

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest includes a crown at the top with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag with a cross, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: an eagle), and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'CITY OF VANCOUVER'.

Agenda Item

5

Children's Services Performance Update

Falkirk Council

Title: Children's Services Performance Update

Meeting: Performance Panel

Date: 23 March 2017

Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out an executive summary of Children's Services performance for the period September 2016 to February 2017 and includes our:
- key priorities;
 - key areas for improvement;
 - significant challenges, risks and changes in Service pressures since the last Performance Panel update;
 - important indicators; and
 - engagement with our customers.
- 1.2 The Performance Panel Statement at Appendix 1 seeks to update Members on progress towards achieving the important actions and indicators drawn from our Service Plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Performance Panel is asked to note the performance of Children's Services over the period September 2016 to February 2017.**

3. Key Priorities

- 3.1 We have set the following key priorities for our Service since the development of the Service in August 2015. These are:

Priority One: Raising Attainment – Scottish Attainment Challenge

Priority Two: Improve Outcomes for Looked After Children

Priority Three: Infrastructure, Capacity and Transformational Change – Delivery of Early Years Education

- 3.2 As Officers we continually monitor progress on all of the actions within our Service Plan. We have identified 3 key actions which ensure the above

priorities are met. Progress on each of these is provided in the attached Performance Panel Statement.

- 3.3 The Performance Panel Statement also highlights those Service Plan actions that are currently behind target.

4. Key Areas for Improvement

4.1 Priority 1: Raising Attainment

Attainment in Secondary Schools

February 2017 saw the publication of the latest attainment data for Falkirk Council secondary schools. This data is made available from Insight, which bases its data on performance of pupils at the point of exit from school.

Leaver Destinations

Falkirk schools have seen an improving trend in young people entering positive destinations over the past decade.

Although the figure for 2014/15 was the first time that our performance in this area dropped, 2015/16 saw a resumption of this positive trend. The percentage of young people entering a positive destination on leaving school is now the highest it has ever been for Falkirk Council schools, at **95%**, which is **2%** higher than the national average.

The Service will continue working more closely with schools and the Employment Training Unit to develop our range of interventions and supports to enable young people to be further supported into positive destinations.

Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Performance at SCQF Level 4

Attainment of school leavers in Literacy has been improving steadily in Falkirk Council schools over recent years, and is now higher than the national average at SCQF Level 4 (**95%** compared to a national average of **94%**) and Level 5 (**79%** compared to a national average of **78%**).

Although Falkirk Council schools' performance in Numeracy at SCQF Level 4 has been improving over recent years, it is still slightly behind the national average (at **88%** against a national figure of **90%**).

Performance at SCQF Level 5

At SCQF Level 5, Falkirk Council schools' Numeracy performance has fluctuated over recent years and is now lower than the national average (at **63%** against a national figure of **67%**).

We are currently investigating to identify those aspects of Numeracy and the subjects involved which are the cause of low performance at Levels 4 and 5, to provide additional support to schools to raise our attainment.

The Numeracy measure is based not solely on performance in Mathematics but also takes account of aspects of numeracy in a small number of other courses.

Performance at SCQF Level 6

Falkirk Council schools' performance of young school leavers with one or more Highers has remained fairly static in recent years. However, a significant increase in 2016 has taken us above the national average for the first time since before 2011-12, to **64%** against a national figure of **62%**.

The percentage of young people leaving Falkirk Council schools with 3 or more Highers has fluctuated in recent years. However, the increase in 2016 (at **49%**) now equals the national average for the first time since 2011-12.

The percentage of young people leaving Falkirk Council schools with 5 or more Highers has been improving over recent years. The increase in 2016, to **34%** means our performance now equals the national average for the first time since before 2011-12.

Schools will be supported to target interventions that enable them to continue to improve their attainment results

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap

Tackling disadvantage and 'closing the gap' are key priorities both nationally and for Falkirk Council schools. This is reflected in the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), which is about to be allocated to schools on the basis of their Free School Meals entitlement (FME) figures and pupil rolls.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) allows local authorities and schools to analyse attainment by SIMD decile. Primary and secondary schools are now interrogating this data to identify groups of pupils who are actually or potentially disadvantaged in order to support them and their families through appropriate interventions around their learning. In these respects, Officers in the Service Support and Improvement Team will continue to support schools.

Schools are being supported to ensure that the data analysis and resulting interventions that they are expected to put in place should have a positive cumulative impact over time on closing Falkirk Council's 'attainment gap'.

Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)

Within Falkirk Council we have two schools who receive funding from the Scottish Government as part of the SAC Schools Programme. The SAC is about achieving equity in educational outcomes, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Equity can be achieved by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed. Langlees Primary School was our first Attainment Challenge School, receiving funding in January 2016 of £125,000 followed then by Falkirk High School in October 2016 £170,926.

