



# **Aberdeenshire's Child Protection Committee Improvement Plan 2023-2026**

## Introduction

Welcome to our Aberdeenshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) Improvement Plan, March 2023 to March 2026.

Building on the foundations of our previous Improvement Plans, this three-year Plan sets out our actions to support the partnership achieve positive outcomes for our Children, Young People and their families/carers. The Plan will describe how we will achieve our aims within the partnership. It highlights the aspirations and vision of the Child Protection Committee for the next three-years. It will be reviewed annually each March, and the work will include an evaluation of our results against the previous year's aims. Any adjustments to the strategy as a result of progress, or amendments in response to Government or environmental changes, can be agreed by the CPC. As we move forward, we are dedicated to our collective efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of Children and Young People across Aberdeenshire. This CPC Improvement Plan is aligned with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), 2017-2027, and the Children's Services Plan, 2023-2026. Aberdeenshire CPC and partners are committed to continuous improvement through quality assurance and self-evaluation as demonstrated by this CPC Improvement Plan. This shared commitment is also demonstrated through our partnership Quality Assurance Strategy and Programme, CPC Dataset Reports, CPC Development Days, and our CPC Annual Report.

## National Context

The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be the best place in the world for Children and Young People to grow up so that they become: successful learners; confident individuals; effective contributors and responsible citizens, and where children are loved, safe and respected, so that they can reach their full potential. The policy framework of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is now well embedded across Aberdeenshire, supported by key local policy frameworks, such as the [Getting it Right for Children, Young People and Families in Aberdeenshire](#), which promote early and proportionate intervention to address wellbeing and concerns across the continuum of need – whether General, Specific, or Intensive. The Independent Care Review, commissioned in 2017, led to a root and branch review of Scotland's care system resulting in the publication of The Promise in 2020. The Promise underlines Scotland's aspiration for its young people, to grow up in nurturing, loving, safe and respectful homes and enabling them to achieve their full potential. [The Promise Plan, 2021 – 2024](#), and updated plan, [2024-2030](#), has five primary focus areas: the right to a childhood; whole family support; supporting the workforce; planning, and building capacity.

This Improvement Plan also supports the work of the Scottish Government's vision and approach to implement a [Bairns' Hoose model](#) across Scotland as a transformational, whole-system approach to delivering child protection, justice, and health support and services to child victims and witnesses of abuse and harm. The overall vision of a Bairns' Hoose in Scotland is that all children in Scotland who have been victims of, or witnesses to, abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility, whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse, will have access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice. Aberdeenshire is a current Pathfinder for the Bairns' Hoose.

[Aberdeenshire's Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\), 2017-2027](#) sets out the vision of how Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) will deliver positive changes for the communities of Aberdeenshire, with a specific focus on reducing socio-economic inequality, primarily through the priorities identified in:

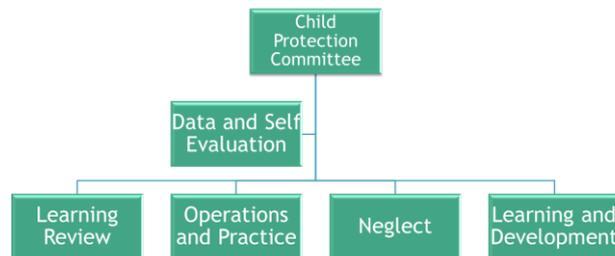
- Reducing Poverty in Aberdeenshire
- Connected and Cohesive Communities

- Changing Aberdeenshire’s Relationship with Alcohol.

The five foundations of the Promise - Family, Voice, Care, People and Scaffolding are central to [Aberdeenshire’s Children and Young People Services plan, 2023-2026](#), as our ambition for our Children, Young People and their families is clear:

*‘Our commitment to Aberdeenshire’s children and young people, is to provide them with the right support, in the right place at the right time.  
In helping them reach individual potential and goals, we will work together to make Aberdeenshire the best place in Scotland to grow up.’*

### The Child Protection Committee



Key to the CPC's approach are three pivotal policy documents. These are the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – Updated 2023](#), [Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities](#) and [A Quality Framework for Children and Young People in Need of Care and Protection](#). These documents form the cornerstone of the CPC's strategy, activity in child protection and evaluation methodology.

Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities describes the functions of Child Protection Committees as:

- Continuous improvement
- Public information, engagement, and participation
- Strategic planning and connections
- Annual reporting on the work of the CPC

### Aberdeenshire’s CPC Improvement Plan

This CPC Improvement Plan, 2023-2026, presents a shared commitment among partners to a robust agenda of outcome-driven improvement, evidencing our focus for ongoing development. As a plan of action, it is both broad in scope and high in aspiration, serving as our agreed plan for the continual improvement of services safeguarding Children and Young People in Aberdeenshire. Aberdeenshire’s CPC has a clear vision for all children in Aberdeenshire to be safe and protected from harm. As a partnership, Aberdeenshire’s CPC exists to develop, implement, and improve child protection strategy and thread child protection work through all services and agencies within Aberdeenshire. At the heart of this work is the national vision, “It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m all right.”

Outlined below are our targeted areas of improvement for the period 2023-2026. The plan is designed to be adaptable, with room for additional developmental areas or enhancement opportunities as they arise. In shaping this CPC Improvement Plan, we have acknowledged a range of national and local influences, including current and evolving legislation and policy shifts. Attention has been given to pre-

existing and forthcoming improvement and scrutiny frameworks. This includes our Inspection Improvement Plan, recent local quality assurance activity, self-assessments, along with the lessons from Learning Reviews.

Multi-professional consultation on the draft Improvement Plan has been sought in the form of three workshops taken place in North, Central and South Aberdeenshire. The purpose was to ensure we are influenced directly from our frontline services. All this learning and consultation has been integral in drafting a comprehensive, dynamic, and responsive improvement plan, streamlining actions into one overarching document.

The Improvement Plan includes three distinct areas, which overarch all of the Improvement Plan and Aberdeenshire's CPC Subgroups; they include: Data and Self-Evaluation, The Bairns' Hoose, and our Communication Strategy.

### **Oversight, Review, Achievements, Impact**

- Each Action or Task is aimed at improving outcomes for Children, Young People, and their families/Carers.
- Ownership of this Improvement Plan rests with the CPC.
- The role of coordinating this Plan lies with the CPC Lead Officer.
- The CPC will collaborate closely with the and GIRFEC subgroups. This collaboration aims to ensure a comprehensive understanding and therefore implementation of the Plan, establishing clear accountability for the assigned actions and tasks, and providing support during their implementation.
- Activity will be supported by staff learning and development opportunities with follow-up quality assurance processes.
- The CPC is committed to routinely monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing the Plan supported by the CPC Data and Quality Assurance Subgroup.
- The CPC will provide regular updates to the Executive Group for Public Protection.
- The CPC will produce an annual report on the progress of this Plan for scrutiny.

National Context				
GIRFEC	UNCRC		The Promise	Trauma
Aberdeenshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan				
Reducing Child poverty		Connected and Cohesive Communities		Changing relationships with alcohol
Aberdeenshire Child and Young People's Service Plan, 2023-2026 'We will work together to make Aberdeenshire the best place in Scotland to grow up'				
Mental Health is Promoted and Improved	Children with Additional Support Needs and/or Disabilities and Their Families are Well Supported to Achieve Their Full Potential	Keep The Promise to our Care Experienced Young People	Whole Family Wellbeing – Right Support Early and Effectively	Safe, Valued and Listened to in Our Communities
Aberdeenshire's Child Protection Committee Improvement Plan				
Voice and Participation		Confident and Competent Workforce		Older Young People
Overarching areas				
Data and self-evaluation		Bairns' Hoose		Communication Strategy

**Aberdeenshire CPC Action Plan Priority Setting RAG – Red, Amber, Green** - Each action will be assigned a priority as described below

Traffic Light	Definition	Action
<b>R RED</b>	There are <b>significant issues</b> and/or risks re the action / task right now = <b>we are not delivering the action</b>	This action should be escalated immediately
<b>A AMBER</b>	There are <b>some issues</b> and/or risks re the action / task if not fixed = <b>we are at risk of not delivering the action</b>	Plans are underway, but immediate action is not required
<b>G GREEN</b>	There are <b>no issues</b> and/or risks impacting on the action / task which is progressing according to plan = <b>we are delivering the action</b>	In place/no immediate risks

**Outcome 1 – Voice and Participation**

Children and Young People will be at the centre of our work, and we will see them, listen to them and focus on their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. We will be curious and seek to understand their lived experience. We will support them when seeking their views and when assessing need and risk. They will be central to assessment, planning and decision making. We will be inquisitive, curious, and alert to parental disguised non-compliance. The risks of disproportionate optimism, in respect of the parent’s potential to improve, will be fully understood and resisted.

