Aberdeenshire
C O U N C I L **Education and Children's Services**

REPORT TO EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE - 2 DECEMBER 2021

VIRTUAL HEAD TEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

1   Reason for Report / Summary

1.1   Aberdeenshire Council is required to produce and report annually on its Corporate Parenting Plan, which will be presented to the Committee on 2nd December 2021. The Corporate Parenting Plan outlines key actions and activities for all corporate parents including the Virtual Head Teacher.

1.2   This report compliments the Corporate Parenting Annual Report by providing provides additional information on the role and achievements of the Virtual Head Teacher (VHT) and the specific task of improving support, who works collaboratively across Services to improve outcomes for Care Experienced Young People, in the form of an annual report.

1.3   This report also serves to demonstrate ongoing commitment to listening to Care Experienced Young People to ensure that lived experience directs and influences service design and provision as outlined in The Promise.

2   Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

2.1   Consider and comment on the progress made during the period from August 2020 to August 2021; and

2.2   Note and comment on the continued work planned for 2021/2022 in line with the Corporate Parenting Plan 2020/2023 and the priorities outlined in The Plan 21-24 from The Promise.

3   Purpose and Decision Making Route

3.1   This matter is being brought before the Education and Children's Services committee in order that all elected members are well informed of the developments to support attainment for Care Experienced Young People across Aberdeenshire.

4   Discussion

4.1   Corporate Parenting is the responsibility Aberdeenshire Council has for children and young people who are or have been Looked After, by definition of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

4.2   The Corporate Parenting Leads' Group, is a thematic group of the GIRFEC Strategic Group and one of the 5 priorities identified within the Multi Agency Children's Services Plan. It is responsible for continuously improving the

service experience of Looked After Children, young people and care leavers, and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP).

4.3   The Group is committed to responding to the challenges faced by Care Experienced Young People to improve outcomes for this group. The work is underpinned by the priorities of Getting it Right for Every Child.

4.4   Education and Children's Services has been tracking the attainment of Care Experienced Young People for several years and reports on this annually as part of a suite of performance indicators. Whilst Aberdeenshire performs well in this area, Care Experienced Young People remain behind their peers in terms of attainment and positive destinations, and it is vital that we continue in our efforts to bridge this attainment gap.

4.5   In February 2020, The Independent Care Review was published. Over 5,500 people were listened to and discovered change was needed across Scotland to make sure that all children in Scotland are "loved, safe and respected". Findings from the review have led to The Plan, which will be phased across ten years with Plan 21-24 as the first phase.

4.6   Children's rights are legally protected in Scotland. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was incorporated into Scottish law in 2021. As a local authority we must take steps to respect and uphold children's rights when making decisions about their lives.

4.7   The Scottish Government have continued to provide local authorities with a funding grant to provide targeted and focused support for Care Experienced Children and Young People to improve their educational outcomes.

4.8   From the Scottish Government grant, alongside the post of Virtual Head Teacher, this has also funded for 2020/2021 MCR Pathways Programme to five Academies, a mentoring programme to support care experienced pupils and those who are identified as vulnerable according to government guidelines for the funding criteria.

5   Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1   This report helps deliver the Strategic Priorities "Education" and "Health and Wellbeing" within the Pillar "Our People".

5.2   This report also helps deliver against Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan Priority – Corporate Parenting.

5.3   The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	X IIA attached as Appendix 2		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	X IIA attached as Appendix 2		
Climate Change and Sustainability		X	
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

5.4   There are no staffing implications.

5.5   In terms of finance, Aberdeenshire Council has been granted the following by the Scottish Government for the specific use of improving attainment. **Appendix 1** set out how funding has been used for 2020/21.

2018/19	£220,000
2019/20	£328,000
2020/21	£324,000
2021/22	£338,000

5.6   An integrated impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as **Appendix 2** and there is a positive impact as follows:

Through strong collaborative working across partners, care experienced young people will experience improved attainment, positives destinations and improved wellbeing.

5.7   The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

ACORP005- Working with other organisations.
ACORP007- Social Risk
Corporate Risk Register

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

ECSSR001- To have better integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people.
ECSSR002- To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people.
Link to risk register page on website

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 their comments are incorporated within the report and they 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 E.1.1 (a) of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the4 matter relates to Children's Services.