Scottish Attainment Challenge – Innovation Fund

In addition to the SAC Schools Programme further funding was made available for schools through a bidding process as part of the Innovation Fund in August 2016. The aim of this programme is also to address equity and raise attainment. Innovation Fund schools across Falkirk are:

• Braes High	£10,000
• Carronshore Primary	£4,500
• Denny Cluster (primary schools)	£70,000
• Falkirk High	£7,700
• Graeme Cluster (primary schools)	£69,000
• Individual Support and Wellbeing Service	£10,000
Total Funding award for authority	£171,200

The annual total of funding for our schools through the Attainment Challenge Programme and Innovation Fund is **£467,126**.

The above funding has enabled our schools to address barriers to learning for our pupils and families living in SIMD 1 & 2, who face economic and social difficulties which prevent some children from thriving. The following sections provide information on each school's programme. These programmes are ambitious therefore impact and change can take time. Initial impact can be evidenced however the main outcomes will take time to be achieved and cannot be met within a few months.

Langlees Primary School

Langlees have created a range of interventions to increase attainment across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (HWB).

To increase attainment in literacy, interventions have included the following:

1. Partnership work with Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) through the Focusing on Communication and Learning (FOCAL) programme in early years and First Level to increase vocabulary.
2. A number of programme interventions across the school, including the nursery. These have resulted in improvements in pupils' acquisition of language and an improved skill base in staff. These interventions are set to continue.
3. Staff development in the visual and communication environment.
4. Close working between Speech and Language (SALT) staff and the lead teacher for Health and Wellbeing (HWB), including development of the Rights Respecting School agenda.

To increase attainment in numeracy, interventions have included introducing an assessment tool being piloted in P2,4 and 7 relating to the Big Maths programme. By providing instant feedback on pupil progress, the tool helps teachers to plan numeracy teaching on a week-by-week basis appropriate to the needs of the class. This initiative has been shared with parents/carers and other schools in the Falkirk cluster.

The school has also developed a number of initiatives to improve literacy, resilience, creativity and citizenship aimed at targeted classes and groups requiring additional support in their learning and to improve engagement. These initiatives include:

1. More focused early interventions in Early Years resulting in improved engagement with parents/carers.
2. Entry to nursery for 3 year olds on their third birthday (as part of an authority pilot) with corresponding increase in development of relationships with the home resulting in the children settling in more quickly.
3. Improved partnerships with Aberlour Family Centre in Langlees, offering more effective support for a small number of targeted families.
4. Pupils who habitually arrived late have been targeted and now attend the breakfast club
5. Development of the school grounds to provide opportunities for children across the school to enhance their learning through outdoor activities that challenge their thinking and engage them in problem-solving.
6. Introduction of the John Muir Award, an environment-based accredited award, in P7 as a transition project to be continued in Falkirk HS. This award increases confidence in children in understanding the environment and in working collaboratively.

Falkirk High School

Falkirk High has made as its priority a learning space to support their most disengaged and disadvantaged young people who are in danger of exclusion. Known as the Inspiring Learning Space (ILS), the facility allows the pupils to remain within the school and receive further support, providing a bespoke curriculum package to a small number of young people.

The young people involved have become more engaged in school and are increasingly confident in their literacy and numeracy, and in working with others. An evaluation of how literacy, numeracy and HWB are being delivered across the school is underway and areas for further potential innovation are being identified. Attainment will be measured towards the end of the session.

The families of these children are supported by Falkirk HS's home-school partnership worker and have commented on the positive impact that ILS has had on the engagement of their child with school.

The school is undertaking a detailed study to identify those pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals to enable assistance to be given to families and ensuring that they claim their entitlement.

Innovation Fund Schools

The above schools involved in this programme have made progress as follows:

Braes High School

Innovation funding is being used to develop an S1 outdoor learning programme, working with disengaged and disadvantaged pupils to help reduce exclusions and to remove barriers to learning. The first phase of the programme has involved staff training and delivery in partnership with the Outdoor Learning Team. The aim is to create sustainable skills in staff to allow the programme to continue across the school supporting a range of pupils.

Carronshore Primary School

Funding has been used to ensure continuity and progression across the Early Years by developing learning through play to raise attainment and achievement. The school has implemented further play-based approaches throughout nursery and P1. A particular focus has been on identified children with low attainment who have significant and challenging learning needs. Impact will be measured in due course.

Denny Cluster and Graeme Cluster Primary Schools

These 13 schools are working in partnership with the Forth Valley Speech and Language Services as part of the Falkirk Communication and Language programme (FOCAL) to improve spoken language, confidence and learning in pupils in nursery to P2. As well as this they are developing the skills and knowledge of those who work closest with each child. Each establishment has a 'communication champion' identified and staff are provided with tools, mentor support to track and monitor progress of pupils. This is a 30 month programme split over two stages with stage one offering direct support to 7 primary schools and stage two offering support to the remaining 6 schools.

The Inclusion and Wellbeing Support Service

Funding has been used to raise attainment across the school by promoting active learning, positive family relationships and improve mental health and wellbeing of pupils and their families. This has been split across three programmes:

- The Cycle Challenge - which enables pupils to gain qualifications across STEM subjects through repairing and building bikes;
- Parents Planting Seed - which engages parents through the creation of a community garden in the school grounds providing produce to support family cooking classes; and
- The Story of our School - a film project with pupils and families creating a documentary reflecting on the new school building and their previous school.

