



City Chambers
DUNDEE
DD1 3BY

16th October, 2026

Dear Colleague

You are requested to attend a MEETING of the **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE** to be held in the Council Chamber, City Chambers, City Square, Dundee and also to be held remotely on Monday, 26th October, 2026 at 5.00pm.

The meeting will also be livestreamed to YouTube. Members of the Press or Public wishing to join the meeting as observers should follow this link www.dundee.gov.uk/live or alternatively they may attend in person.

Should you require any further information please contact Committee Services on telephone (01382) 434818 or by email at committee.services@dundee.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

GREGORY COLGAN

Chief Executive

AGENDA OF BUSINESS

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members are reminded that, in terms of The Councillors Code, it is their responsibility to make decisions about whether to declare an interest in any item on this agenda and whether to take part in any discussions or voting.

This will include all interests, whether or not entered on your Register of Interests, which would reasonably be regarded as so significant that they are likely to prejudice your discussion or decision-making.

2 ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS - Page 3

(Report No 241-2026 by the Executive Director of Children and Families Service, copy attached).

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF REDUCED CLASS CONTACT TIME - Page 23

(Report No 242-2026 by the Executive Director of Children and Families Service, copy attached).

At this juncture external members of the Committee will depart.

4 OUR PROMISE 2023-26 ANNUAL UPDATE - Page 31

Report No 240-2026 by the Executive Director of Children and Families Service, copy attached).

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REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE 26 OCTOBER 2026

REPORT ON: ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 241 - 2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report, 'Achievement of Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs', provides information on the profile of additional support needs (ASN) in Dundee and an overview of the achievements of children and young people with complex ASN.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Committee notes the content of the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the sustained increase in the number and complexity of children and young people with additional support needs presents a potential financial and operational risk to the Council. This may require further investment and additional workforce capacity, including specialist staffing and support, to ensure statutory duties continue to be met. Any specific proposals with financial implications will be brought forward through the Council's established budget and governance arrangements.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Dundee City Council has a statutory responsibility to assess and make provision for children's additional support needs (ASN) under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. In addition, it has duties under the Equality Act 2010 regarding children and young people with protected characteristics, including disability.
- 4.2 A child or young person has additional support needs for the purposes of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from school education provided or to be provided for the child or young person. Additional support falls into three overlapping, broad headings: approaches to learning and teaching, support from personnel and provision of resources.
- 4.3 A child or young person has additional support needs if the child or young person is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 17(6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (c.36)).
- 4.4 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires the local authority to "make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by each child or young person with additional support needs, for whose school education the authority is responsible." There is no requirement under the 2004 Act for a diagnosis to be made before support is provided.
- 4.5 The presumption that education should be provided in a mainstream setting has been in legislation since 2003, reflecting a move towards a children's rights-based approach. Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 provides that a pre-school or school-aged child should be educated in a mainstream school unless one of the three circumstances set out in that section applies. The exceptions are that mainstream education would not be suited to the ability or aptitude of the child; would be incompatible with the provision of efficient

education for the children with whom the child would be educated; or would result in unreasonable public expenditure that would not ordinarily be incurred.

- 4.6 In 2010, the way in which ASN information was collected by the Scottish Government changed and, for the first time, information on reasons for support and the nature of support was collected separately for each type of additional support need. Since 2012, six additional categories of reason for support have been introduced: communication support needs, young carer, bereavement, substance misuse, family issues and risk of exclusion.
- 4.7 It is important to recognise that children and young people with additional support needs are not a homogenous group. They may have a range of needs – some educational, some not – some needs may be short term; others may be long lasting. Whilst some children and young people do not require additional support beyond that which a classroom teacher can provide, others need additional services or specialist provision. The Children and Families Service provides a range of additional services and provision as detailed in Appendix 1.

5.0 PROFILE OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS (ASN) IN DUNDEE

- 5.1 The number of children and young people in Dundee identified with additional support needs (ASN) has steadily increased since 2010 and there continues to be year-on-year increases. This is mirrored nationally.

Early learning and childcare settings

- 5.2 Funded Early Learning and Childcare Statistics 2025 Additional Tables¹ (published December 2025, Scottish Government) contains information about the number of children registered with early learning and childcare (ELC) settings whose home language is not English, are assessed/declared disabled, and have additional support needs (ASN). The statistics for Dundee, and Scotland, are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Percentage of registrations (and number of children) with ASN in ELC in Dundee

	Dundee	Scotland
Percentage of all registrations whose home language is not English, Gaelic, Scots, or Sign Language (note: estimate to nearest ten in publication)	14% (380)	11%
Percentage of all registrations assessed/declared disabled	2% (70)	2%
Percentage of all registrations with additional support needs	20% (540)	19%

- 5.3 According to these statistics, 11% of all children registered in Dundee's ELC settings are recorded as having language, speech, and communication issues, compared to 8% nationally. 2% of children are recorded as having learning difficulties, compared to 2% nationally. 5% of children are recorded as having social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, compared to 6% nationally.

Primary and Secondary schools

- 5.4 According to the Pupil census supplementary statistics 2025² (published March 2026, Scottish Government), 36.4% (3,543) of primary school children in Dundee in 2025 were reported to have at least one ASN. This was an increase of 7% from 2024, where 3,311 children were recorded as having ASN. The Scotland average increased from 34.6% in 2024 to 36.9% in 2025. The highest seven reasons for additional support are detailed in Table 2, as well as the number of looked after children.
- 5.5 52.3% (4,383) of young people in Dundee secondary schools in 2025 were reported to have at least one ASN. This was an increase of 7% from 2024, when 4,110 young people were recorded

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/funded-early-learning-and-childcare-statistics-2025/documents/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/>

as having ASN. The Scotland average increased from 46.1% in 2024 to 48.8% in 2025. The highest seven reasons for additional support are detailed in Table 2, as well as the number of looked after young people.

Table 2 Reasons for support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs 2025

	Primary Schools		Secondary Schools	
1	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	1059	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	1322
2	English as an additional language	933	Family Issues	819
3	Family Issues	507	English as an additional language	742
4	Communication Support Needs	407	Interrupted learning	601
5	Language or speech disorder	383	Young Carer	590
6	Other moderate learning difficulty	322	Mental health problem	565
7	Autistic spectrum disorder	311	Other moderate learning difficulty	493
	Looked after	135	Looked after	160

- 5.6 In total, there are 1,812 children and young people assessed and/ or declared as having a disability in schools in Dundee. 1,371 of these children and young people have been assessed as having a disability.
- 5.7 There are 2,473 children and young people in Dundee schools whose home language is not English, Gaelic, Scots, Doric or Sign Language. Collectively, they speak 74 different home languages, placing Dundee seventh among Scotland's 32 local authorities for language diversity. Having a home language other than those listed does not, in itself, constitute an additional support need. Children and young people who are competent or fluent in English, taking account of their stage of English language acquisition, may not require or be recorded as receiving additional support.
- 5.8 Children and young people receive support in a range of ways, and from various professionals and partners, to meet their needs. An overview of the nature of this support is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 Nature of support of children and young people with Additional Support Needs in 2025

Nature of support	Primary	Secondary
Education: Additional Specialist teaching support	690	1,435
Education: Additional Specialist non-teaching support	1,095	1,493
Social Work services	195	237
Health services	730	1,028
Voluntary	107	258
Classroom Teacher	2,510	2,895
Other	275	476

Note: children and young people with more than one additional need will appear multiple times

Special schools

- 5.9 Dundee has two special schools: Kingspark School and Rockwell Learning Centre. In 2025, there were 249 children and young people (85 female; 164 male) in Dundee's specialised schools with ASN. 197 of these children and young people were assessed or declared as having a disability. 135 children and young people receive additional support for social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties and 109 for autism.

Table 4 Nature of support of children and young people with Additional Support Needs in 2025: Specialist Schools

Nature of support	Special
Education: Additional Specialist teaching support	211
Education: Additional Specialist non-teaching support	234
Social Work services	36
Health services	73
Classroom Teacher	5
Other	8

6.0 ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING ASN

- 6.1 Special sector schools are not included in the Insight benchmarking tool. Their results are available to the Children and Families Service through the Qualifications Scotland results received in August.
- 6.2 Six young people in S6 in Kingspark achieved a National 2 award and one achieved two National 2 awards. These awards were in Food, Health and Wellbeing, Performing Arts, and Physical Education.
- 6.3 26 pupils at Rockwell Learning Centre were entered for Qualifications Scotland awards in 2026: 10 in S4, 14 in S5 and 2 in S6. Table 7 shows the number of pupils gaining one or more awards at National 3 level or better.