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education & Children's Services

Report prepared by Emma Allen, Virtual School Head Teacher
Date 3rd September 2021

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Annual Report 2020/21
Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 1

The Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2020-2021

1.0   Introduction

The year 2020/21 has been an unprecedented year for our communities and the impact of the pandemic has stretched far and wide in terms of our schools, children, and young people and in particular our care experienced young people.

Whilst all our schools have worked tirelessly to promote virtual/online learning during lockdowns, care experienced young people have told us that at times it has been hard to remain motivated and engaged when there are so many other things going on in their lives. Throughout the lockdown, care experienced young people were frequently supported through the Hub provision and feedback has been extremely encouraging on the positive impact this has had on our young people's mental health, family relationships and their engagement with the curriculum.

Access to IT provision/laptops has also been a massive support to our care experienced young people including our care leavers who have also been able to access this and continue to engage in further education.

However, mental health remains a significant area of concern in relation to all our young people but particularly so for care experienced young people who are more likely to have already experienced significant trauma in their lives. This added to not being able to see family face to face (albeit virtually) during the initial lock down period and being cut off from friends and school, has and will continue to take its toll.

Research evidences a direct correlation between wellbeing/mental health and attainment/achievement. Finding ways to support our care experienced young people to be all they can be, achieve and attain thus reducing the attainment gap has therefore never been more important. It is the role of the Virtual Head Teacher to continue to work alongside colleagues in schools to shine the light on our care experienced young people and the challenges they face to help mitigate against the risks this brings to their experience in school and ultimate destination post school.

2.0   The Changing Landscape

This year, two important events have taken place: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was passed on 16 March 2021. The Bill embeds the UNCRC into Scots Law. The UK government challenged the Bill and the Supreme Court agreed that some aspects of the legislation exceeded the Scottish Parliament's devolved powers. The Bill has now been sent back to the Scottish Parliament who must now amend or abandon the provisions the Supreme Court judged to be out with its competence before the Bill can be enacted and given Royal Assent.

The publication of The Promise in 2020 has lead to the further publication of Plan 21-24 which focuses on the period from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2024. It outlines a set of outcomes that should be concluded by 2024. The five priority areas outlined in Plan 21-24 are as follows:

Plan 21-24: In Summary
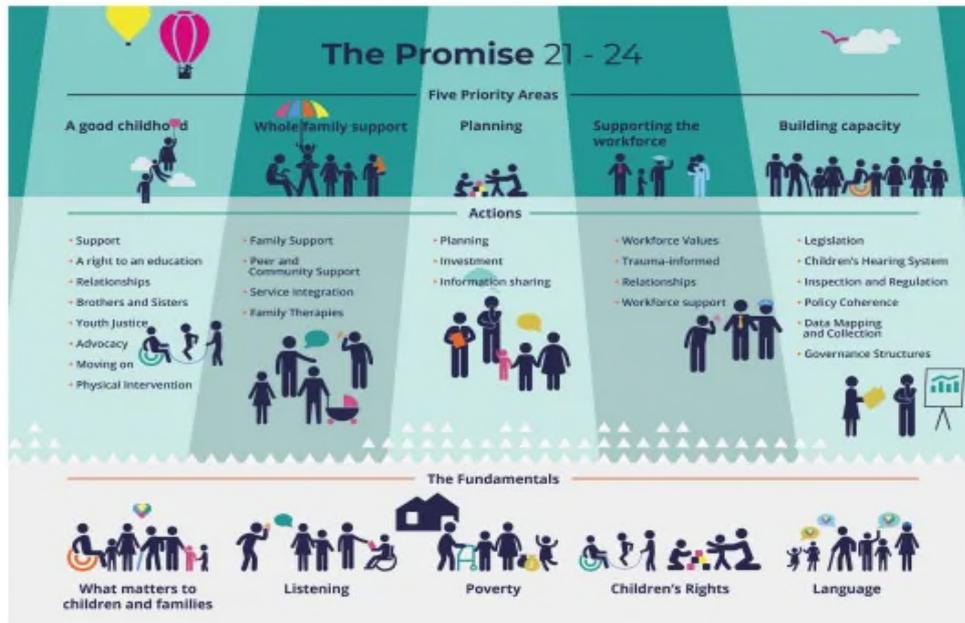
Over the past year, the Virtual Head Teacher has played an active role in working collaboratively with partner services and organisations to deliver on "A Right to an Education" within the priority area 'A Good Childhood' to tackle the well documented attainment gap that exists between care experienced children and their peers.