All Innovation Fund projects aim to offer sustainable impact across their schools which will be tracked and monitored over the next year to evidence impact.

Pupil Equity Fund

Falkirk Council schools are due to receive funding totalling **£3,538,800** in session 2017-8, to be used by primary, secondary and special schools to close the attainment gap in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

Children's Services is currently preparing guidance for schools, to be published by Easter, which will advise schools on how to:

- identify current needs,
- identify appropriate strategies that will lead to sustainable impact on attainment in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing, and
- manage the practicalities regarding issues such as recruitment and staffing costs.

Schools will work with Officers to track and monitor the impact and effectiveness of interventions.

4.2 **Priority Two: Improve Outcomes for Children Who are Looked After**

There has been a national trend whereby there is an increasing number of children and young people becoming Looked After, both At Home and Away From Home. Over the last few years, Falkirk's "Looked After" overall rates have been consistently lower than the national average, though the figures for 2015 - 2016 move us closer to this.

In 2015, the national trend for all Looked After children showed a rate of 14.9 per thousand, while Falkirk had a lower rate of 11.4 per thousand. The national rate for 2016 will not be published until the end of March 2017.

We compare less favourably with the Scottish average in terms of the percentage of our overall Looked After population who are Looked After Away From Home in residential schools and residential care. However, this is showing improvement and moving closer to the national average as can be seen in the table below.

Table 1

	Reporting Date			
	31/07/2014	31/07/2015	31/07/2016	31/12/2016
Community Placements	302	305	325	324
Residential Placements	68	59	48	52
Percentage Residential	18.4%	16.2%	12.9%	13.8%
National Average Percentage	8.9%	9.9%	Not yet available	Not yet available

This is a result of Falkirk increasing our percentage of community placements, for example, by increasing kinship placements, and reducing the number of residential placements since 2014-15. The table above also shows this trend was not maintained in our most recent snapshot at 31st December 2016.

Our performance in relation to the national ratio has also improved because the national average of residential placements has been moving closer to the Falkirk ratio of community to residential placements since 2014-15. It is also important to note that placements for children are based on what is appropriate to their needs, so a community placement is not always appropriate for all children/young people. Placements are also often decided by the Reporter to the Children's Panel, whose decisions the Council must then implement.

Improvement Actions

- The review of Care Provision Contracts to negotiate better costs and provision from external providers has progressed. While managing to recruit enough carers to maintain our numbers at around 60 carers, despite on-going recruitment campaigns, we have not been successful in recruiting enough carers to increase our overall numbers to fully meet our need. We estimate a shortage of approximately 30 carers. For this reason we continue to purchase care from external providers at higher cost to the Council.

We are reviewing our fostering service and developing a fostering strategy, which includes how we provide payments and ensures that our support levels are maintained. We are also working with a digital marketing firm to use their expertise to pilot the use of social media in targeted recruitment.

Alongside this, the existing external fostering contract has been reviewed and tendered and contracts are about to be awarded, with a start date of April 2017. The contract includes cost benefits from sibling placements and long term placements.

- Foster care recruitment remains challenging and consequently we are progressing plans to run a digital marketing campaign. We are also promoting foster care through employee payslips, Falkirk Council News and in partnership with Falkirk Football Club.
- We will increase our focus on related/kinship carers as an alternative to foster care.
- We anticipate that all of the above actions will allow us to improve our service, recruit additional local carers, and obtain savings for the external placements.
- The planning and development of a more co-ordinated Family Support Service is progressing. The review aimed to develop and implement a specification for a family support service to meet a range of identified children's needs. The review covered all services provided directly by the Council or funded by Children's Services.

The range of different agencies and approaches highlighted the importance of developing a more co-ordinated family support service which would meet the very different context of care we now face, and the new requirement of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Given the complexity of the work, the review group worked on two separate aspects – targeted services to young people requiring a more intensive service, and early intervention services which, if provided timeously, may avoid difficulties escalating.

The group has completed its work and a report has been submitted to Children's Services Senior Leadership Team recommending the development of a single, targeted family support service, and further work to re-design a more equitable early interventions service across the Council area.

- The Realigning Children's Services project commenced in September 2016 and will contribute to changing the ways in which we deliver services.
- Improving the balance of care between residential and foster care has been a significant development with the decisions from the Looked After Children Scrutiny Committee and Executive. The Scrutiny Panel's recommendations were agreed by the Executive on 29 November 2016. The recommendations address the following areas:-
 - Early Intervention
 - Balance of Care
 - Corporate Parenting
 - Transitions

Our continued commitment to meeting the needs of all looked after children is demonstrated by 100% of looked after children and young person having a plan and this plan being reviewed through our statutory reviewing framework.

4.3 **Infrastructure, Capacity and Transformational Change - Delivery of Early Years Education**

Early Learning and Childcare

The key strategic work stream here is the planning, preparation and implementation of significant infrastructure expansion work to deliver on the Scottish Government's plans to increase the provision from 600 to 1,140 hours by 2020.