Table 5 Number of pupils in Rockwell gaining one or more awards at National 3 level or better.

		Award Level			
		National 3+	National 4+	National 5+	Higher
Number of awards	1+	25	24	10	3
	2+	22	18	3	
	3+	15	9		
	4+	8	4		
	5	3	1		

- 6.4 Not all achievements can, or should, be measured through statistics or formal qualifications. For children and young people with additional and complex support needs, significant progress may be reflected in increased communication, confidence, independence, participation, wellbeing, resilience and a stronger sense of belonging. These outcomes can represent important milestones for the individual young person and their family, particularly where substantial barriers to learning and participation have been overcome.
- 6.5 The case studies in Appendices 2 to 5 illustrate a number of these significant achievements and provide insight into the difference made by personalised, relationship-based and multi-agency support. They demonstrate how the combined contribution of staff, specialist services and partners can widen access to learning and enable young people to develop their voice, engage more fully in education, achieve greater independence and progress towards positive next steps.
- 6.6 Inclusive school events and wider-achievement programmes provide important opportunities for children and young people to contribute, develop confidence and experience a strong sense of belonging. Participation in sport, performing and creative arts, pupil leadership, community activity and school award programmes enables pupils with additional support needs to demonstrate strengths that may not be captured through formal attainment measures.

- 6.7 Examples in the appendices include participation in choir and creative performance, national dance competitions, Eco Schools and Reading School activities, Rights Respecting Schools work and a school pantomime. These experiences support communication, teamwork, resilience and independence, while ensuring that young people are recognised as active and valued members of their school communities.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The profile presented in this report demonstrates a sustained rise in the number and proportion of children and young people identified as having additional support needs in Dundee, reflecting the national trend. In 2025, 20% of registrations in Dundee's early learning and childcare settings included an additional support need, while 36.4% of primary pupils and 52.3% of secondary pupils were recorded as having at least one additional support need. The range of recorded needs and the level of support provided by education, health, social work and third-sector partners illustrate the increasing complexity of support required.
- 7.2 Dundee will maintain a strategic focus on ensuring that the full breadth of achievement by children and young people with additional support needs is recognised and celebrated, including progress in confidence, communication, independence, participation and positive progression. Alongside this wider understanding of success, the Children and Families Service will continue to prioritise improved attainment by increasing the number of pupils with at least one ASN achieving literacy and numeracy at SCQF Level 4 or above and Level 5 or above, and by raising total tariff points across all Insight cohorts. Progress in these areas will inform ongoing improvement activity and the targeting of support to secure better and more equitable outcomes.
- 7.3 National work is under way to improve the consistency and quality of additional support needs data, including review of the categories used to record needs and the development of clearer national guidance. The Scottish Government has also published a route map for a National Staged Intervention Model for Additional Support for Learning. The current co-design phase is reviewing local authority models, variation in thresholds, identification and support pathways, with the aim of establishing a more consistent national approach while retaining appropriate local flexibility.
- 7.4 Dundee will continue to implement and refine its Inclusion Strategy and staged approach to meeting needs, using accurate data, regular review and evidence of impact to direct support. The Children and Families Service will engage with the national work and align local recording guidance and staged intervention arrangements with the agreed national framework when this is finalised. The priority will remain early identification, timely and proportionate support, stronger consistency across establishments and improved presence, participation, progress and positive destinations for children and young people with additional support needs.

8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

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

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

Audrey May
Executive Director of Children and Families
Service

David Bald
Strategic Education Manager
(Secondary and Inclusion)

APPENDIX 1

Range of additional support (services and provisions) available in the Children and Families Service

Provisions	Type of Support offered
Accessibility and Inclusion Service (AIS)	An outreach team that supports children and young people with a range of ASN including care-experienced young people, travelling community pupils, hospital education and home education.
Anxiety in Motion (AIM)	A community-based provision that supports education for secondary-aged young people with medically registered anxiety, who experience school avoidance.
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	A team of teachers and bilingual assistants that supports children within mainstream education to develop English language skills.
Longhaugh Support Group (LSG)	Supports joint placements for primary-aged pupils between their placement school and LSG. It supports pupils who experience high levels of social, emotional and behavioural needs.
Deaf Education team	The education team supports children and young people across different secondary and primary schools who have hearing impairments or are registered Deaf.
Visual Impairment team	The education team supports children and young people across different secondary and primary schools who have sight impairments or are registered blind.
Autism and Social communication team	An outreach team that supports mainstream schools and nurseries with strategies for young people who have a diagnosis of autism or display behaviours that are autistic in nature.
Rockwell	Specialist off-site provision for secondary-aged pupils who are experiencing social, emotional and behavioural needs.
Kingspark school	A specialist school that supports educational outcomes for children and young people from Primary 1 to Secondary 6 who have complex medical and additional support needs.

APPENDIX 2

Kingspark - Case Study**Breaking Barriers to Engagement: How High-Tech AAC Fostered Communication and Participation**Summary

This case study demonstrates a highly successful intervention focused on increased communication and active participation. By providing access to specialist hardware and software alongside motivating daily routines and group activities, Pupil A overcame initial barriers to become an active participant who is now beginning to discover their communication and literacy skills.

Student Profile - Context and Needs

Pupil A has complex physical and communication needs. When Pupil A joined Kingspark they were using a range of core word symbols printed on to a low-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) communication board. Due to the pupil's limited upper body movements, they were learning to access these low-tech boards using their eyes with a communication partner. It became clear quite quickly that Pupil A's communicative competence far exceeded the vocabulary that could be presented to them using the current low-tech method.

Strengths and Interests

Pupil A shows a real interest in listening to music and enjoys interacting with those around them. Pupil A displays strong receptive language skills, especially whilst engaged in activities they find fun and motivating.

Challenges and Main Goals - Baseline

Prior to this intervention, Pupil A used a paper-based AAC book consisting of a small range of symbols.

Pupil A relied on a staff member always being present to act as their communication partner. As a communication partner, the staff member would track Pupil A's eye movement whilst pointing to the symbols and awaiting confirmation of the pupil's selection before sharing this with the class. Due to staffing ratios alongside the fast-paced nature of Kingspark School this was not always possible, raising concerns that many of Pupil A's communication attempts may have been going unnoticed. Simultaneously, Pupil A's functional communication was potentially being restricted by the physical layout of the communication book, which encouraged single-word selections such as "more", "stop", "finished" to have basic needs met.

If communication attempts are not acknowledged and responded to there is a high risk of AAC abandonment, a reduction in engagement and participation.

Core Objectives

Increased communication: Supporting Pupil A to move beyond single word utterances toward emerging sentence formation, peer interaction and multimodal communication using high-tech Assistive Technology (AT).

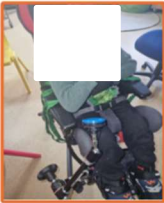
Increased participation: Supporting Pupil A to transition from a passive observer to an active participant in a wide range of activities across their school day.

The Intervention

To achieve these goals, Kingspark integrated a high-tech AAC system (Surface Pro, PC Eye Camera, TD Snap software, REHAdapt floor mount) into daily routines and a range of environments including cafe and Rainbow Group to encourage consistent vocabulary use and social engagement.

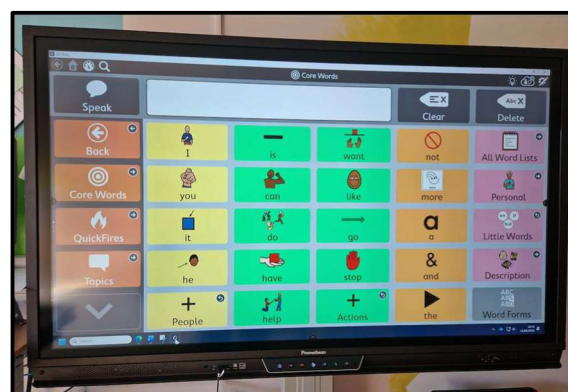
Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The Assistive Technologist and Speech and Language Therapist worked collaboratively alongside the class team to bridge the gap between physical access and linguistic competence.

The hardware and dual-access solution: Utilising specialist hardware and software sourced directly from the Kingspark Assistive Technology Kit, the team created a robust set-up tailored to the pupil's specific physical requirements, paying special attention to optimal positioning to allow for the best possible eye gaze calibration. Furthermore, the Assistive Technologist integrated a physical switch specifically to support participation in environmental control activities e.g., turning toys, appliances or technology on and off. The switch access required a secondary mounting solution (Manfrotto clamp base mounting system).