The role of the Virtual Head Teacher is also pivotal to Aberdeenshire's Corporate Parenting Plan which sit within Aberdeenshire's Children's Services 2020-2023 Plan. The corporate parenting plan has 5 priorities which also shape the work of the Virtual Head Teacher:

2.1 Care Experienced Children and Young People:

1. Are at the heart of decision making in relation to all aspects of their lives and are supported to make their views and wishes heard.

2. Are supported to feel safe and secure in their placements and involved in their wider communities.

3. Have access to good health and wellbeing services and are enabled to become responsible for their own health and wellbeing. They will know their health history, in particular when leaving care.

4. Have the best opportunities to fulfil their potential, and that we have high aspirations for their futures, with the right support being offered, at the right time.

5. Will be prepared for further education, employment and independent living, ensuring they have suitable accommodation, and are able to live independently with limited but accessible and appropriate support, and experience greater stability.

3.0 Workstream Activities

The Corporate Parenting Plan outlines key actions and activities for all corporate parents including the Virtual Head Teacher. The following section of this report outlines the specific activities/work undertaken by the Virtual Head Teacher over the last year and compliments the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2020-21.

3.1 Communication and Young People's Voice

The voice of young people and their families has been at centre of all improvement work and so by listening and knowing what matters to children and families has brought about the development of a brand new digital platform called Your Place Your Space at http://aberdeenshire.community/KMS/dmart.aspx which is due to be launched in 2022.

The overall aim of this project is to develop a 'one-stop shop' for our care experienced young people and their carers where they can find information they need quickly, ask questions and receive feedback via the site.

The Virtual Head Teacher has worked alongside care experienced young people to understand and develop the platform to ensure it contains the type of information that our care experienced young people tell us they need access to. Corporate parents from across a range of organisations including Aberdeenshire Council have then responded to 'the ask' and begun to populate the digital space with the required information in an accessible and simple manner.
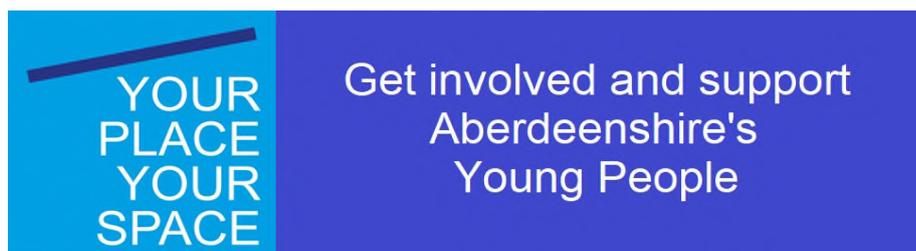

The evolution of the platform will continue to be driven by our care experienced young people to ensure it remains up to date, relevant and provides relevant links on subjects including finance, housing, education and mental health. An engagement area is also being developed starting with an ask and answer service.

The platform will also encapsulate both local and national support networks and provide opportunity for consultation on particular topics or engagement in discussion on what matters most to care experienced young people. Safety features are in place where only approved administrators can post and update material.

Whilst still in its infancy, it is anticipated that that the success of the platform will be informed through positive and ongoing meaningful engagement with care experienced young people who will have a very clear and vital voice in both developing and evaluating whether the platform is effective.
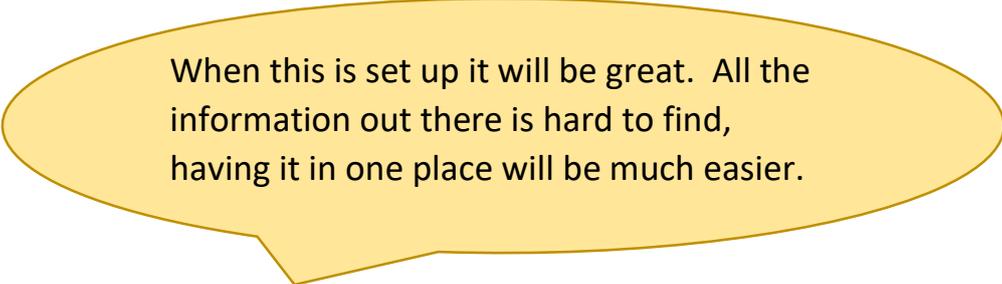
> When this is set up it will be great. All the information out there is hard to find, having it in one place will be much easier.