This work will also entail significant workforce expansion as we increase staff across our early year's establishments to deliver this project.

This commitment to introduce increased early learning and childcare provision for all 3 to 5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds also places a duty on local authorities to undertake further consultation with parents/service users to assess their views of the new 1,140 hours delivery model.

The Service consulted parents during March/April 2016 and reported the findings and recommendations to the Education Executive in November 2016.

The key points highlighted in the consultation were:

- consider more flexibility in nursery class hours
- consider increasing private partner commissioning
- consider allowing parents to access full day (funded) places at extended day nurseries
- consider using child minders

All of these points will be considered by the Service as we plan for and develop the new 1,140 hour provision by 2020. To assist with this planning the Service undertook an additional parental survey which closed in February 2017, to ascertain parental expectations and views on the potential uptake and flexibility of the new 1,140 provision across all early year's establishments across Falkirk. The results from the exercise will be analysed by 31 March 17.

A Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on their 2020 Blueprint was submitted in January 2017 following agreement at Education Executive.

5. Update from last Performance Panel

5.1 There have been a number of significant challenges, risks and changes in Service pressures since our last report to Performance Panel. This section notes some of these:

- As noted in 4.1 above, the Scottish Attainment Challenge is a new national initiative which seeks to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This work will have a significant impact on Children's Services.
- As noted in 4.2 above, the Realigning Children's Services project commenced in September 2016 and will contribute to changing the ways in which we deliver services.
- Insight Data – The most recent Insight data on performance of school leavers is reported separately to Elected Members. These highlight strengths in some areas, especially the percentage of young people going into positive destinations, and highlights challenges in others, notably the continuing requirement to increase attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The reduction in personnel within the Education Improvement and Support team over a significant period of time resulted in limited Service capacity to focus on key areas of school improvement including literacy and numeracy.

6. Important Indicators

- 6.1 Our Service has a suite of indicators that are required for statutory and business related purposes. As agreed by members, a proportionate approach would be taken on the reporting of these indicators. We have identified 24 important indicators. We have provided information on all of our important indicators in the attached Performance Panel Statement. Indicators that are on target have comparative data for information. Indicators that are significantly below target or slightly below target have additional background information on the progress and improvement actions for each. Some indicators are marked as 'data only' and do not have targets, but these areas of activity impact on other Children's Service areas and so provide important contextual information.

7. Engagement with Customers

- 7.1 Children's Services has not had any topics at the Citizen's Panel this year.
- 7.2 Our Service is currently in the process of engaging with our service users on the following:

Budget Engagement with Parent Councils

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has engaged with Parent Councils to explain the budget position – particularly in relation to the savings which need to be made.

In October 2016, the SLT held a meeting with Parent Councils to explain the budget process and the savings options that had been identified so far. The majority of the comments received in relation to the Council's Consultation Exercise related to Children's Services' options and most of the feedback received focused on a small number of individual budget options. A total of 497 comments were received.

The options which have generated feedback are detailed below:

CLD	42%
ASN/SfLA Provision	18%
Breakfast Clubs/Baby Provision/School Meals/Lets	12%
Education – School mergers/Management time	8%
General Statements – Children and Families	5%
Transport to Schools	4%
Library Provision	3%
Music Tuition	3%
Social Work	2%
Repairs Budget, NPDO Janitors, NPDO Refinancing	2%
Public Toilets	1%
Total	100

The SLT carried out further engagement with Parent Councils in January 2017 to explain the additional attainment challenge and equity fund monies that schools would be receiving directly from the government. Schools will engage directly with their own Parent Councils when deciding how to spend this money.

Going forward, Children's Services SLT will meet with Parent Councils again in March 2017 to clarify the final 2017/18 budget position and to explain what cuts were agreed following the Council's Budget Meeting in February.

8. Self-Assessments

- 8.1 As at September 2016, the PSIF (Public Service Improvement Framework) / Reflect self-assessment for Community Learning and Development was completed and an action plan drafted. This action plan has not yet been implemented pending the budget decision on whether CLD Service provision is to continue or not. The process of the self-assessment and the resultant action plan has been shared with the inspectors who are currently inspecting the provision of the CLD Service as evidence of ongoing review and evaluation.
- 8.2 The PSIF / Reflect self-assessment for Children and Families Social Work started in February 2017 with a planned completion date of April 2017.

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DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Date: 5 March 2017

Ref:– Children's Services Performance Panel Report – March 2017

Contact Name: Robert Naylor, Ext: 4686

APPENDIX

Performance Panel Statement – Appendix 1

DRAFT Children's Services – Performance Panel Statement – September 16 to February 2017

Key Actions Progress



Action is significantly behind target.



Action is slightly behind target or in danger of not achieving deadline.



Action is on target.



Action is completed.








Data only indicator.