Superior's Switching Snapshot		Switch set up description I use a Jellybean or low profile wireless switch mounted to a universal mount on the right hand side of my wheelchair.
My Access Methods I am working within Stage 4 of the Switch Progression Pathway. I use a single jellybean or low profile wireless switch to participate in a range of activities. I activate my switch using my right hand. Eye gaze is my main access method. Switch access is secondary.	Top tips for Superior - I like space and time to concentrate. - If I am struggling I may need reassurance and modelling. - I will disengage if I am bored, please try a new activity. - I am working on 1 switch timing. This is very tricky so please be patient. If I become frustrated please end the session with an activity I find easier.	
Switch activities I enjoy include - Sensory stories – using my switch for a fan, bubbles, sound effects etc. - Helpkizlearn games - Environmental Controls – I like using a blender to make smoothies.		

In-class coaching and modelling: To bridge the gap between device set-up and daily use, the Assistive Technologist provided direct, in-class support with Pupil A. This live coaching allowed Pupil A's class team to learn how to mount the hardware safely, navigate the software confidently, troubleshoot any issues and master the best strategies for Aided Language Input (modelling) during Pupil A's school day.

Whole-class integration and normalisation: To continue to develop staff confidence and competence and to create an inclusive learning environment, the Assistive Technologist installed the TD Snap communication software onto the classroom PC. This allows staff, and other pupils, to use the software via touch on the ActivePanel. The creation of a dual-purpose set-up enabled Pupil A's staff team to model vocabulary navigation for Pupil A and the rest of the class simultaneously. This ensures that Pupil A's form of communication feels accepted, valued and normalised within the classroom.



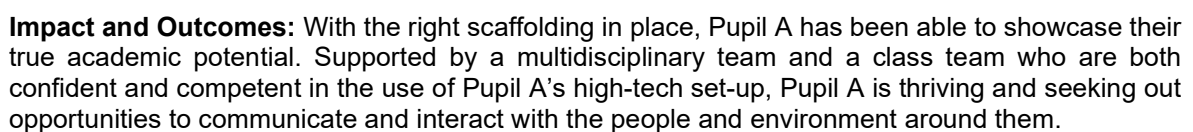
Scaffolding core language for social play: Pupil A is encouraged and supported by staff to use their system whilst partaking in play and games with his peers. Pupil A will explore core vocabulary on their device such as "go" "stop" "like" "my turn" helping them to develop essential social skills. Pupil A also likes to share how these peer interactions make him feel, often commenting if something is "silly" or "wonderful".



Daily independence: Pupil A now independently completes their "Good Morning" routine and uses their eye gaze to navigate to and select their own lunch every day.

Environmental Control: Pupil A successfully uses a secondary switch access site, taking active control over their environment during class activities. Pupil A particularly enjoys blowing leaves with the fan during sensory stories and turning on the blender to make smoothies during snack time.

Creative Expression: Pupil A is part of the school's Rainbow Choir. The choir uses a range of AAC tools to support participation of several pupils. Pupil A will comment on whether he would like the song to be sung "fast" or "slow", enjoys choosing which animals should feature during songs and will add sound effects to these songs using a specially created folder within his TD Snap software. Pupil A's favourite role during choir is that of "Daddy Duck" during 5 Little Ducks.



Key Learning Points and Next steps

Learning Points: Before considering the addition of Assistive Technology, Pupil A's specific strengths, interests and needs were carefully considered. Technology was only introduced when it was identified as appropriate to support and unlock the pupil's existing potential.

High-tech AAC gave Pupil A access to a much wider range of vocabulary, allowing their personality to shine. Moving beyond basic transactional language like "stop" or "more" has allowed them to share their thoughts and feelings.

Combining a range of AT (eye gaze and switch access) fosters participation across Pupil A's entire school day.

The use of specialist communication software on the classroom Activepanel creates inclusion. Allowing everyone to use the software not only makes Pupil A feel as though their voice is normal and valued but supports the learning of the rest of the class too.

Most importantly, none of the successes discussed above would have been possible without teamwork. A multidisciplinary team working collaboratively allowed for the creation and delivery of a comprehensive intervention.

Future Goals: For Pupil A to continue to grow in eye gaze proficiency, navigating to new pages and discovering new vocabulary.

To increase conversation initiation with peers during less structured times of the day e.g. 'choosing' time.

To use their eye gaze system to participate in shared reading experiences to develop their understanding of phonics, word recognition and reading comprehension.

APPENDIX 3**Anxiety in Motion (AIM) – Case Study**

Pupil A joined AIM in S4 following a period of significant difficulty within mainstream education, including experiencing a high level of bullying and developing emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA). As a result of these experiences, Pupil A had become extremely anxious about attending school and was spending the majority of their time at home. Their parents subsequently approached the local authority to seek an appropriate educational placement and support for Pupil A, and AIM was identified as a suitable provision.

Despite the challenges they were experiencing, Pupil A remained keen to learn. They had previously accessed private tutoring arranged by their family and demonstrated a strong interest in the arts, particularly dance. Outside of attending dance activities, Pupil A found it very difficult to leave the house and would spend much of their time in their room. They were, however, highly motivated to continue their education and make progress.

On joining AIM, Pupil A initially found the prospect of attending a school-based environment extremely challenging. Although they were keen to study Art, they were initially unable to physically enter the Rockwell building where Art was being delivered to AIM pupils at that time. The smaller and more nurturing environment at AIM, then based in Kirkton Community Centre, with reduced class sizes and peers experiencing similar anxieties and barriers to education, proved to be particularly beneficial for Pupil A. They were able to build up their attendance and engagement relatively quickly within this supportive environment.

At the beginning of their time with AIM, Pupil A was living with their grandparents due to difficulties within their home relationships. They commenced a programme of study which included N4 Mathematics and N5 English, History and Modern Studies.

During Pupil A's first year at AIM, the provision relocated to the Rockwell building. This represented a significant challenge for Pupil A and resulted in considerable distress for both Pupil A and their family. Their family contacted AIM to express concerns that Pupil A was struggling significantly at home and that they felt they were returning to the level of difficulty experienced the previous year. In response, AIM provided an enhanced transition programme, including regular visits and support from the Senior Education Resource Worker (SERW). Pupil A was also supported by AIM staff and our CAMHS nurse throughout this period.

With consistent support, reassurance and a carefully planned transition, Pupil A was eventually able to attend AIM within the Rockwell building. They demonstrated considerable resilience throughout this period and went on to successfully achieve all of the qualifications they had initially set out to study.

In S5, Pupil A continued to develop both academically and personally. Their programme included Higher English, N5 Mathematics, N5 Art, N4 Biology and continued study of Modern Studies. They also explored opportunities within the senior phase college options within Dundee and Angus College and attempted to attend a hairdressing course. However, they found this environment overwhelming and made the positive decision, with support, to withdraw from the placement.

Rather than allowing this setback to prevent them from progressing, Pupil A secured a work experience placement within a local florist. This provided them with an opportunity to develop workplace skills, build confidence and gain valuable experience within a working environment.

Alongside their education, Pupil A has continued to demonstrate significant commitment and talent in dance. They have represented Scotland in dance competitions and have achieved a number of first-place finishes. Their dedication to dance has been an important source of achievement, confidence and personal identity.

During their time at AIM, Pupil A also experienced the significant loss of their grandfather, who had been one of their main caregivers. This was understandably a very difficult period for them. AIM provided additional 1:1 support and offered access to counselling. Pupil A chose not to access formal counselling but instead developed a trusting relationship with the SERW, whom they felt comfortable confiding in. This demonstrated their growing ability to identify appropriate sources of support and communicate their emotional needs.

Pupil A successfully completed their S5 examinations and secured a place on a college hairdressing course. Over the summer, they have subsequently secured an apprenticeship with a local hairdresser. Pupil A feels that the apprenticeship route will be better suited to their needs and learning style, particularly given their previous experience of finding a senior-phase college environment overwhelming.

Pupil A's journey through AIM has demonstrated significant personal growth, resilience and determination. They have progressed from experiencing considerable barriers to attending education to successfully achieving academic qualifications, undertaking work experience, competing nationally in dance and securing an apprenticeship in their chosen career area.

Pupil A's achievements extend beyond their academic qualifications. Throughout their time at AIM, they have developed their confidence, independence, communication skills and ability to recognise and manage the challenges associated with anxiety. Their progress demonstrates what can be achieved when appropriate educational, pastoral and emotional support is provided within an environment that recognises and responds to individual needs.

Pupil A's family have expressed their appreciation for the support provided by AIM and the impact this has had on Pupil A's educational and personal development. They highlighted not only their academic achievements but also the importance of prioritising their emotional wellbeing and developing their coping skills. They described AIM's support as having made a significant difference to Pupil A's life and expressed their belief that their future within their chosen career is now secure.