Comment from care experienced young person, 19 years.

3.2 Development of Academy Groups to support care experienced pupils in schools

Prior to and during the pandemic, Mackie Academy colleagues facilitated a vibrant and successful group for care experienced young people. The young people and the staff supporting the group reported improvement in school engagement and relationships between staff and the young people as well as an increase in confidence, resilience and the development of new skills. The young people reported really benefiting from being able to come together with other young people with similar experiences in a safe environment and felt supported through the use of a strength-based approach. They reported to feeling less alone, more able to share worries and concerns and they felt valued and listened to. The group will also continue to give the young people a voice enabling them to share their ideas on how services could be improved to better support them.

Following the success, the Virtual Head Teacher has over the last year worked with several other academies to share this example of innovative practice and support the development of further groups across Aberdeenshire Academies.

Throughout discussions with schools, it was clear that to promote and then establish a group within other schools, the individual needs of the particular young people at a particular school had to be paramount and each group would operate and look different.

The young people themselves would be at the centre of decision making and the groups would develop over time. It has been the role of the Virtual Head Teacher over the last year to work alongside colleagues in education and social work to support the development of the groups ensuring that the voice and lives experience of our care experienced young people is at the centre.

To date, Meldrum Academy and The Gordon Schools alongside Mackie Academy have also made a commitment to forming groups and will continue to be supported by the Virtual Head Teacher and other relevant professionals throughout the year.

Activities that promote mental health and well-being as well as more creative aspects to improve confidence and self-esteem are currently being planned and explored with care experienced young people.

The Virtual Head Teacher has been an integral driver behind the success that several programmes that have been rolled out at The Gordon Schools.

She enabled us to access funds for an initial Relax Kids session that was evaluated so positively by young people, families and staff that we were able to use the feedback to apply for further funding to role out the 'Relax Kids' programme.

The Virtual Head Teacher was also pivotal in encouraging me to create a group in school that would support care experienced young people, LGBTQ+ and Young Carers. After meeting with Meldrum Academy and Mackie Academy to discuss the impact of previous groups, I linked with a colleague from MCR Pathways and Relax Kids to create our group in The Gordon Schools.

To date, by working in partnership with our young people, we have planned the following sessions:

*Relax Kids - massage, meditation, and mindfulness

*RGU Art Bus - virtual Reality teamwork, bubble sculpture and print making

*Youth Music Initiative - drone filming, sound recording and editing

*Networks of Wellbeing - outdoor education

Without the Virtual Head Teacher's support and encouragement, none of this would have happened. We are very lucky to have her and look forward to posting some of the group's success on the Aberdeenshire website.

Principal Teacher, The Gordon Schools

We cannot underestimate the impact Covid has had on this group of young people, who have a lived experience that is likely to have been very different from that of their peers. It is therefore more vital than ever that care experienced young people in line with The Promise, are provided with every opportunity to have a voice and feel valued and listened to. It is anticipated that once these new groups are up and running, the learning can be shared with other academies with a view to further rolling out this model.

> This group is great because we have all had similar experiences and we all understand how that feels.

> We can share what has happened and how we feel and everyone gets it.
>
> A group member, Mackie Academy

3.3 Permanence Panel Member

The role of Aberdeenshire Council's Permanence Panel is outlined in the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The Panel considers applications for the approval of adopters, permanent foster carers, the match between adopters or permanent foster carers and a child or sibling group as well as providing scrutiny to a Child's Plan where the recommendation is either adoption or permanent fostering and making a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.

The learning needs and educational progress of our children feature prominently in all decision making about a child's care and the addition of the Virtual Head Teacher to the Panel ensures the educational needs of any child are clearly considered as part of the planning process. The Virtual Head Teacher then also provides a level of consistency by having a in depth knowledge and understanding of a particular child who is most likely to be attending an Aberdeenshire School. The understanding of the child's journey and the trauma experienced by the child is vital to being able to support that child in school and beyond.