Key Priorities - Children

1. Raising Attainment – the Attainment Challenge



Action	Progress	Status
1.1 Work collaboratively with SPTC (Scottish Parent Teacher Council) to implement the Partnership Schools Programme in 7 Falkirk Schools – including Langlees Primary School	Meetings have taken place to set up ATPs (Action Teams for Partnership) in all 7 schools, action plans for this session have been drawn up and are in the process of being implemented. All ATPs will report back on and celebrate success in June 2017. Langlees PS parents chose to set up a 'Drop-off, Drop-in' café for parents each Wednesday morning where parents could find out what is going on in school and participate in a book, toy and clothing swap shop. The first parent-led café had 9 parents attending – it is hoped more will come along next week when publicity is increased. There are plans to invite the Fire Service to talk about fire safety, an Educational Psychologist to help parents deal with children's challenging behaviour and also to help develop a community garden for the school. The ATP is also planning a family learning event in May focussing on outdoor learning, particularly to involve dads, and showcasing the recent developments to the playground.	
1.2 Implement a review of the ICT Strategy for Learning and Teaching	Work began to review our Anytime, Anywhere Learning ICT strategy in April 2016. The Education ICT Strategy Group met to review the current strategy and agree the scope of consultation for the new strategy. From this, a plan to undertake "1000 Digital Conversations" was put in place. The conversations, made up of survey, face to face, school visits, and group discussion, took place in May and June 2016 and involved Falkirk pupils, parents/carers, staff and third parties. These "Digital Conversations" helped the Education ICT Strategy Group to decide the areas of focus in the refreshed strategy and made sure we identified and therefore could address the issues of most importance to our users. Some issues raised had already been identified and future	

Action	Progress	Status
	<p>spending plans were already in place, with other issues being picked up in the new Strategy. The new Scottish Government Strategy, "Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the Use of Digital Technology" was published in October 2016, and the key themes will also inform the new Falkirk Education ICT Strategy. Work on the strategy refresh is still ongoing, with the new draft structure presented to Education ICT Strategy Group in January 2017. The structure was approved, with minor changes, and work is ongoing to complete it by May 2017, ready for implementation in education establishments starting in August 2017.</p>	
<p>1.3 Update the Literacy Strategy in line with current educational developments, in particular the National Improvement Framework</p>	<p>The Literacy Strategy statement has been updated in terms of referencing recent educational developments, although the spirit of the strategy remains the same – zero tolerance to illiteracy.</p> <p>The updated statement is in draft form and will be discussed with the recently appointed service manager for approval.</p> <p>The 8 work streams associated with the Literacy Strategy have been reviewed. The proposal is to reduce the number of workstreams to reflect the National Improvement Framework and meet with key officers to decide the direction of travel and action points.</p>	
<p>1.4 Implement the 'Read, Write, Count' programme as part of wider parent engagement.</p>	<p>The 'Read, Write, Count' bags were delivered and gifted to every P1, P2 and P3 child in Falkirk Council. Most of the gifting took place during Book Week Scotland in November 2016. This Scottish Government campaign aims to increase literacy and numeracy skills and to encourage families to include reading, writing and counting activities in their everyday lives. Many schools used the opportunity to engage with families and deliver the message of the importance of sharing books with young children, for example in Easter Carmuir PS parents were invited to a breakfast and gifting event where there was storytelling and a talk about the activities and benefits of the 'Read, Write, Count' bags. Similarly at Bowhouse PS there was a gifting event for families and then targeted parents and children took part in a 6 week programme of literacy workshops based on the 'Read, Write, Count' bags.</p> <p>On 22/2/17 there was a presentation about Falkirk Council's 'Read, Write, Count' programme at the Bookbug Shared Practice conference in Edinburgh.</p>	
<p>1.5 Develop and implement an authority strategy for measuring attainment across the Broad General Education, in line with the National Improvement framework.</p>	<p>2016-7 is sixth academic session in which schools have accumulated attainment data from P1,3,5,7 and S2 through CEM standardised tests. Schools and the centre are therefore data-rich and can observe trends in pupil progress in Reading and Mathematics over time at class, school, cluster and whole-authority levels. Details are awaited from Education Scotland regarding the new National Improvement-based Scottish standardised tests, to be introduced in session 2017-8. While comparison with CEM testing will present challenges (given that CEM testing is mostly based around a UK-wide standard while the new tests will be based exclusively on a Scottish standard), schools are becoming ever-more knowledgeable through interpreting test data and, coupled to their wider knowledge of the child, will be confident in identifying the stages at which pupils are performing in their learning.</p>	