We will build sustainable trusting relationships with Children, Young People and their families/carers which is supportive and, when appropriate, challenging. We will actively encourage and support parents and carers to engage with services and multi-agencies to improve their Child/Young Person’s wellbeing and minimise risk. Fathers and partners will be visible. All our work will be trauma informed.

UNCRC Article 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40.

No.	Actions/Tasks	Strategic Lead	Timescale	Outcomes	RAG
1.1	Review and when required develop an approach to involving Children, Young People and their families/Carers in the appraisal, review and development of child protection policies, processes, and assessments. This includes feeding back to Children/Young People and their families/Carers.	Operations and Practice  Children and Young People Voice and Participation Group  Bairns’ Hoose Oversight Group	2023-2026	The work of the CPC is influenced by Children, Young People and their families/Carers. The views of Children, Young People and their families/Carers are actively sought in relation to child protection issues that affect them and inform practice, policy, and service improvements.	
1.2	Ensure key child protection processes; for example, Child Protection Planning Meetings, Core Group Meetings, safety planning, have the Voice of the Child at the centre of decision making. Further enhance the range of local indicators to complement our Minimum Data Set to evidence this. Use Data with	Data and Self Evaluation  Bairns’ Hoose Oversight Group  Children and Young People Voice and	2023-2026	All multi-agency partners are assured that Children and their families’ voices are being gathered, heard, and acted on, in line with The Promise and National Guidance.	

	Soul – gather stories to evidence impact.	Participation Group			
1.3	Develop tools to support the workforce to communicate with Children and Young People. This includes non-verbal Children and Children with communication needs.	Rights and Participation Subgroup		Professionals will feel confident in gathering the views of Children and Young People.	
1.4	Develop further the use of social media and online activity to raise awareness of child protection issues to professionals, the public, and Children and Young People. Our front-facing information for Children, Young People and families is refreshed, user friendly and updated regularly. National publicity drives are shared and promoted.	GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup	2023-2026	Professionals, the public, Children and Young People will be aware and alert to potential Child Protection concerns and have the confidence and knowledge to appropriately report this.	

**Outcome 2 - Confident and Competent Workforce**

We will have in place early and effective intervention which aims to minimise the risk of further harm and abuse to Children and Young People. Multi-agency staff will feel confident in recognising and responding to harm, ensure that children and young people get the right help, at the right time, from the right people. We will have a confident multi-agency workforce who will both work and learn together, effectively using and implementing policy and procedures. We will develop shared thresholds and understanding of how to address neglect and enhance wellbeing.

UNCRC Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 17, 18, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41

No.	Action/Tasks	Strategic Lead	Timescale	Outcomes	RAG
2.1	Actively promote and support the GIRFEC multi-agency practice approach within all services and	GIRFEC Strategic Groups	2023-2026	Practitioners and managers are GIRFEC practice informed and aware, which ensures Children and Young People get the right support; from the right people; at the right time.	

	<p>agencies across Aberdeenshire. Work together with the GIRFEC Strategic Groups, recognising GIRFEC and Child Protection is a continuum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure guidance is up to date and promoted.</li> <li>• Joint approach to training.</li> <li>• Joint promotion and awareness raising activities.</li> <li>• Joint induction of services.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Operations and Practice Subgroup</p> <p>GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup</p>			
2.2	<p>Roll out and evaluate the use of the Vulnerable Pregnancy Protocol.</p>	<p>GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup</p> <p>Data and Self-Evaluation Subgroup</p>	2023-2026	<p>Professionals have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with vulnerable pregnancies, which will lead to a consistent approach. Unborn Babies and their families will be supported at the right time.</p>	
2.3	<p>Review single and multi-agency assessment frameworks, checklists, toolkits and training to ensure that all agencies (whole system), including adult services, can and are able to contribute to a joint holistic (whole family) assessment of risk and needs, which inform robust safety planning and decision-making processes, particularly in relation to Children and Young people affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental drug use.</li> <li>• Parental mental health.</li> </ul>	<p>Operations and Practice Subgroup</p> <p>Neglect Subgroup</p> <p>Adult Protection Committee</p> <p>Data and Self-Evaluation Subgroup</p>	2023-2026	<p>Assessment frameworks are of a consistently high quality and take a whole family and whole systems approach to assessing risk and need and inform robust safety planning and key decision-making.</p> <p>The National Risk Framework continues to be promoted and used by all professionals.</p> <p>Professionals will be confident when assessing need and risk. Children, Young People and their families will get the right support at the right time.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse.</li> <li>• Neglect (evaluation).</li> <li>• Poverty.</li> <li>• Child and Young People Mental Health.</li> </ul>				
2.4	<p>Develop and implement a rolling programme of Child Protection training, which is evaluated.</p> <p>A Learning and Development Report will be available annually to mark progress.</p> <p>Regular evaluation of areas to develop will take place and be guided by self-evaluation activity, Learning Review Action Plans, data and learning needs analysis surveys. Areas of development will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Curiosity.</li> <li>• Thresholds.</li> <li>• Chronologies.</li> <li>• Skilled supervision.</li> <li>• Multi-agency induction programme.</li> <li>• Collaborative working.</li> <li>• Transitions.</li> <li>• Self-harm.</li> <li>• Suicide.</li> </ul>	<p>GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup</p> <p>Data and Self-Evaluation Subgroup</p>	2023-2026	<p>Multi-agency professionals will have their training needs listened to and met. The confidence of staff will increase which will positively impact on the Children, Young People and Families they work alongside.</p>	