> 'Panel membership is predominately represented by social work professionals. The Virtual Head Teacher broadens the range of experience of the Panel and provides a different and positive perspective. In turn, the Virtual Head Teacher has also provided the panel with a single point of contact to support their understanding of education support, new initiatives and ensures that we give due consideration to this element of a child's life.' Permanence Manager

Over the last year, the Virtual Head Teacher has been able to use this knowledge to support schools to understand the permanence process and the impact this journey has on children, their families and ultimately the child's experience of school.

Having access to reports written by several different professionals including colleagues in education, has provided an opportunity for the Virtual Head Teacher to consider the use of language in reports written for permanence panel. In collaboration with the Young Person's Organising and Campaigning Group (YPOC) and working alongside colleagues in the Corporate Parenting Leads Group, a challenge has been set to make real and significant changes to the way we use language as outlined in The Promise. All partners need to move away from the term 'placement' replacing it with 'where the young person lives' and replace the word 'contact' with time spent with family' to name a few of the easier ones to tackle. Care experienced young people also tell us that when accessing their files, reports are often a list of things that have gone wrong as opposed to taking a strength-based approach which enables the young person or adult in later life to have a greater sense of who they were/are.

3.4 Collaborative Working

A key part of the role of the Virtual Head Teacher is to work with schools, social workers and individual young people and/or their families/carers to ensure that care experienced young people are at the centre of and heart of planning and decision making and this can

only be truly collaborative if the views of the young person are listened to. The Virtual Head Teacher also has a strong role in gathering data and intelligence to help understand whether the approaches taken are actually making a visible difference to that young person.

Examples of the way the Virtual Head Teacher has worked collaboratively over the last year have included working with schools and other professionals to;

- support care experienced young people experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing.
- support a care experienced young people back into school following a period of non-attendance or exclusion
- support care experienced young people in transitions into or between Aberdeenshire schools
- improve their understanding of trauma and the impact this has on a care experienced young person and their ability to engage in education
- support access to funding to improve general wellbeing and help evaluate impact.

The Virtual Head Teacher is also part of the work being undertaken to deliver Holistic Family Support through two pilots aiming to contribute to the ambitions of The Promise.

For me this role of the Virtual Head Teacher has been significant. It gives us behind the scenes support for care experienced young people and allows us to make sure we are getting it right. Sometimes having that extra set of eyes and ears is so useful. Recently in a meeting the Virtual Head Teacher mentioned looking into transition planning for a young person, and this will be key for them. The Virtual Head Teacher has also supported us as a school with a sensitive issue regarding a young person's safety and the safety of staff and other pupils. Their advice has been invaluable to enable this care experienced young person to be back in school. Also, it's lovely to hear feedback when we are getting it right, and you are so good at doing this.

Principal Teacher

3.5   Transitions:

Transitions are key in a young person's life and particularly throughout the life of a care experienced young person. Our aim is clear: 'When coming into care or moving whilst in care, the young people's views must be actively listened to and key information is prepared and shared at times of transition between schools for all care experienced young people.'

Throughout the last year, the Virtual Head Teacher has shared with schools the Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group's (YPOC) latest campaign "Coming into Care, Moving Placements" and encouraged schools to read and listen to the voices of care experienced young people to really improve this experience. The Virtual Head Teacher was also commissioned by the YPOC group to gather and collate information on whether schools are putting the guidance into practice with a view to sharing good practice and continually improving this experience for care experienced young people.

> The Virtual Head Teacher has really pushed the Children's Rights Agenda throughout her work. She has been able to get to know the work of YPOC group and raised awareness of their campaigns to education staff. She has been developing a digital platform specifically with and for care experienced young people. And she has offered support to YPOC on their next campaign which is all about Stigma. I have been part of working groups that she is also involved in and she has the needs of care experienced young people at the heart of her interactions and action planning in improving practice so that care experienced young people's lives are enriched and improved. *Children's Rights Officer.*

3.6   CELCIS and The Virtual Head Teacher Network

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection based in Strathclyde University. CELCIS | Our work in Education

CELCIS work with the Scottish Government and all other services and organisations that support care experienced children and young people. The Virtual Head Teacher has continued to work alongside other Virtual Head Teachers and leads of Care Experienced Teams across Scotland. In this last session, work had focussed on developing a response to The Promise, developing the role and responsibilities of the Virtual Head Teacher as well as taking part in the Education Forum that promotes widening participation and access to Further and Higher education for care experienced young people. Reframing language has also been a focus which will continue in the next session. The **impact** of being a member of this group is enabling all "virtual" colleagues to share practice, learn from each other and develop actions to national policy collaboratively. Future actions for session 2021-22 will develop a self-evaluation process, a deep dive into Plan 21-24, with specific focus on exclusions and improving the collection and use data concerning our care experienced pupils.