Action	Progress	Status
<p>1.6 Revise and update assessment and moderation advice for all establishments in line with the National Improvement Framework.</p>	<p>In October 2016, 10 Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) were appointed from Falkirk schools' existing staff to represent the authority at national moderation events. The QAMSOs are expected to attend a training day then 3 moderation events over the session, gather the relevant evidence and to work with the Curriculum Support Team to cascade the key messages to teachers. Their work will help teachers across the authority implement new moderation processes consistently and make sound professional judgements on the achievement of pupils for reporting and quality assurance purposes.</p> <p>After an initial training session, in early November, QAMSOs attended a moderation event on planning, focussing on evidence collection. By the 15th of March the 2nd moderation event will have taken place where the focus is on 'Holistic Assessments'. The 3rd and final session in May/June is around 'Achievement of a Level'. The timescales for attendance at events and collection of the relevant evidence have been extremely demanding and driven by Government requirements around consistent reporting and monitoring of pupils' achievement. Our QAMSOs are looking to meet again after their 2nd moderation event and plan for cascading their learning to all teachers in the local authority through CPD sessions. We plan to have the first round of courses available in summer term - those would be open to all practitioners in the authority. Currently the impact has been on the improvement in the professional skills and abilities of the teachers directly involved in the QAMSO role but, following a roll out of training, we hope to develop moderation skills and consistent practice across all schools over the remainder of this session and next.</p>	
<p>1.7 Improve literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing for children in the Langlees area as part of the Scottish Government Attainment Challenge.</p>	<p>Langlees have created a range of interventions to increase attainment across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. For literacy, interventions have included partnership work with Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) through the Focusing on Communication and Learning (FOCAL) programme in early years and First Level to increase vocabulary. The programme only started a few months ago, however has made good impact already in developing pupils language and developing skills of staff.</p> <p>SALT are also working closely with our lead on health and wellbeing. The teacher is leading on developing Rights Respecting School and Bounce Back Resilience Programme.</p> <p>To support the development of numeracy Big Maths online assessment tool is being piloted in P2, P4 & P7. Staff are finding this very valuable as it is a quick indicator of change and can demonstrate instant impact. The plan is for all teachers to use this. The teacher leading on this has piloted the Number Talks programme with her class in Term 1. The success of using Number Talks as an additional strategy has had an impact on problem solving within the class it was piloted in. The Teacher is now cascading this approach into the P7 class and sharing this method with the P7 teacher. The online tool and the evidence gathered from this is now being</p>	

Action	Progress	Status
	<p>shared within the cluster. A leaflet on this has been shared with Parents/Carers.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing is a key focus for the school. They are working in partnership with Aberlour offering family liaison for four targeted families who are struggling. The support is one day per week and started in August 2016. The service has increased intervention offered to pupils and families and reduced some workload for the senior management in the school.</p> <p>The school grounds have been developed as part of the Attainment Challenge. Phase 1 of this has just been completed. Staff, pupils and wider community were consulted on this in June 2016. The Authority have liaised with Grounds for Learning and the company contracted to complete work. Staff training and on-going ground work /school and community engagement is planned for January 2017 onwards.</p>	

2. Improve outcomes for Children who are looked after

Action	Progress	Status
2.1 Implement Continuing Care, Aftercare and Kinship Care Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of kinship care placements has increased from 20 to 44. The number of Section 11 Orders has increased from 79 to 86. Committee approval to be sought to raise age range in Tremanna from 18 to 21. A Criminal Justice Worker to work with 18 to 21 year olds in Leaving Care team ??? 	
2.2 Develop a Corporate Parenting Champion Board which will ensure children who are looked after are at the heart of, and drive the Corporate Parenting agenda alongside Members and Senior Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding has been agreed and four staff have been appointed who are working with looked after children to develop the Champions Board model. (One of these staff was a care experienced young person.) 	

3. Infrastructure, Capacity and Transformational Change – Delivery of Early Years Education

Action	Progress	Status
<p>3.1 Restructure of Early Learning and Childcare Sector</p>	<p>The permanent appointment of an Early Learning and Childcare Provision Co-ordinator was made in January 2017. The main remit of this post over the next 3 years will be to work in partnership with schools, nurseries, central support teams, parents, ADES, Scottish Government (SG) and other stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate the strategic planning and implementation of a flexible local delivery model of 1,140 hours of learning and childcare by 2020. This is a major infrastructure project which will require significant capital and revenue resource investment by the SG in order to meet their target date. • progress, develop and establish the centralised NAMS (nursery admissions system) processing team within Sealock House, which will streamline existing processes and reduce workload for schools. • review and update a number of existing policies and procedures. • support schools and nurseries operationally by ensuring efficient and adequate deployment of resources to ensure continuity of service delivery and to prioritise these when necessary to support areas of challenge. <p>This EL&C Co-ordinator will work also with the Team Managers (BGE) to provide support across our Day Nurseries and to ensure that the appropriate monitoring processes are in place to meet Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate and Falkirk Council's standards.</p> <p>The 2 posts to support the centralised NAMS have now been approved and these will be recruited by Easter 2017.</p> <p>The Service Manager (BGE) is also reviewing the remits for all central support staff with Early Year inputs.</p>	
<p>3.2 Expansion of Early Years Provision (Scottish Government / SFT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council submitted their response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the 2020 Blueprint. This response was agreed by Education Executive in Jan17. • A survey to assess parent's views on the potential uptake and delivery of the 1,140 hours in all early year's establishments closed on 10 Feb17. The responses will be analysed by 31 March 17. • An initial audit on all establishments to identify additional infrastructure expansion works at establishments has been submitted to the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). Further work is planned on this exercise by Aug17, once capital monies are agreed. • Officers have attended several national sessions in relation to models of delivery and good 	

Action	Progress	Status
	practice, and ADES Networks. A Mobilisation Team has been identified – first meeting 6 th March with representation from ELC, Property, Design, Forward Planning and HTs	

