

REPORT TO EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27 MAY 2021

ECS Holiday Recovery Programme

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals from the ECS Leadership Team for the development of a Holiday Recovery Programme for children and young people across Aberdeenshire further to the recent Council commitment to a £2 million reserve for this purpose in the 2021-2022 budget.

2 Recommendations

Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree to the proposals for an ECS Holiday Recovery Programme as outlined in Appendix 1.**

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 This report is coming to ECS Committee further to the recent commitment at Full Council to fund a £2 million reserve to develop and deliver an ECS Holiday Recovery Programme for children and young people across Aberdeenshire in light of the impact the pandemic has had on their mental, social, physical, emotional and educational wellbeing.
- 3.2 This report has been considered by the ECS Leadership Team and Strategic Leadership Team and who are in full agreement with the proposals as set out in **Appendix 1**.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on each and every citizen in our country since the first positive case in the UK was identified in early 2020. The impact of the various lockdowns and the closure of schools have had a specific impact on children and young people. It is not natural for children and young people to be separated from their peers at such an important time in their lives and the consequences of the pandemic on this generation will be long lasting and far reaching.
- 4.2 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there were significant concerns around young people's mental health which resulted in a new counselling service being developed as a result of additional targeted Scottish Government funding announced in 2020/21. In Aberdeenshire this service is currently under development and Children and Young People's mental health remains a key theme in the 2020 – 2023 Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan.
- 4.3 As well as the closure of schools for part of school year 2019-2020 and 2020 – 2021, the cancellation of the SQA examinations diet in both 2020 and 2021 has

also had a serious impact on the wellbeing of young people. Negative coverage in the media of “lost learning” and speculation around a “lost generation” have caused upset and consternation among professionals, parents and young people themselves. Throughout the pandemic, ECS has met regularly with young people to hear their views and to listen to their own lived experiences throughout the pandemic. Negative media commentary has very much affected them and they are articulate in expressing their views and their aspirations for a better future.

- 4.4 Staff across ECS have worked exceptionally hard over the past year to continue support children and young people. Remote learning has been greatly enhanced and improved since the initial lockdown and all areas of the service have adapted their ways of working to provide as much ongoing support as possible. There has also been a specific and continued focus on our most vulnerable children and young people. Staff across the service have commented regularly on their concerns for our young people and the impact that the pandemic is having on all aspects of their wellbeing.
- 4.5 Given the experiences which young people have had over the past year, it is accepted that as society gradually opens up, they should have the opportunity to mix again with their peers, to socialise, to play and to have fun. The experiences of the past year have allowed some to thrive whilst for others the struggles have been very real and potentially damaging.
- 4.6 The £2 million Holiday Recovery Reserve agreed as part of the 2021-2022 Aberdeenshire Council budget provides an opportunity for each cluster to develop proposals to support the wellbeing of young people based on local intelligence and need. These proposals are set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.7 On 23rd March 2021, the First Minister made an announcement in the Scottish Parliament that the Scottish Government was committing an additional £20 million fund to support holiday “fun” activities. Further detail on this fund is awaited, but intelligence through the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) has indicated that this should enhance and complement programmes already in place in local authorities to support holiday activities and should be used in the first instance to support those in poorer socio-economic circumstances. Once further information on this fund is forthcoming, the ECS Leadership Team agree this should be targeted at specific areas in Aberdeenshire, predominantly in the north to enhance the holiday offer in place by providing specific interventions for identified groups of young people. Many young people who would most benefit from this support have already been identified through our “seven markers” approach used throughout the pandemic. There are also clear links to the pilot Whole Systems Approach work which is being undertaken in the Peterhead area.
- 4.8 ECS already offers a variety of holiday programmes and activities, mainly through Live Life Aberdeenshire and through the CLD service. The proposals outlined in Appendix 1 and any subsequent additional Scottish Government funding will allow us to greatly enhance the offer to children and young people across Aberdeenshire.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 Specify which of the Council's Priorities are relevant to the report.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation

This report helps deliver the Strategic Priorities of “Education and Health and Wellbeing” within the Pillar “Our People”, and also supports the key underpinning principles of having the right people, in the right place, at the right time and tackling poverty and inequalities.

5.2 This report helps deliver against Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan Priority – Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

This report helps deliver on the LOIP Priority – Child Poverty

5.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities	X		
Fairer Scotland Duty		X	
Town Centre First		X	
Sustainability		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	X		

5.4 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 1** and there is a positive impact in that the proposals for holiday recovery will provide additional opportunities for young people during holiday periods to support their physical, social and mental health and wellbeing. These supports will be targeted at specific groups of young people who will benefit the most.

5.5 It is anticipated that the proposals outlined in this report will have a positive impact on children and young people's rights and wellbeing.

5.6 No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate or Directorate Level.

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section E1.1b of the [List of Committee Powers in Part 2A](#) of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to policy issues relating to Education that are not specifically delegated to any other Committee.

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education & Children's Services

Report prepared by Laurence Findlay, Director of Education and Children's Services
Date 20 April 2021

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 - ECS Holiday Recovery Programme

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	23/04/2021	L Findlay	

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions including those that affect services the council delivers).

Service	Education and Children’s Services
Section	Education and Children’s Services
Title of the activity etc.	ECS Holiday Recovery
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	To provide a holiday recovery programme across all 17 clusters in Aberdeenshire to support the mental, physical and social health and wellbeing of young people during the Covid-19 recovery phase
Author(s) & Title(s)	L Findlay

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment and explain what it means in relation to the activity you are assessing.

Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Feedback from young people, staff and parents highlights the potential concerning impact that Covid-19 has had on the wellbeing of young people	As a service, ECS is keen to ensure appropriate interventions and supports are in place as society gradually “opens up”. Having holiday activities in place is a key element of this.
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Feedback from staff in a range of services and from partner organisations agree that young people would benefit from a holiday recovery programme	Support for the proposals
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	Plans for holiday recovery activities are shared with parents and with other organisations who may help us to deliver	Support for the proposals
External data (census, available statistics).		

Other (general information as appropriate).		
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Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	N/A
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Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.

What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:

Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?

These should be included in the action plan.	N/A
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Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

Holiday activities will be provided across Aberdeenshire but a specific focus will be given to ensuring equity of provision and also targeting individuals and groups who are at greatest risk of non-participation for socio-economic reasons.

Stage 7a:
Are there potential impacts on protected groups?

The protected groups covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how? Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	X			
Age - Older			X	
Disability			X	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			X	

Religion or Belief			X	
Sex			X	
Pregnancy and maternity			X	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			X	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			X	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			X	

Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.

On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:

- Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g. housing, transport.
- Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service
- Prospects: peoples life chances e.g.access to, or ability to access: employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.

Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities • People who live in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners • Looked after children • Carers including young carers • Veterans • Students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People in low paid work • People with one or more protected characteristic
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Please complete by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	X			
Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	X			
Pockets: Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	X			
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work	X			
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income , educational achievement.	X			

Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?

Impacts.	Positive	Negative
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	Funding is in place both from the Council and from Scottish Government to cover the costs of activities which are offered.	
	Specific groups of young people at risk of “missing out” due to socio-economic circumstances will be targeted and supported to attend	

Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	CLD has carried out a survey of the kinds of activities young people would wish to see being offered. One of the principles of the proposed ECS Holiday Recovery Programme is co-creation with young people and they will be involved at a local level.
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Stage 10: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?		
These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale

Stage 11: What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	Feedback will be sought from young people who participate in activities. We will ensure specific feedback is gathered from young people who we believe will benefit most from the activities from an Equalities perspective.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?		
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	All impacts identified from this assessment have been positive in that the entire programme is designed around the intention to provide activities which will improve outcomes for young people	
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.				
Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Education and Children's Services		
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	ECS Holiday Recovery Programme		
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Laurence Findlay Position: Director of ECS Date: 23/04/2021 Signature: L Findlay	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: N/A Date: N/A		
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: N/A Position: N/A Date: N/A	Name: Position: Date:	
	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.			Date:
	7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk			Date:

APPENDIX 2

ECS: Holiday Recovery Programme

Background

It is evident that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on all parts of our society, but many of the impacts on our young people are disproportionate given the time they have been away from schools, away from their routines and separated from their peer groups at such an important developmental and educational stage in their lives. Indeed, a time in their lives that they will never get back.

Within ECS we are committed to working together for better, fairer lives and it is essential we provide some form of holiday recovery programme to focus on providing a range of age-appropriate activities and supports to young people across Aberdeenshire. Some of these should be face to face, but some can equally be carried out virtually through technology.

Whilst there is disproportionate coverage in the media of “lost learning” and “academic catch-up”, activities should focus on mental and physical health and wellbeing and socialisation, but academic elements can also be built in for young people who feel this would be of the greatest benefit to them personally. However, our overall priority must be the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of our young people and our proposals must be built around this. If we provide high quality opportunities for improving wellbeing, academic success will ensue as teachers assess learning and provide appropriate scaffolding and supports to learners in school settings. Too much talk of “lost learning” and “catch-up” is demoralising for learners and for their teachers. If we get wellbeing right, the rest will naturally follow. Nevertheless, some young people are expressing anxieties around their academic progress and due cognisance of this should be taken in developing our approaches to a holiday recovery programme.

Proposal

Each cluster in Aberdeenshire should develop a programme for Summer 2021, October 2021 and Easter 2022 co-created with young people themselves from the Pupil Participation Forum, Aberdeenshire Youth Council and our local MSYPs and other youth groups operating in each cluster.

Each programme should be rooted in the principles of GIRFEC and should have the wellbeing of young people at its very core.

Each programme should be cross-ECS and involve CLD, school, Children’s Services and LLA as well as partners from the voluntary and private sectors. The programme should be coordinated and led by CLD at a local, cluster level. Young people and parents/carers should also be involved in this coordination. It is also important that our local community planning partners are involved.

Funding will be made available to each cluster and there will be an additional weighting given to clusters serving areas of greater disadvantage. Locally, this funding can be topped up through use of any additional budgets which local groups

may have access to, including PEF, DSM carryforwards and other team budgets which may be available. Programmes developed should enhance what is already being offered in local areas through existing holiday programmes organised by Active Schools and others. Further to the First Minister's announcement of a "Holiday Fun" fund on 23rd March 2021 to enhance existing local authority programmes, there is scope to target specific areas where there is felt to be the greatest need of this kind of support.

Programmes developed should be targeted at those who would benefit from them most of all based on local knowledge of individual young people, families and community needs.

The main focus should be on mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing. However, in Easter 2022, clusters may opt to arrange some "masterclass" interventions ahead of the SQA 2022 examination diet. Some of this could, of course, be done virtually and be done on an Aberdeenshire-wide basis and further discussions with ASHTA will be required around this.

Local leadership will be essential in developing an appropriate offer to our young people, but there will be designated service manager/QIM who will maintain strategic oversight of the programme development, implementation and evaluation and will report back to the ECS Leadership Team on progress and impact.

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education and Children's Services