3.7   Scottish Attainment Challenge – Funding MCR Pathways

Monies from the Scottish Attainment Challenge have been provided to schools over the last year to support the role out of MCR Pathways, a mentoring programme that helps young people who have experienced disadvantage, realise their full potential. MCR Pathways - Nationwide Mentoring Programme

It was noted that during the Covid-19 pandemic mentors and co-ordinators of the programme continued to maintain connection with the young people they were linked with and continued to have a positive effect on the well-being of the pupils involved. The five schools using the MCR Pathways programme are The Gordon Schools, Inverurie Academy, Fraserburgh Academy, Peterhead Academy and Banff Academy.

The well-being of our young people, especially those who have experienced significant loss and trauma, benefit from this support and the intention is to continue this programme with financial support from the Scottish Attainment Fund as well as a funding stream from the Scottish Government, into session 2021-22. This will allow MCR Pathways to continue its impact in making positive connections and improving long term goals of positive destinations, (further/higher education, training and employment) for young people.

4.0   Data

The Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan 2020 - 2023 (girfec-aberdeenshire.org) highlights that *'it is well evidenced that the outcomes for children and young people who are or have been Looked After are not as good as their peers. For instance, they are more likely to be excluded from school; less likely to attain literacy and numeracy standards; less likely to enter and sustain positive destinations after leaving school and more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system as adults. Longer term, a disproportionate number are serving or have served prison sentences.'*

To enable us to understand where interventions bring about positive change is it vital that we use data to track improvement. The year 2020/21 has been fairly unprecedented given the impact of lockdown and therefore the collation of data has been hindered in some areas. When 2020/21 data is fully available, comparing like for like with previous years will require significant caution.

4.1   Attendance and Absences of Care Experienced Young People

Analysis of the attendance and absence figures for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP)[4] indicates an increase in overall attendance of 1.2% from 90.1% in 2018/19 to 91.3% in 2019/20. This variance year-on-year for CEYP can in part be attributed to the relatively small numbers of pupils that are looked after, with small changes in numbers of CEYP potentially having a substantial impact on overall attendance and absence figures. Indeed, the total number of CEYP recorded in Aberdeenshire schools has also further fallen from 375 in 2017/18, to 344 in 2018/19 and 322 (53 away from home, 269 at) in 2019/20[5].

Authorised absence of CEYP decreased by 0.4% from 6.1% in 2018/19 to 5.7% in 2019/20 and unauthorised absence decreased by 0.7% from 3.5% in 2018/19 to 2.8% in 2019/20. See the table below for a summary of attendance, authorised, unauthorised and total absence for CEYP.

CEYP[5]:		2019/20*	2018/19	2017/18
Attendance**	Aberdeenshire	91.3%	90.1%	90.4%
Total Absence**	Aberdeenshire	8.5%	9.6%	9.2%
Authorised Absence	Aberdeenshire	5.7%	6.1%	5.7%
Unauthorised Absence	Aberdeenshire	2.7%	3.5%	3.5%

* to 20/3/2020 (week 34)

4.2   Positive Destinations

During 2019/20, positive destinations for our Care Experienced Young People have increased from 80.9% to 94.9%.

4.3   Next Steps for 2021 Onwards

As previously indicated, Plan 21-24 was published in March 2021 and sets out clearly how all services and organisations need to Keep the Promise and make sustainable improvements to be achieved by 2030. We are in the first phase of this plan and the Virtual Head Teacher alongside other professionals in will be planning for the implementation of the following key education aspects outlined in Plan 21-24. In particular, the Virtual Head Teacher will be working with school on alternatives to exclusion for care experienced young people given the challenge that no care experienced young person should be excluded from school.

Right to education – Plan 21-24

Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.