Pupil A should be extremely proud of the progress they have made during their time at AIM. Their journey has required considerable courage, perseverance and resilience, and they leave the provision having achieved both academically and personally. They are now moving forward into an apprenticeship within the hairdressing industry and have a clear pathway towards their chosen career.

APPENDIX 4

English as Additional Language Team (EAL) – Case StudySupporting an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC) - EAL InterventionBackground

Pupil A is an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) living in Dundee. They arrived in the UK approximately one year ago, alone, with no family members in the UK.

They are supported by Social Work and live independently. On arrival, they had very limited English and required significant support to communicate and access learning.

Initial Concerns**Communication barriers:**

Pupil A had very limited English on arrival, which made it difficult for them to communicate with others, understand instructions and participate in classroom activities.

They were heavily reliant on their mobile phone to translate both what was being said to them and what they wanted to communicate to others.

Emotional wellbeing and confidence:

Pupil A had experienced significant trauma, upheaval and uncertainty as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

Initially, they presented as extremely shy and vulnerable. They were reluctant to speak to teachers or other pupils and often appeared frightened in unfamiliar situations. They would frequently remain close to, or hide behind, female members of staff and found it difficult to engage with others.

These emotional and communication barriers were having a significant impact on their ability to access learning and develop relationships within the class.

Intervention by EAL Staff

EAL staff worked closely with Pupil A using a trauma-informed, relationship-based approach, recognising that developing a sense of safety and belonging was an important first step in supporting their learning.

Key strategies included:**Building positive relationships:**

EAL teachers prioritised developing a trusting and positive relationship with Pupil A. Time was given to helping them feel safe, valued and comfortable around staff before expecting them to communicate or participate more independently.

The focus was on helping Pupil A become 'ready to learn', while recognising their individual experiences and emotional needs.

Visual scaffolding and survival language:

Pupil A was explicitly taught basic 'survival' English to help them navigate everyday situations.

Visuals, matching activities, repetition and opportunities to practise language away from the pressure of the classroom were used to build understanding and confidence.

Developing literacy and language skills:

A range of appropriately differentiated activities was provided across all four areas of literacy: listening, talking, reading and writing.

Activities focused on developing vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and comprehension. Tasks were carefully pitched to Pupil A's stage of English language acquisition while remaining age-appropriate and respectful of their chronological age.

Developing social language and peer relationships:

Opportunities to use English socially were introduced gradually.

Initially, Pupil A worked with one trusted peer before being supported to work with different pupils. This helped them develop confidence in communicating with others and enabled them to build positive friendships within the class.

Developing digital skills

Opportunities were provided for Pupil A to develop basic computer skills, supporting both their independence and their ability to access learning.

Wellbeing and inclusion

Regular check-ins were undertaken to ensure that Pupil A felt safe, valued and included within the learning environment.

EAL staff ensured that their language and wellbeing needs were understood and appropriately supported.

Progress and Impact

Pupil A made significant progress in confidence and independence throughout the academic year.

They began to use simple English to communicate with both peers and staff and developed a much better understanding of classroom instructions. As their confidence and English language skills developed, they were able to engage more consistently and independently in learning activities.

Pupil A also developed positive friendships within their class. Their increasing confidence enabled them to participate more fully in class, and they became a dedicated, enthusiastic and highly motivated learner.

Importantly, the intervention supported not only their language development but also their sense of belonging, relationships, confidence and readiness to learn.

Outcome

Pupil A made excellent progress across all four areas of literacy and successfully achieved a National 2 ESOL qualification at the end of the academic session.

Their progress has continued beyond school. This academic session, Pupil A has been accepted onto a full-time ESOL course at Dundee and Angus College, representing an important next step in their educational journey.

EAL Service Impact

This case study demonstrates the impact of targeted EAL intervention for a highly vulnerable young person.

Through a combination of trauma-informed practice, relationship-building, appropriate language development, visual scaffolding and social integration, EAL support helped to move from significant communication barriers and social withdrawal towards increased confidence, independence, successful learning and progression to further education.

The case highlights the important role of EAL staff in ensuring that newly arrived bilingual learners, including UASC, can access education, develop relationships, feel a sense of belonging and achieve their potential.

APPENDIX 5**YPU School (CAMHS Inpatients) – Case Study**

Maintaining continuity of education, achievement and inclusion throughout a period of complex mental health needs

Background

Pupil A is a 17-year-old young person who has experienced a number of admissions to Dundee's Young People's Unit (YPU) CAMHS. They have a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa. Pupil A received an ADHD diagnosis last year.

Accessing education has consistently presented significant challenges. Pupil A was unable to attend their mainstream school and found it difficult to engage independently with online learning through e-Sgoil. Repeated hospital admissions, changing mental health needs and periods of significant risk have created further barriers to learning.

Despite these challenges, Pupil A has engaged positively with YPU School. The small, flexible and relationship-based nature of the provision has enabled them to access learning in a way which had not previously been possible. They have achieved a significant range of qualifications while continuing to participate fully in the wider life of the school.

Responding to Changing Needs

Pupil A's presentation and educational needs have varied considerably across admissions, requiring teachers to continually adapt their approach.

During their first admission, they required intensive one-to-one support to sustain attention and engagement. They presented with very little outward emotion, could sit motionless for periods and found independent working extremely difficult. Tasks and individual questions were discussed and modelled, with a teacher working alongside them.

During their most recent and ongoing admission, Pupil A has presented very differently. They have been much more physically active and expressive, frequently pacing and talking rapidly, and they have found it difficult to remain on a task. They can become distracted or bored quickly and have sometimes returned to the ward part-way through a lesson, meaning learning often has to be revisited.

Individualised support and a calm, consistent approach have enabled Pupil A to continue learning despite significant changes in their presentation and needs.

Partnership and Multi-Agency Working

Partnership working has been central to maintaining continuity in Pupil A's education. YPU teachers have liaised closely with their home school, home local authority and e-Sgoil to coordinate learning. Where Pupil A found it difficult to engage independently with e-Sgoil, teachers provided the structure and individual support required to help them access learning.

Teachers also work closely with the NHS multidisciplinary team, including nursing, psychology, psychiatry, occupational therapy, social work and other professionals involved in Pupil A's care. Close communication supports decisions about classroom attendance, ward-based teaching and wider participation, balancing educational entitlement with changing clinical needs and levels of risk.

Flexible Education Around Risk

At times, Pupil A's level of risk, including risk of absconding and self-harm, has meant that they have been unable to attend the school classroom. YPU staff have worked with NHS colleagues to identify safe alternatives that allow them to remain involved in education and school life.

Individual teaching has been provided on the ward when appropriate. When risk has prevented Pupil A from attending Fun Friday classroom activities, they have phoned down from the ward, supported by a nurse, and participated in quizzes and bingo alongside other young people.

Pupil A was also the narrator for the YPU Christmas pantomime. They participated in rehearsals but were unable to attend the final performance due to the level of risk at that time. Their narration was recorded in advance and incorporated into the performance, ensuring that they remained an important part of the production.

These adaptations ensure that restrictions necessary for safety do not automatically become barriers to participation, achievement and belonging.

Educational Achievement

While engaging with YPU School between 2023 and 2026, Pupil A has achieved:

- Level 2 Fundraising
- National 3 Applications of Mathematics
- National 4 Mathematics
- National 4 Health Sector
- National 4 English and Literacy
- National 4 Biology: Life on Earth
- National 4 Biology: Multicellular Organisms
- National 4 Biology: Added Value Unit (Assignment)
- Level 4 Scottish Studies - Scotland in Focus
- Level 4 Employability
- National 5 Numeracy
- National 5 Literacy
- National 5 English - Creation and Production
- National 5 English - Analysis and Evaluation
- Level 5 Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Level 5 Understanding Mental Health Issues

Pupil A's experience demonstrates an important distinction between education being available and education being accessible. Both online learning and mainstream education had been available to them, but they struggled to engage with either. The relationships, structure and responsive support provided by YPU teachers enabled Pupil A to access learning and to achieve recognised qualifications.

Participation, Rights and Wider Achievement

Pupil A's involvement in YPU School extends beyond qualifications. They regularly attend the weekly art group, have enjoyed Eco Schools activities and have contributed to the school's Reading School initiative, including helping with a 'Blind Date with a Book' stall during Book Week Scotland.

They have also played an important role in the school's Rights Respecting Schools work. As part of YPU School's successful work towards the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award, they contributed to a film in which young people and teachers discussed young people's rights and the particular importance of maintaining these rights during a hospital admission. As YPU School now works towards Gold accreditation, staff hope to support them to build on this involvement by working towards becoming a Rights Respecting School Ambassador.