Important Indicators on Target – Children’s Services

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Target	Benchmark
		Value	Value	Value		
1	EDU_ECO_011 % of school leavers entering a positive destination - initial survey	90.1%	95.0%	Not yet available	93.5%	Virtual Comparator 94.0% Scotland 93.3%
2	EDU_ECO_025 % of school leavers attaining Level 4 in Literacy	91.8%	95.5%	Not yet available	90%	Virtual Comparator 95.0% Scotland 94.1%
3	EDU_ECO_026 % of school leavers attaining Level 4 in Numeracy	82.2%	87.6%	Not yet available	82%	Virtual Comparator 91.1% Scotland 87.5%
4	EDU_ECO_027 % of school leavers attaining Level 5 in Literacy	71.7%	79.5%	Not yet available	71.5%	Virtual Comparator 82.5% Scotland 79.0%
5	EDU_ECO_028 % of school leavers attaining Level 5 in Numeracy	59.6%	63.1%	Not yet available	63%	Virtual Comparator 70.3% Scotland 66.8%
6	EDU_ECO_029 % of school leavers gaining 3 or more Highers	43.7%	48.9%	Not yet available	46%	Virtual Comparator 53.0% Scotland 48.6%
7	EDU_ECO_030 % of school leavers gaining 5 or more Highers	30.7%	33.7%	Not yet available	33%	Virtual Comparator 37.3% Scotland 33.9%
8	EDU_EQU_025 Tariff score of lowest attaining 20% of School Leavers	127	168	Not yet available	135	Virtual Comparator = 200 Scotland = 170
9	SWK_CHF_LAC_06 Proportion of young people who are looked after who have a plan	100%	100%	100%	100%	Scottish average 2014/15 - 97.0%
10	SWK_CJS_REP_01 Percentage of Criminal Justice Social Work Reports submitted to court by the due date	98.8%	97.5%	99.0%	100.0%	No benchmark
11	SWK_CJS_CPO_02 Percentage of individuals on new CPOs with supervision requirement seen by a supervising officer within one week	92.8%	92.9%	94.1	100.0%	No benchmark

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Target	Benchmark
		Value	Value	Value		
13	SWK_CHF_LAC_04a Proportion of all looked after children in community placements	83.8%	87.1%	86.2% (@31/12/16)	91.1%	Scottish average 2014/15 - 91.1%

Progress

Falkirk residential placements have been falling since July 2014, although this has not been sustained in most recent snapshot - 31/07/14 – 68 (10 in Falkirk Residential Home); 31/07/15 – 59 (9); 31/01/16 - 53 (9); 31/07/16 – 48 (9); 31/12/16 – 52 (9)

We know from the latest national comparisons (31/07/15) that Falkirk had higher proportions of looked after children in residential placements (then 14.4%, but 12.8% @ 31/07/16) compared to Scotland as a whole (8.9%), particularly in residential schools (4.4% - 2.7% @ 31/07/16 - v 2.5% nationally) and 'other residential' settings such as Care Visions (7.1% - 6.4% @ 31/07/16 - v 1.2% nationally). National comparisons for 31/07/16 will be available when the Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland 2015-16 are published at the end of March, but we are showing a shift in the right direction when compared to 2014/15 figures.

It may be expected that, since we have lower rates of looked after children, a slightly higher proportion in Falkirk may have high tariff residential needs. Indeed this was reflected in our rank 4th highest local authority on % of residential placements at 31/07/15 but 6th ranked on highest rate of under 18 population in residential placements.

Kinship care placements for looked after children are supporting the desired shift showing increasing trend over last 2 years: 31/07/15 – **30**; 31/01/16 – **36**; 31/7/16 – **45**; and 31/12/16 – **44**

Improvement Action

1. Kinship care continues to be a placement of choice to avoid formal care. 44 looked after children are in Kinship care placements, with others supported informally with relatives. In addition, in the light of the new guidance on section 13 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, 86 kinship carers with a section 11 order are supported financially. The numbers supported with section 11 orders is gradually increasing as more carers come forward and supports permanency for children. Aspects of the guidance remain to be clarified and particularly whether the council where the child resides is the responsible authority, or the authority who placed the child.
2. We have continued to recruit foster carers and have averaged around half a dozen carers per year. This though has only kept our numbers at the same level due to retirements. Over 2016, our recruitment has not been as successful, with both campaigns attracting only a handful of enquires some of which were for respite rather than full time care. A new recruitment strategy has been drawn up, seeking to use social media to greater advantage, and to provide a higher profile to the need for foster carers.
3. The Council contract with external foster carer providers has been reviewed and a decision was taken in January 2016 to re-tender with some minor changes to include cost benefits for sibling placements, long term placements and bulk placements provision. The procurement process has encountered delays but the tender period closed in January 2017, with awards imminent.