School improvement plans will value and recognise the needs of their care experienced pupils with robust tracking of attendance and attainment so that support can be given early.

Care experienced young people will be actively participating in all subjects and extra-curricular activities in schools.

The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from education will end.

Schools will support and ensure care experienced young people go on to genuinely positive destinations, such as further education or employment

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A strong multi-agency approach is required to enable Aberdeenshire to be able to deliver on the above ambitions of the Promise. The Virtual Head Teacher will work closely with education colleagues to introduce Plan 21-24 and positively anticipates that together, colleagues across Aberdeenshire will embrace the challenge.

Emma Allen, Virtual Head Teacher
Aberdeenshire Council October 2021

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report

Assessment ID	IIA-000242
Lead Author	Emma Allen
Service Reviewers	Andrew Dick, Leigh Jolly
Subject Matter Experts	Lynne Gravener, Christine McLennan
Approved By	Laurence Findlay
Approved On	Friday November 19, 2021
Publication Date	Monday November 22, 2021

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Report containing the progress of the Virtual School Head Teacher from August 2020-August 2021.

During screening 5 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 2 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

In total there are 19 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by laurence.findlay@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	No Negative Impacts Identified
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	No Negative Impacts Identified
Health Inequalities	Not Required
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe	Yes			
Healthy	Yes			
Achieving	Yes			
Nurtured	Yes			
Active	Yes			
Respected	Yes			
Responsible	Yes			
Included	Yes			

4.2. Rights Indicators

UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy	Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 12 - Respect for the views of the child Article 13 - Freedom of expression Article 15 - Freedom of association Article 17 - Access to information; mass media Article 28 - Right to education Article 29 - Goals of education Article 31 - Leisure, play and culture Article 39 - Recovery and rehabilitation of child victims

4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Achieving	All actions in an education setting will support and build a foundation on which improved attainment will be a focus. Young people and their families as well as other services will engage collaboratively to improve attainment and positive outcomes.
Active	Children and young people will be part of the continuous assessment undertaken by schools and other services to encourage active participation and lifestyle in order to support health and well-being and improved attainment and longer term positive outcomes.
Healthy	Education will work with Health and other partners to contribute to multi agency working within the GIRFEC framework to ensure health needs are met in education settings.
Included	Children and young people will be included in decisions that are made for them by listening to their views and where appropriate taking part in planning. Other services outwith education will be used to ensure we are getting it right for every child. (GIRFEC)

Impact Area	Impact
Nurtured	Schools will continue to adopt a nurturing approach to children and young people, based on historic training and continued emphasis on trauma informed practice.
Responsible	Children and young people views and opinions will be heard via embedded practice where hearing their voice is the norm and an expected and planned activity through all interactions and interventions with our children.
Respected	Training, discussion and a deeper understanding of The Promise and a trauma responsive approach will demonstrate through language and actions that our children and young people are respected in their education setting.
Safe	Children will know that schools are a place of safety and where their rights will be upheld.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015-2020 Impact Report	Data shows that care experienced children and young people have a slightly reduced rate of attendance, lower attainment, and a higher exclusion rate than their peers who are not care experienced.	As a local authority we must find out why there are differences in attainment and achievement between care experienced children and young people and those who are not. Then we need to decide, with the young people's views at the centre, how we close the attainment gap and promote positive outcomes.

4.5. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

Children and young people's views have been and are continuously sought through care experienced groups in Academies, the Young Person's Organising and Campaigning Group as well as discussions with individuals and their representatives. Using digital platforms as a tool for engagement and sharing of useful information will be presented to young people for evaluation and future planning of engagement

4.6. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

Groups, opportunity for individual interaction as well as digital tools will allow children and young people a varied choice in how to share views and gain information. It is planned that these activities will be developed by the young people with the guidance of adults facilitating this.

4.7. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

Children and young people will be given opportunities to share their views and also shape how the process of sharing views and opinions are improved and their ideas are acted on. Their ideas will form the basis for new projects and developments in how they learn, access services and help teachers and others understand their own unique contexts.

4.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

All actions are to improve attainment and positive outcomes and uphold their rights.