Pupil A also enjoys spending time with Daisy, the school's registered therapy dog, who is a familiar part of the YPU School environment. Daisy's playful nature and occasional mischief often make Pupil A laugh and bring out their sense of humour, adding little glimmers of joy to the school day.

All these experiences ensure that education during hospital admission is not limited to qualifications. They support creativity, contribution and wider achievement, while helping Pupil A to maintain a sense of belonging to a school community.

Continuing Education and Planning Beyond School-Leaving Age

Pupil A reached their S6 school-leaving date in July 2026. However, YPU School has continued to support them while they remain within the hospital setting, recognising the importance of meaningful learning, achievement and preparation for life beyond hospital.

They continue to attend YPU School, currently enjoying an online nursing course and engaging in wider achievement opportunities. YPU teachers will also support their next steps by liaising with their home local authority and relevant partners around careers guidance, future education, training or employment and transition planning.

This continued involvement provides structure, purpose and progression, while supporting Pupil A's transition from hospital education towards their future destination.

Impact and Wider Significance

Pupil A's experience illustrates the importance of specialist educational provision for young people whose mental health prevents them from accessing conventional education. It reflects the principles of Scottish guidance on education during ill health and Additional Support for Learning, including continuity of education, inclusion, partnership working and collaboration between education and health.

Through their involvement with YPU School, Pupil A has been able to maintain links with education and participate in learning and school life even during periods when risk has prevented them from accessing the classroom.

Pupil A's journey demonstrates that complex mental health needs and hospital admission do not need to result in lowered educational expectations. For Pupil A, YPU School has provided qualifications and achievement, but also structure, a sense of belonging and an important connection to life beyond hospital.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIS	Accessibility & Inclusion Service
BSL	British Sign Language
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EAL	English as an additional language
LSG	Longhaugh Support Group
PACE	Pupil Access to College and Employability
RISE	Raising Interpersonal Skills for Employment
SEBN	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child
SERW	Senior Education Resource Worker

GLOSSARY

Insight	Insight is an online tool for benchmarking the senior phase. It is a professional tool available to secondary schools and local authorities to allow them to look at specific cohorts of learners and identify areas of success and where improvements can be made. Although Insight provides data on the attainment of a wide range of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) awards from a range of providers, not all SCQF achievement awards are included.
SEEMIS	A management information system used by all local authorities in Scotland. It securely holds attainment, attendance and personal data relating to children and young people.
Special Schools	These are specialist provisions that support educational outcomes for children and young people.
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority, an awarding body for national qualifications.
Strategic Equity Fund	The Strategic Equity Fund is provided by the Scottish Government to invest in approaches to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge: to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.
Tariff Points	The Tariff Scale is a key feature of the Insight online benchmarking tool. It allows a score to be calculated that summarises a wide range of achievement and awards from a range of providers. The tariff score is based on elements from the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), in particular SCQF Credit Points and levels, as well as elements related to a qualification's composition. The tariff scale allows comparisons to be made between cohorts, schools, local authorities, and their virtual comparators. The tariff points accrued by schools, local authorities and cohorts should not be viewed as the only way of measuring performance and should be considered in the context of the other outcome measures included in the tool, for example, breadth and depth, improving post-school participation and raising attainment in literacy and numeracy as well as other data sources.

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REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE – 26 OCTOBER 2026

REPORT ON: IMPLEMENTATION OF REDUCED CLASS CONTACT TIME

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 242-2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out a high-level implementation plan for the phased introduction of additional Reduced Class Contact Time (RCCT) for teachers in Dundee City Council schools, in line with nationally agreed timescales and conditions.
- 1.2 It provides assurance to Committee on proposed governance, affordability, workforce feasibility, risks and dependencies.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Committee:
- notes the nationally agreed RCCT timescales and conditions;
 - notes the proposed governance and phased implementation approach;
 - notes that implementation remains contingent upon full Scottish Government funding and national agreement on workforce and delivery assumptions;

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of this report.
- 3.2 A financial modelling template was provided by ADES for local authorities to use to provide a consistent approach across the country. Dundee City Council (DCC) modelling, including the financial projections, estimates the cost of implementation in Primary and Special to be £4.038m and for Secondary £3.737m in a full financial year. Giving a total projected cost of £7.775m.

Sector	FTE Allocation	Projected Increase Required (FTE)	Projected Cost Incurred (£m)
Primary & Special	759	52.93	£4.038m
Secondary	636	48.99	£3.737m

4.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Currently teachers have a maximum class contact time of 22.5 hours per week. A national agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA commits local authorities to progress towards a reduction in maximum weekly class contact time to 21 hours, incorporating an additional 90 minutes of undirected professional time, subject to further definition through the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT). There will be no reduction in the number of teaching hours provided to children and young people. However, as a result of the proposed arrangements, pupils are likely to be taught by a greater number of teachers over the course of a typical week.
- 4.2 The agreed phased delivery timetable is:

- Primary and special schools: August 2027
 - Secondary schools: August 2029
- 4.3 Delivery is conditional on full Scottish Government funding, agreed national cost methodologies, validated workforce modelling and protection of funding for Additional Support Needs (ASN). Until these are confirmed, the full cost to Dundee City Council cannot be quantified.
- 4.4 The Scottish Government will provide an early release of £7.5 million in 2026-27 from funding associated with the Reduced Class Contact Time (RCCT) agreement.
- 4.5 The purpose of this early funding is to support local authorities to develop robust, evidence-based implementation plans for RCCT, ensuring a consistent national approach while allowing for local flexibility.
- 4.6 The funding will support essential preparatory activity, including workforce modelling, financial planning and local implementation design, all of which are critical to the successful delivery of the wider policy. The allocation to Dundee is £170k.
- 4.7 Uncertainty remains however, particularly in relation to funding, workforce availability, national methodologies and the detailed SNCT position. The scale of change nevertheless requires timely planning. The high-level plan in this report will therefore be reviewed routinely and developed as national arrangements become clearer.
- 4.8 Dundee City Council currently operates within nationally agreed teacher contact time arrangements. Initial high-level modelling indicates that implementation of RCCT will have significant implications for workforce planning, school staffing structures, curriculum delivery/offer and accommodation requirements across all sectors. Detailed local modelling is underway and will continue as national funding arrangements and workforce assumptions become clearer.
- 4.9 The proposed Dundee approach:
- covers primary, special and secondary schools;
 - focuses on staffing, operational readiness, governance and assurance;
 - does not pre-empt national SNCT agreements; and
 - assumes that Dundee City Council will not proceed with unfunded local delivery.
- 4.10 The Council's approach to implementation will seek to maintain the quality of learning and teaching, protect learner entitlement and minimise any adverse impact on curriculum breadth and choice and meeting learners' needs.

4 PROPOSED GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5.1 Governance and accountability

- 5.1.1 It is proposed that an RCCT Implementation Board is established, with the Executive Director of Children & Families Service acting as Senior Responsible Officer. The Implementation Board will oversee:
- delivery of the local implementation plan against national timescales;
 - workforce modelling and affordability assurance;
 - management of strategic risks and dependencies; and
 - escalation to COSLA and the Scottish Government where required.
- 5.1.2 Core membership will include Strategic Education Managers and representatives from Finance and People Services. There will also be collaboration with Property services and Digital services to ensure readiness. The Implementation Board will report through the Council's established corporate and service governance arrangements.

- 5.1.3 Dundee are also working closely and in collaboration with colleagues from Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council to develop a model which will be similar across Tayside.
- 5.1.4 Progress reports will be presented to the Children and Families Committee at key milestones during each phase of implementation, with a further update provided no later than Spring 2027.
- 5.1.5 Progress will also be reported to the Dundee Negotiating Committee for Teachers (DNCT), in keeping with SNCT expectations, so that local consultation and professional advice inform programme planning.

5.2 Primary schools and Special schools: delivery by August 2027

When	Proposed Dundee actions
2026 to early 2027	- Finalise workforce and cost modelling using agreed national methodologies. - Confirm the total additional full-time equivalent staffing requirement. - Incorporate RCCT funding requirements into 2027/28 budget planning.
2026/27 operational preparation	- Undertake phased recruitment activity to minimise workforce planning risk. - Engage with Provisionally Registered Teacher allocation and relevant returns to GTCS. - Assess ASN staffing impacts and identify mitigations. - Prepare and test school-level timetabling models. - Identify any required amendments to the Devolved School Management Scheme.
Readiness assessment by April 2027	- Agree authority-wide timetabling principles. - Complete evidence-based school readiness assessments. - Complete property/estates and digital capacity checks. - Issue workforce deployment guidance to support consistency and equity.
August 2027	Implement reduced class contact time in primary and special schools, subject to funding and staffing being in place.