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Target	Benchmark
		Value	Value	Value		
14	SWK_CHF_RSP_01 Number of overnight respite weeks provided to children with a disability	210.4	199.3	Annual indicator – data not yet available	>210.4	Scottish Government Concordat 2010/11 – 211.7

Progress

Tayavalla (Action for Children) are the largest providers of overnight respite care accounting for 56% of the service in 2015/16 and this proportion has grown over the last 3 years. The number of weeks provided during that period: 2013/14 - 118.3 (51% of overnights provided); 2014/15 – 108.8 (52%); 2015/16 – 112.6 (56%)
The level of respite care provided directly by the Council's Family Based Short Breaks (FBSB) service has fallen over the same period: 2013/14 - 76.3 (33% of overnights provided); 2014/15 – 67.3 (32%); 2015/16 – 53.4 (27%)

The reduction of FBSB provision can be accounted for by the fact that a number of carers have retired,. The Children with Disability Team has also been developing alternative approaches to respite care which are more suited to many families such as autism specific Saturday sessions and befriending which has reduced demand for short breaks slightly. The team is also small, and increased demand has not allowed for capacity to undertake recruitment of more carers. Additionally there is an increase in referrals of children with very complex physical and medical needs who are not suited to family based care.

The amount of respite purchased from independent providers actually increased by 2% in 2015/16, whilst our own provision (FBSB) fell by 20%, with an overall decrease of 5%.

Improvement Action

Commitment has been given to consolidate the Children with Disability Team staffing to improve services for children with disabilities.

Important Indicators significantly below target – Children



		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Target	Benchmark
15	SWK_CHF_RSP_02 Number of daytime respite weeks provided to children with a disability	447	398	Annual indicator – data not yet available	>447.3	Scottish Government Concordat 2010/11 - 587.7
Progress						
<p>Provision has fallen across all provided/purchased services over the last 3 years – We are also providing a larger amount of befriending now, with eight or nine groups per week at three hours per group (3 – 4 children). The Children with Disability Team now run the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three youth clubs per week – Tuesday, Thursday and art group • Autism Saturday groups every Saturday • Befriending sessions • Home support – this covers mostly Special Stars but also Crossroads, Ist Home Care etc 						
		2014/15	2015/16			
Family Based Short Breaks (FBSB)		191.83	150.86			
CwD - Small Befriending Group		60.22	59.54			
CwD - Activity Scheme (Easter & Summer)		99.77	95.26			
CwD - Youth Clubs / Art Group		17.40	14.58			
Crossroads		55.07	51.02			
Self Directed Support		20.47	25.75			
Others		2.55	0.97			

Notes:

1) 1 week = 52.5 hours (Scottish Government definition for reporting purposes)

2) CwD = Children with Disabilities Team


Improvement Action

Commitment has been given to consolidate the Children with Disability Team staffing to improve services for children with disabilities. We aim to maintain as many children with their families and in their communities as possible. Day time respite and support will continue to be promoted and utilised when appropriate as it is both good practice and provides a cost effective intervention when compared with overnight respite. Our developed Saturday day sessions provide a direct alternative to overnight respite allowing parents a significant period of respite whilst their child is being cared for. Feedback from families on both the Saturday group and befriending and Activity Scheme continue to be very positive and in line with our commitment to maximise independence.

Important Indicators – Data Only

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Target	Benchmark
		Value	Value	Value		
16	SWK_CHF_LAC_02a Number and Rate per 1000 population of children looked after at home (LAAH)	118 3.7	123 3.9	(@31/12/16) 123 3.9	Data Only	Scotland 2014/15 = 4.0
17	SWK_CHF_LAC_03a Number and Rate per 1000 population of children looked away from home (LAAF)	246 7.7	250 7.8	(@31/12/16) 253 7.9	Data Only	Scotland 2014/15 - 10.9
18	EDU_EQU_017 % of LAAH school leavers achieving level 4 in Literacy	50.0%	50.0%	Not yet available	Target not appropriate -	Although the performance of Looked After Children is a key priority for Children's Services, target setting and benchmarking are not always appropriate, as very small numbers are involved. The ability of one child can have an enormous effect (positive or negative) on the average performance of the whole cohort.
19	EDU_EQU_018 % of LAAFH school leavers achieving level 4 in Literacy	64.7%	92.9%	Not yet available	Target not appropriate	
20	EDU_EQU_019 % of LAAH school leavers achieving level 4 in Numeracy	30.0%	25.0%	Not yet available	Target not appropriate	
21	EDU_EQU_020 % of LAAFH school leavers achieving level 4 in Numeracy	35.3%	78.6%	Not yet available	Target not appropriate	
22	EDU_EQU_026 % of LAAH school leavers entering a positive destination	50.0%	75.0%	Not yet available	Target not appropriate	
23	EDU_EQU_027 % of LAAFH school leavers entering a positive destination	52.9%	78.6%	Not yet available	Target not appropriate	
24	SWK_CHF_CP_01 & 01a The number and rate per 1000 referrals dealt with by social work under Child Protection procedures	207 7.3	197 7.0	(Apr-Dec 16) 157 5.5	Target not appropriate	No benchmark

Inspections (during period: 1/7/16 – 31/01/17)

Title	Update	Status
Bo'ness Public Primary School	Report published. Action plan drawn up.	
Larbert High School	Report to be published shortly and consequent Action Plan will be drawn up.	