5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes			
Age (Older)		Yes		
Disability	Yes			
Race	Yes			
Religion or Belief	Yes			
Sex	Yes			
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation	Yes			
Gender Reassignment	Yes			
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth	Yes			
Material deprivation	Yes			
Area deprivation	Yes			
Socioeconomic background		Yes		

5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Younger)	The VHT will take part in projects that explore and promote collaborative working across services and third sector agencies to provide timely and appropriate support for our young children and their families. Encouraging a trauma informed response from educators towards children and their families.
Disability	Underpinned by the UNCRC every child has the right to an education and Plan 21-24 of which Aberdeenshire is aiming towards, children and young people "in care" will have access to intensive support to meet their education and health needs.
Gender Reassignment	All actions outlined in the report will promote inclusion and where needed will remove barriers and enhance the support structure around individuals and families. Their views and opinions will be listened to to help shape the service we provide.

Impact Area	Impact
Race	Through The Promise work undertaken across Aberdeenshire, elements of family support will include non-stigmatising approaches, underpinned by children's rights, working with family assets and making sure families and young people have empowerment and agency in the support being offered.
Religion or Belief	Aberdeenshire Council have pledged to keep The Promise and within Plan 21-24 we aim to support families underpinned by Children's Rights, Article 2, non-discrimination, Article 14, freedom of thought, belief and religion through intensive family individual support where needed. Understanding people's needs including their beliefs is fundamental in getting the support right for them.
Sexual Orientation	All care experienced children and young people, along with their families will be supported to thrive according to their needs. Main focus of the VHT is to improve attainment and positives outcomes and the route to this is varied. Removing barriers, stigma and maintaining inclusion are important in this role.
Sex	Underpinned by Children's Rights, Article 2 non-discrimination, throughout all activities and projects, professionals will be alert to sex discrimination within families and organisations and be pro-active in ensuring whole family support and a good childhood is happening.
Area deprivation	Working with other services and agencies across Aberdeenshire and communicating the varying needs across the region, communication will be at the heart of planning, listening to the real life issues and challenges and using this evidence to plan better.
Low income	A major focus in schools is to reduce the cost of the school day and as part of the projects outlined we must ensure that in Aberdeenshire we remove the barriers some of our care experienced pupils may face when engaging with education and various linked activities.
Low wealth	As with low income, barriers to educational activities need to be removed, cost of the school day needs to be implemented when planning activities and our aspirations need to be high for our families and young people, where we remove the barriers associated with low wealth and create a change culture where recognise and foster ambition.
Material deprivation	Working with other services and agencies in a symbiotic way to support our families and individuals without delay, bureaucratic processes or stigma to ensure everyone has what they need in order to thrive.

5.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Other Evidence	Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015-2020 Impact Report	Care experienced children and young people have a lower attainment and positive outcomes compared to their peers who do not have experience of care.	Actions need to promote improved attainment and positive outcomes.

5.5. Engagement with affected groups

Surveys and engagement consultations on substance misuse, corporate parent meetings called "Twilight" sessions, newly formed care experience groups in academies and individual communications with young people and carers/parents.

5.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Communication directed at all young people and families with experience of care.

5.7. Evidence of engagement

This is on-going and will form the basis of work over the coming session.

5.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

All actions are to promote improved attainment and positive outcomes for children and young people.

5.9. Improving Relations

Clear communication, relationship and trust building between services and agencies, clarity of purpose and effective collaborative working and professionalism by fully understanding and acting on The Promise.

5.10. Opportunities of Equality

The VHT will ensure the education service know and begin to understand why The Promise is needed and how we ensure our young people get the same opportunities as those children who have not experienced care.

6. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details	
Introduce The Promise and Plan 21-24 to the Education service and how key elements will be developed and put into place in education settings.	**Lead Officer**	Emma Allen
	Repeating Activity	No
	Planned Start	Friday October 01, 2021
	Planned Finish	Monday August 12, 2024
	Expected Outcome	The Promise leads change for care experienced children and young people. Data from The Promise has formed Plan 21-24. Scotland is in the first part of a ten year plan where key changes outlined in Plan 21-24 will focus on improvements in working with young people and their families, with professionals having a deeper understanding of their needs and how to support them effectively. Plan 21-24 highlights key aspects within education of which the Virtual Head Teacher will collaborate with stakeholders to achieve.
	Resource Implications	Emphasis on using the resources we already have in a more efficient and appropriate way. Use of the Scottish Attainment Fund to resource specific large scale projects.