5.3 Secondary schools: delivery by August 2029

When	Proposed Dundee actions
2026 to 2028	- Develop and evaluate delivery scenarios, including implications for Senior Phase design, while protecting the quality of curriculum delivery/offer and learner entitlement. - Evaluate workforce mix and delivery models to inform an RCCT workforce plan. - Assess curriculum, qualification and timetabling implications and identify mitigations.
2028/29	- Select and cost a preferred delivery model. - Confirm funding and workforce feasibility. - Identify any required amendments to the Devolved School Management Scheme.

When	Proposed Dundee actions
Readiness assessment by April 2029	• Agree authority-wide timetabling principles. • Complete evidence-based school readiness assessments. • Complete property/estates and digital capacity checks. • Issue workforce deployment guidance to support consistency and equity.
August 2029	• Implement RCCT in secondary schools, subject to agreed national and local conditions being met and a positive readiness assessment.

5.4 Detailed planning and communication

5.4.1 The high-level plan will be translated into a detailed and adaptable implementation plan. Communication arrangements will be established to keep Head Teachers, parent representatives/forum, DNCT, relevant professional associations and other relevant stakeholders informed about planning, decisions and progress.

5.5 Risk and assurance

5.5.1 The Implementation Board will establish and maintain a detailed risk register. The principal risks and proposed controls are summarised below.

Risk area	Key risk	Proposed controls
Workforce	Insufficient teachers or FTE capacity may prevent delivery at the required scale and pace and increase costs.	• Validated workforce modelling. • Phased recruitment and workforce planning. • Readiness checks before implementation.
Funding	Funding may be insufficient, late or based on a methodology that does not reflect Dundee's full costs.	• Discrete and transparent financial planning. • No implementation without confirmation of full funding. • Escalation through COSLA and Scottish Government channels.
Curriculum and statutory duties	Insufficient staffing may affect curriculum delivery, curriculum offer, learner entitlement and/or ASN provision.	• Sector-specific delivery modelling. • ASN impact assessment and mitigation. • School readiness assessments and quality assurance.
Industrial relations	Local arrangements may diverge from SNCT or DNCT expectations.	• Ongoing DNCT engagement. • Alignment with national agreements. • Clear and consistent workforce guidance.
Equality and consistency	RCCT may be applied inconsistently across sectors, schools or staff groups, including part-time staff.	• Equality considerations embedded in option appraisal. • Consistent authority guidance. • Documented decision-making and monitoring.

Risk area	Key risk	Proposed controls
Governance and reputation	Weak evidence, documentation or communication may increase legal challenge or stakeholder concern.	• Implementation Board oversight. • Documented consultation, risk and readiness evidence. • Regular reporting to Committee, CLT and corporate governance forums.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for enacting change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment. As the agreed model is refined and finalised for implementation by August 2027, any required Integrated Impact Assessments will be undertaken and reported to the Committee through future reports.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council Leadership Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 7.2 Engagement with the DNCT, Head Teachers, relevant professional associations and other stakeholders will continue as detailed implementation plans are developed.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 National agreement and associated communications between the Scottish Government and COSLA on reduced class contact time.
- 8.2 Relevant SNCT and DNCT agreements and guidance, as available.

AUDREY MAY
Executive Director of Children and Families

PAMELA NESBITT
Strategic Education Manager

OCTOBER 2026

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List of abbreviations

ADES	Association of Directors of Education Scotland
ASN	Additional Support Needs
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DNCT	Dundee Negotiating Committee for Teachers
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
PRT	Provisionally Registered Teacher
RCCT	Reduced Class Contact Time
SNCT	Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers

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REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE – 26 OCTOBER 2026

REPORT ON: OUR PROMISE 2023-26 ANNUAL UPDATE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 240-2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Children and Families Committee with the final annual update on the implementation of Our Promise to Care Experienced Children, Young People and Care Leavers 2023-26 (Appendix 1). The report covers the last 12 months and follows Elected Member approval of Our Promise on 23 October 2023 (report number 295-2023, Article IV of the minute referred); the first annual update approved on 28 October 2024 (report number 298-2024, Article IV of the minute referred); and the second annual update approved on 27 October 2025 (report number 313-2025, Article III of the minute referred). The report also includes a further update on Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) activities in the last 12 months (Appendix 2).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that committee:
- a) Note continued progress made in the implementation of Our Promise 2023-26 and improved outcomes for care experienced children, young people and care leavers.
 - b) Request the Executive Director to provide the next annual update on Our Promise as part of the Children's Services Partnership Plan 2026-29 update in 12 months.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Children's Social Work Service is currently projecting a balanced budget and gross expenditure on care provision for children and young people decreased by around £6.4m (21%) between 2022-23 and 2024-25. This has involved reductions in the overall care experienced population alongside reductions in expenditure on external residential care, as more children and young people remain in the city in either family-based or local residential care. Currently, Children's Service Planning Partnerships are awaiting confirmation from Scottish Government of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding beyond March 2027.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to develop a 'Corporate Parenting Plan' to outline how it will meet the needs of 'Looked After Children'. The Independent Care Review published in February 2020 was critical of this stigmatising language and promoted a stronger collective ambition to achieve transformational improvements in the way we support families. It emphasised the importance of ensuring families can remain together and when that is not possible children live in family-based care settings. In The Promise, it outlined 5 key foundations of Family, Care, People, Voice and Scaffolding. In The Money and Follow the Money, it also commented on avoidable financial costs.

5.0 DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.1 In response to the Independent Care Review, the Council developed Our Promise to mirror the 5 foundations covering the periods 2020-23 and 2023-26. Out of the total of 28 initiatives outlined in the current plan, work has started on all of them, 24 have been completed; 3 are underway; and 1 will commence in late 2026. As outlined in Appendix 2, the 14 initiatives allocated WFWF funding over the last 12 months have also been active in either building the capacity of existing services to help maximise resources or directly providing new supports to help meet family's needs. Some trends over the last 3 years, benchmarking and continued priorities now include:

- **Number in care** - the total number of children and young people in alternative care arrangements has reduced by 22% from 374 in March 2023 to 292 in March 2026. This does not include children, and young people subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) at home, which has increased from 45 to 91.

This means that the total number of children and young people subject to CSOs at home or in alternative care has reduced from 419 to 383 (9%) between March 2023 and March 2026. National figures from the Local Government Benchmark Framework (LGBF) for the three-year period 31st July 2022 to 31st July 2025 show a three-year decrease of 6%.

- **Balance of care** - the balance of family-based Kinship Care and Foster Care versus internal or external residential care has increased from 85.7% in March 2023 to a peak of 91% in June 2025 and 90% in March 2026. In the latest available LGBF comparison, the national average was 88.3%.

As further improvements in the balance of family-based versus residential care towards exemplar Local Authorities of 95% are dependent upon the availability of Foster Carers, this has continued to be a key priority and actions to increase their recruitment and retention are described in paragraph 9.3.

- **Missing episodes of children and young people from Children's Houses** - there has been a reduction in the number of missing episodes from Children's Houses from 389 in 2022 to 182 in 2025 (53%). Typically, these involve repeat missing episodes of a small cohort of children and young people when they do not return home on time.

This is one indicator of greater stability in the Children's Houses, where 3 of the 6 houses inspected by the Care Inspectorate are currently graded as Very Good; 1 is graded as Good; and 2 are graded as Adequate. A shared Children's House Improvement Plan and targeted support to individual houses is contributing towards improvements.

- **School attendance** – the overall attendance rate for care experienced pupils in 2025-26 was 82%, slightly lower than the LGBF Family Group average of 82.3%. It is adversely affected by the much lower attendance levels of children and young people subject to a CSO or in Kinship Care, whereas the attendance level of pupils in Foster Care is 90%.

Paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 provide details of the response, which involves holistic whole family support to overcome barriers to school attendance at home, in schools and in the wider community. The development of Whole Family Support (report number 349-2025, Article IX of the minute referred), initially in the Northeast and Eastend, is also including a targeted focus on this cohort of families.

- **Attainment** – the percentage of care experienced pupils achieving 1+ award at SCQF Level 4 or better decreased from 81% in 2024-25 to 52% in 2025-26. For the past four years the average achieving one or more awards at SCQF Level 5 or better has been 52%. It is again affected by children and young people on a CSO at home or in Kinship Care.

