching framework to test improvement at a local level.

Approaches supported by CYPIC include the **Model for Improvement**, which enables practitioners to test, measure, implement, and spread new and better ways of working to make services more effective and responsive to the needs of children, young people and families.

Working with the wider Children's Services Partnership, the Directorate has also begun a journey of improvement work applying the **4DX** methodology, based on Franklin Covey's Four Disciplines of Execution. This is aligned to a key strategic priority aligned to The Promise: *'Increasing the proportion of children with a multiagency child's plan who can be supported to live Safely at Home from 70% to 74% by March 31st, 2022.*

Model for Improvement



## Appendix 1 – Further Information

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### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is the Scottish Government's standard approach to measuring relative levels of disadvantage across Scotland. It provides information about a range of resources and opportunities available to communities at a local level. These relate to: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing.

SIMD is calculated for defined local areas called data zones; there are 6,976 datazones across Scotland.

Each of these datazones fall within five families, called quintiles, according to the overall level of multiple deprivation recorded by SIMD for that area. SIMD Quintile 1 (often abbreviated to **SIMD Q1**) refers to the most deprived areas, as measured by SIMD.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>



### United Nations on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (**UNCRC**) is the global “gold standard” for children’s rights and sets out the fundamental rights of all children.

In Scotland, the UNCRC is already used to provide a framework to ensure that children's rights are considered whenever decisions are taken, and to help provide every child with a good start in life and a safe, healthy and happy childhood. It forms the basis of Scotland’s national approach for supporting children, called Getting it right for every child (**GIRFEC**).

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/human-rights/childrens-rights/>



### The Promise

In 2017, the Scottish Government launched an Independent Review of Scotland’s Care System (Children and Young People) to help Scotland deliver the ‘world’s best care system’.

The Promise is responsible for driving the work of change demanded by the findings of the Independent Care Review, following their publication in 2020. It works with all kinds of organisations to support shifts in policy, practice and culture so Scotland can *#KeepThePromise* it made to care experienced infants, children, young people, adults and their families - that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential.

Further information can be found at: <https://thepromise.scot/>



## Appendix

# Education & Children's Services Directorate Summary overview of performance 2020-21



The table below summarises the outcomes reported to Council committees over the course of 2020-21.

Priority Area	Pre-COVID Improvement Journey	Impact of COVID
<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<p>The proportion of children looked after by the local authority has been lower in Fife than in Scotland for a number of years.</p> <p>As a result of the Belonging 2 Fife strategy, there has been a shift in the profile of care in the past 2 years with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduction in the proportion of looked after children in residential placements.</li> <li>• A reduction in the number of looked after children in purchased foster care placements.</li> <li>• An increase in the number of looked after children who are being supported safely at home, or in a kinship placement.</li> </ul> <p>However, the proportion of children being looked after in a purchased foster care placement continues to be above the national average.</p>	<p>The shift in the profile of care towards children being supported safely at home has continued, during the course of the pandemic.</p> <p>A programme of work, using the 4DX improvement methodology and involving the wider children's services partnership, has begun. This is looking to develop a better coordinated partnership approach to prevention for vulnerable children and young people, including those on the edge of care.</p>
<p><b>Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Emotional wellbeing was identified as an area of concern before the pandemic, through a range of surveys and engagement events with young people.</p> <p>A partnership approach (Our Minds Matter) had been developed to ensure that young people were better supported with their mental health. The initial stages of this approach had been deployed, including multi-agency training, and improved transition pathways to access support.</p>	<p>Plans to introduce a Fife's Community Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework were initially delayed by the pandemic but are now being progressed.</p> <p>Surveys of parents have indicated a high level of positive feedback regarding the support given to children and families by the Directorate. However, there is a range of evidence that the Covid pandemic has added to existing stresses for young people, families and staff.</p> <p>A range of local and national surveys have also identified that mental health and resilience are key issues of concern to young people.</p>

<p><b>Opportunity</b></p>	<p>Prior to 2019/20 there had been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sustained increase in participation of 16-19-year olds in education, training or education. Fife also substantially closed the gap with national levels of participation.</li> <li>• An improvement in the proportion of school leavers entering positive destinations, both nationally and in Fife. By 2019/20 Fife had significantly closed the gap in outcomes with national.</li> <li>• An improvement in school leaver attainment for literacy and numeracy and a closing of the attainment gap.</li> <li>• An improvement in achievement of CfE levels in primary schools for literacy and numeracy and a closing of the attainment gap.</li> </ul>	<p>During 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of school leavers entering positive destinations declined in both and Scotland. The gap with national widened.</li> <li>• The Certification Process for SQA awards at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher was replaced with an alternative method of certification. This means that school leaver attainment for 2019/20 is not comparable with earlier years.</li> <li>• Although data on achievement of CfE levels was not collected nationally in 2019/20, there is evidence that the Covid pandemic has had an adverse impact on the progression of learning in the Broad General Education.</li> </ul> <p>N.B. Published data on participation pre-dates the Covid pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Poverty</b></p>	<p>Levels of child poverty have been increasing across Scotland in recent years. There is evidence that levels of child poverty have been increasing at a faster rate than national. Fife now ranks as having the 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate of child poverty by the standard national measure of local poverty.</p>	<p>The Covid pandemic has had a negative impact on economic activity and levels of child poverty are projected to increase yet further. Unemployment levels are also projected to increase – potentially towards 10% – in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Enablers</b></p>	<p>Quality indicators for children’s services before the pandemic had shown that the Directorate’s provision was generally well rated by national inspection agencies, including early years settings, schools, and care settings.</p> <p>The Directorate and wider children’s services partnership were evaluated as having the capacity for further improvement.</p>	<p>The regular schedule of service inspections has been interrupted by the pandemic.</p>



**Education & Children's Services**  
Improving life chances for all