2.5	The Neglect toolkit will be promoted and evaluated. This will support to understand the impact the toolkit is having on professional confidence, analysis within assessments and in ensuring families have the right support.	Neglect Subgroup  GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup  Data and Self-Evaluation Subgroup  GIRFEC Strategic Group	2023-2026	Multi-agency professionals will be confident in recognising neglect and have the skills to assess and analyse the information they gather. This will support families to receive the right support at the right time and to protect Children and Young People from harm.	
2.6	Continue to implement the Scottish Governments National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews.  Review and evaluate Learning Review Action Plans to ensure they are implemented.	Learning Review Subgroup  GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup	2023-2026	Child protection processes and practices continuously improve through the reflective learning gained from multi-agency learning reviews; thereby, improving practice and outcomes for Children and Young People.	

**Outcome 3 - Older Young People**

Children and Young People in need of care and protection are safer as a consequence of high-quality timely responses to concerns about possible or actual risk of harm. We will work in partnership across all agencies to increase our collective understanding of extra familial harm. We have and will continue to - enhance collaboration, streamlining procedures, and improving decision making.

UNCRC Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17,18, 19, 22, 23, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41

No.	Action/Task	Strategic Lead	Timescale	Outcome	RAG
3.1	Update Care And Risk Management Guidance (CARM) guided by	Operations and Practice Subgroup	2023-2026	Vulnerable and young people, whose behaviour places them and / or others at risk of serious harm, are identified,	

	<p>Framework for Risk Assessment Management and Evaluation (FRAME).</p> <p>Develop, present and evaluate CARM multi-agency training.</p> <p>Evaluate assessment frameworks and safety plans, including when a Young Person leaves secure care.</p>	<p>GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup</p>		<p>effectively supported and protected from further serious harm and / or abuse.</p> <p>Professionals feel skilled and confident to work alongside vulnerable Young People and their families/Carers.</p>	
3.2	<p>Evaluate and prioritise Aberdeenshire's strategic response to Contextual Safeguarding, which addresses the needs of Young People.</p> <p>Develop a Contextual Safeguarding e-module for professionals.</p>	<p>Prevention and Early Intervention Subgroup</p> <p>Operations and Practice Subgroup</p> <p>GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup</p>	2023-2026	<p>Professionals are confident in identifying, supporting, assessing, and reducing the risks of vulnerable Children and Young People who are at risk of extra familial harm.</p>	
3.3	<p>Evaluate and prioritise Aberdeenshire's strategic response to Exploitation, which addresses the needs of Young People, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Exploitation.</li> <li>• Child Sexual Exploitation.</li> <li>• County Lines.</li> <li>• Child Trafficking.</li> <li>• Online Exploitation.</li> <li>• Cuckooing.</li> </ul>	<p>Prevention and Early Intervention Subgroup</p> <p>Operations and Practice Subgroup</p> <p>Data and Self-Evaluation Subgroup</p>	2023-2026	<p>Professionals are confident in identifying, supporting, assessing, and reducing the risks of vulnerable Children and Young People who are at risk of extra familial harm.</p>	

		GIRFEC Integrated Learning and Development Subgroup			
3.4	Evaluate missing persons protocol jointly with the Adult Protection Committee to ensure practice is embedded with multi-agency partners.	Aberdeenshire Missing Persons Partnership	2023-2026	Professionals will feel confident in their practice when a Child or Young Person goes missing and on their return.	