It should be noted that as around 20-30 care experienced pupils leave school each year, small reductions in the number achieving one or more awards at SCQF Level 4 or 5 indicates more marked percentage decreases. Nevertheless, they still generally lag their mainstream peers, especially when in the care of their immediate or wider birth family.

- 5.2 The key objectives of keeping vulnerable families together, supporting children and young people in family-based settings, keeping them safe, improving outcomes and reducing financial costs are therefore being increasingly realised but those on CSOs at home or in Kinship Care continue to experience poorer outcomes and the recruitment of Foster Carers has remained a challenge. These are key priorities and further details on more recent and planned activity are outlined in section 9 of this report.

6.0 PEOPLE

- 6.1 In relation to the workforce, Children's Social Work teams have continued to implement a national Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) scheme placing limits on the number of families they support in the first 12 months. A new Supervision Framework was also launched in November 2025. Overall, the average number of families supported by Social Workers has risen from 15 to 17 and the service has embedded Magic Notes to enhance efficiencies. Testing identified that it reduced the time spent on administrative tasks by an average 7-9 hours a week per worker.
- 6.2 To evaluate and help further improve Children's Social Work practice, audits of assessments, plans, chronologies and engagement continue to be carried out 3 times a year. When this programme started in May 2021, 58% were graded as Good or better overall. This rose to 93% in June 2023 and 94% in December 2023. In a further audit carried out in June 2025 focused on children and young people on CSOs at home, 93% were rated as Good or better.
- 6.3 The most recent audit carried out in January 2026 involved a review of assessments, plans, chronologies, engagement and support to children and young people in Children's Houses, with overall practice rated Good or better for 87% of cases. The strongest areas related to assessments and engagement, with most children and young people supported to contribute to planning and progress against meaningful outcomes.

7.0 FAMILY

- 7.1 The details in Appendix 2 provide an overview of WFWF services focused on the key priorities of pre-birth and early years (Alternatives Counselling, Tayside Council on Alcohol and National Literacy Trust); disability and additional support needs (The Yard); poverty and healthy weight (Dundee Bairns); and holiday provision (Holiday Programme Partnership). They also include approaches designed to maximise the capacity, availability and effectiveness of existing services, such as the FORT referral system, DIAS Advocacy Strategy, DVVA Volunteer Strategy, Crichton Street Hub, Together to Thrive and Positive Destinations Framework.
- 7.2 In relation to Early Years, babies and infants under the age of 5 years remain disproportionately represented on the Child Protection Register or away from their birth family in alternative care. Currently, 22% of care experienced children are aged 0-5 years compared with a national average of 17%. In addition to universal services and new WFWF projects, the New Beginnings Team therefore continues to provide targeted support. Over the last 12 months, 85% of babies referred to the team were able to remain either at home in the care of their parent or in extended family with a Kinship Carer.
- 7.3 The service also finalised a review of Third Sector commissioned services, which currently involves £2.3m annual funding to 14 organisations. They deliver a range of services, from substance use, parenting, mediation, one parent families, advocacy, disability and supported accommodation. The review was informed by the 10 principles of flexible family support outlined in the Independent Care Review and is designed to meet varying overlapping needs in more integrated, accessible and responsive ways, including for children and young people currently subject to a CSO at home or residing in Kinship Care.

8.0 VOICE

- 8.1 For younger children, the New Beginnings Team has been trained in using a Mental Health Observational Indicator Set to make observations of children with their main care giver and inform support. To help drive improvements in engagement, the service has continued to gather data on the proportion of children and young people who either attend or, more frequently, have their views represented at meetings. This now shows that for those children and young people who have had a decision-making meeting, 95% had their views represented either by being given opportunities to speak during the meeting or others speaking on their behalf.

- 8.2 To strengthen opportunities for children and young people to speak and be heard, the service also continues to commission Who Cares? Scotland to provide an advocacy service for care experienced children and young people. Over the last 12 months, Who Cares? advocated for 51 children and young people across all types of care arrangement, including external residential care. Examples of the impact of advocacy include changes being made to the frequency of family contact for a child and a landlord extending a notice to quit a tenancy for a care leaver attending University. The service recognises the value of independent challenge and comments on the value of advocacy from children and young people have included:
- 'I feel like the whole team – Social Work, School and Who Cares? – are doing a good job'
 - 'She just says what I want her to say. She checks with me before she talks to anyone'.
 - 'I'm happy because I'm going to get more family time and can call my Grandma at the weekend now'.
- 8.3 Following staffing changes, the Champions Board, which had been operating in all 8 Secondary Schools, is currently being reviewed with proposals due to be presented in late October 2026. Options include retaining the existing model, extending it to include Primary Schools, focusing specifically on care experienced children and young people on CSOs at home or in Kinship Care, developing a linked or separate board for the Children's Houses or all of these. It has proved to be a helpful forum for engaging with and actively listening to children and young people, including responses to requests such as participation in a Columba 1400 Leadership Development Academy and other organised activities.
- 8.4 The WWF funded Advocacy Strategy is intended to widen the availability of advocacy and includes a Delivery Plan 2026-27 focused on the joint development of an Advocacy Charter, partnership training to raise workforce knowledge and skills, digital platforms to raise community awareness, engagement with communities and exploration of available capacity across different settings. It will align with the development of Whole Family Support initially in the Northeast and Eastend, including engagement with communities to inform the design and delivery of services in accordance with Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Details on the impact will be provided in the next 12-month report.

9.0 CARE

- 9.1 A range of developments have continued to strengthen support to children, young people and care leavers in different care settings. In response to the lower school attendance and attainment levels of children and young people on CSOs at home or in Kinship Care, Welfare Rights assessments, a Place2B online parenting programme, school holiday activity camps, targeted leisure and sports activities and trauma informed support from 2 Clinical Psychologists continues to be in place. The service is ensuring that they each have a Coordinated Support Plan, including enhanced transition support from Primary to Secondary School and targeted support from Pupil Support Workers.
- 9.2 The introduction of an education tracking tool is supporting the identification of a cohort of children and young people on CSOs or in Kinship Care with attendance levels below 60%. Following further data analysis, initial targeted intervention is focusing on Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils across five Primary Schools. It will provide a tailored, person-centred approach aimed at understanding and addressing the complex factors contributing to non-attendance. Evaluation of outcomes will inform future development, including the potential scaling and integration of the approach within the service's Improving Presence Strategy.
- 9.3 However, both nationally and locally the recruitment of Foster Carers remains a challenge, with internal Foster Carer households reducing from 75 in 2022 to 53 in 2026. It restricts opportunities to care for children and young people in family-based settings when residing with birth family is not currently possible. In response, the Council introduced a 58% increase in fees from £172 to £272 per child per week from September 2026, alongside a range of other extended supports. The impact of this on recruitment and retention will continue to be monitored.
- 9.4 In relation to care experienced young people entering positive destinations after leaving school, data for the period 2025-26 is not yet available but there were 25 leavers in 2024-25. Of these,

20 (80%) entered a positive destination, compared with 100% in 2023-24 and 71% in 2022-23. As noted in paragraph 5.1 on attainment, small numbers can result in a significant percentage shift, and the service continues to support care leavers to enter and sustain positive destinations. In respect of care leavers aged up to 26 years supported by the Aftercare Team, 48 out of 69 (70%) were in education, training or employment in July 2026.

10.0 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

- 10.1 This report describes how Our Promise continues to have a positive overall impact in supporting vulnerable families. The number of children and young people in care have continued to reduce; the balance of family-based care has increased; foundational Social Work practice is improving; children, young people, parents/carers and communities are increasingly listened to; Care Inspectorate inspections of regulated services are getting better overall; missing episodes from Children's Houses are reducing; costs are reducing; and WFWF initiatives are either contributing towards enhanced support or show promise.
- 10.2 However, there still remains a disproportionate number of babies and infants subject to formal Child Protection processes and ultimately in care; children and young people on CSOs at home and in Kinship Care are less likely to progress well at school; there are challenges in the recruitment of Foster Carers; and the care experienced population still lags their peers in educational attainment by some margin. This will continue to inform Council and partnership priorities, including the development of the data-driven place-based Whole Family Support initiative in the Northeast and Eastend.
- 10.3 Going forward, the Children's Services Planning Partnership Plan 2026-29 approved by Elected Members on 22 June 2026 (report number 142-2026, Article III of the minute referred) includes Priority 5 as Our Promise and outlines a further range of actions in accordance with the 5 foundations. It includes a specific focus on the areas for improvement identified in this report, alongside other actions such as the development of the co-located multi-agency Crichton Street Hub for vulnerable adolescents and planned housing pathways for care leavers. Further annual updates will form part of annual updates on this plan.

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The content of this report was previously considered in report (93-2021) and remains valid. The original report was not subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. For follow-ups relating to initial reports agreed prior to 22/8/22 a copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment is available (where applicable) on the Council's website at www.dundee.gov.uk/iiia.

12.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Independent Care Review reports [Care Review Reports – Independent Care Review](#)

Audrey May
Executive Director

Glyn Lloyd
Head of Children's and Community Justice Services

October 2026

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APPENDIX 1

Our Promise to Care Experienced Children, Young People and Families 2023-26 Action Plan				
Foundation	Actions	Leads	Measuring Impact	Timescales
Voice	Implement Infant Pledge for babies and toddlers in care - 'Hello in There Wee One' has now been published and is being implemented in the New Beginnings Team.	Service Manager	Audit of practice in test sites	¼ audits
	Coordinate Champions Boards – were operating in all 7 Secondary Schools and a current review due to be finalised in late October 2026.	Education Officer	Survey Champions Boards	¼ meetings
	Review advocacy to improve access and impact – WFWF funding to DIAS for development of an Advocacy Strategy, with Delivery Plan to be implemented from 2026-27.	Service Manager	% offered and accessing	March 2024
	Implement findings of survey on brother/sister care – teams received training on being together, informing care plans, having contact and/or knowing of whereabouts, where appropriate.	Service Manager	Implementation of plan	March 2025
	Implement and scale What Matters to You in locality areas – Cafe Conversations and Make it Happen Fund have informed the development of Whole Family Support (WFS).	Head of Service	Formal evaluation	March 2026
	Include a focus on voice in audits of practice – audits now provide data on different age group attendance and/or representation at key decision-making meetings.	Service Manager	% Where voice informed plans	¼ audits
Family	Coordinate targeted deployment of WFWF – all WFWF funding up to March 2027 allocated and partnership awaiting confirmation of continued funding to inform sustainability or exit strategies.	Head of Service	Develop specific measures	Nov 2023
	Develop a clear edge of care offer to all families – review of commissioned services completed, and flexible family support mirrored in contractual agreements.	Senior Manager	Numbers in care	June 2024
	Review working arrangements to provide support at time of need – WFWF Total Mobile made final proposals in November 2025 and will form part of WFS Developments in 2026-27.	Senior Manager		

	Conduct Welfare Rights assessments with all families at risk – families with Kinship Care arrangements all receive Welfare Rights assessment.	Practice Manager	Family stability/disruption	June 2024
	Implement Contextual Safeguarding for adolescents at risk – a Contextual Safeguarding Panel has been established supported by the Crichton Street Hub from September 2026.	Senior Manager	Income maximisation	June 2024
	Explore and apply models of best practice in family support – relates to review of commissioned services finalised in October 2025.	Senior Manager	Audits of Child's Plans	March 2024

Care	Develop and implement brothers/sisters practice guidance – developed and implemented across teams, which continue to navigate complexities in care arrangements.	Senior Manager	Measures inform by survey	June 2025
	Implement therapeutic and other supports to Kinship Carers – Corra funded Clinical Psychologists provide routine trauma informed advice and support to both Kinship Care Team and Kinship Carers	Service Manager	Numbers in Kinship Care	June 2025
	Target school attendance support to pupils in Kinship Care – additional supports being extended and systems tightened to more effectively target.	Education Officer	Educational outcomes	March 2024
	Develop and implement new Foster Carer support strategy – strategy developed and implemented. Fees also increased by 58% from September 2026	Service Manager	Recruitment and satisfaction	Nov 2023
	Complete secure care self-evaluation and implement improvements – not progressed due to competing priorities but multi-agency group will progress September to March 2026-27.	Senior Manager	Compliance with standards	Dec 2026

	Develop and implement new Continuing Care practice guidance – developed and implemented so Aftercare Team now receive advance notification and transfer aged 16 years Review Aftercare support to care leavers aged up to 26 years – reviewed and high % of eligible care leavers receive support, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Enhance supportive post-care housing support - new provision at Reid Square and Fairbairn Street. Policy of no 16–17-year-olds in homeless accommodation Implement Youth Participation action plan – being implemented with Youth Participation Group including additional capacity from WFWF, extension of mentoring support and new school systems.	Senior Manager	Compliance with standards	June 2024
		Senior Manager	% supported and outcomes	June 2024
		Senior Manager	Homelessness	June 2024
		Senior Manager	Positive destinations	June 2024
People	Implement risk assessment and defensible decision training – initial focus on Children's Homes and now delivered to all front-line Social Work teams Implement Welfare Rights training – Welfare Rights member of Our Promise Partnership; routine assessments of Kinship Carers; and advice/guidance available for other families Implement an annual foster carer training plan – developed and implemented and now also extends to Kinship and Foster Panels to promote consistency of approach Ensure high-quality Child's Plans for all care experienced children – audits show marked improvements in the % graded as Good or better Scale parenting programme training across teams – Place2B used by Kinship Team and review of commissioned services to include a focus on parenting	Service Manager	Audits of practice	¼ audits
		Service Manager	Audits of practice	¼ audits
		Service Manager	Attendance and satisfaction	Annual
		Service Manager	Audits of practice	¼ audits
		Service Manager	Audits of practice	¼ audits
Scaffolding	Fully implement GIRFEC Practice Profile in all sites – guidance developed for all sites and data gathered on Team Around the Child Meetings. Audit of quality to take place in late 2026-27.	Education Officer	Audits of practice	Bi-annual audits
		Senior Manager	Audits of practice	January 2024

	Implement new Social Work Practice Standards – implemented across all teams and supporting workforce to prioritise support in accordance with levels of risk and need Revise all Social Work procedures to be Our Promise compatible – key procedures reviewed and action plan developed for all remaining procedures	Service Manager	Audits and staff survey	December 2026
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APPENDIX 2

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding 2025-26				
Provider	Funding	Service	Activity	Outcomes
Alternatives Counselling	£34,267	Therapeutic support to vulnerable expectant and new mothers	Over 450 sessions of counselling, neonatal ward support and wellbeing groups	Increased attachment and reduced overwhelm and anxiety
Tayside Council on Alcohol	£263,295	Birch Programme for women who have had children removed from their care	Targeted holistic support to 48 parents of 100 children	Improved housing stability, health, relationships and employment
National Literacy Trust	£57,238	Talk and Play Together to improve whole family literacy skills	Supported 63 families and distributed 653 books	Strengthened relationships, confidence and literacy
Dundee Repertory Theatre	£79,954	Creative Family Wellbeing Service with whole family dramatherapy	Provided 26 family places and 9 workshops for NHST and DCC staff on family therapy	Improved emotional expression, regulation and confidence
Dundee Bairns	£97,525	Provision of food and healthy eating advice via school tea clubs	Delivered 63 group sessions to 400 families and 18,000 meals in 22 schools	Improved school engagement and reduced food insecurity
The Yard	£57,238	Family support and summer play for parents with a child with a disability	Recorded 221 family engagements across all age groups and 33 parent support sessions	Increased confidence, reduced family stress and less isolation
The Yard	£98,452	Support to children with ASN transitioning from Primary to Secondary	Delivered 61 transition sessions to 149 children and young people	A survey showed 100% of pupils reported increased confidence
Dundee City Council	£127,084	Coordination of Holiday Partnership Programme with various services	Targeted support to 2,625 children, including breakfasts and lunches	Enhanced wellbeing and improved school attendance/engagement
Dundee City Council	£104,728	Development and Delivery of Positive Destinations Improvement Plan	Coordination of in-school and post-school pathways and support groups	Earlier identification, enhanced support and improved tracking
DVVA	£77,160	Coordination and maximisation of volunteer services	Development of a Volunteer Strategy, Go Volunteer Platform and Volunteer Passport	Streamlined volunteer recruitment, support and training
DIAS	£91,587	Development of a Joint Advocacy Strategy by 4 independent organisations	Consultation on and co-design of a partnership strategy	Advocacy Strategy and Delivery Plan to be implemented in 2026-27
FORT	£54,000	Referral and triage function for services requiring access to additional support	Over 300 staff trained and 53 referrals triaged to relevant support	Seamless and timeous access to varying family support
Dundee City Council	£91,000	Renovation of Crichton Street to host a co-located multi-disciplinary team	Works completed and new hub ready for formal opening in October 2026	Intention to improve joint support to vulnerable adolescents
Mental Health Foundation	£156,668	A capacity building Together to Thrive model for services supporting children	Over 200 referrals received via FORT for children awaiting CAMHS assessment	Families reported greater confidence in managing emotions

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