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# Edinburgh Children's Partnership Children's Rights Report 2017–20

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# Foreword

***This is the first report on the steps the Partnership has taken to progress the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child across its services throughout the city. It highlights progress made and achievements that we can build on in the next three years.***

The report covers the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020, although given the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the report takes into account the period since March 2020.

The report sets out progress, evidence and challenges in relation to each of the eight clusters of rights that make up the UNCRC.

It ends with lessons learnt and recommendations for future work in this vital area.

Thank you to all the people and services who have contributed their views which form the basis of this report.



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# Introduction

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As part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, public bodies are required to produce a report every three years which sets out the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Edinburgh, the Children's Partnership has agreed to produce the report on a partnership basis. The report covers the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020. Given the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the unprecedented impact this has had on children and young people, this report also takes into account the period after March 2020.

The Edinburgh Children's Partnership brings together staff from across sectors and services. The Children's Services Plan 2020–23 describes our activities under three headings referred to as the 3Bs: (Best Start in Life; Bridging the Gap; Be Everything You Can Be). We will plan the next steps under these headings so that child rights will be incorporated into existing priorities.



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# Cluster 1 – General measures of implementation

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The Council's Equality, Diversity and Rights Framework 2017–2021 was developed in response to the articles of the UN Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and other associated conventions on rights, eg children's rights. The Framework notes that the Council aspires to embed a 'rights based approach' across the organisation.

The Council places specific importance on the right to life, and the right to be free from inhumane or degrading treatment (the absolute rights). Consequently, the Council set the equality outcomes around the following issues:

- (i) Syrian refugee integration;
- (ii) Supporting those affected by human trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour based violence, domestic abuse, child abuse, hate crime and hate incidents, and;
- (iii) Ensuring dignity in care for looked after children, older people and disabled people.

The final progress report on this Framework 2017–2021 will be published in spring 2021 when a new Equality, Diversity and Rights Framework 2021–2025 will be published. Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights specifically provides protection from discrimination and will be the central theme in the development of the new Framework.

When people gave us their views for this report, many expressed deep concern about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic making existing poverty and inequality much worse. This situation puts in jeopardy the right to life and to develop full potential (Article 6). We have taken account of the main recommendations of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission when planning our next steps.

NHS Lothian is committed to equality and diversity and providing opportunities to support health and wellbeing. Every four years, NHS Lothian sets out their equality outcomes and for children this encompasses Article 24 of the UNCRC. The current Equality Outcomes 2017–2021 supports the human right to health, which includes access to services and approaches across Lothian to help improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

NHS Lothian also try to identify opportunities for equality outcomes to support those of our wider partners, as there is appreciation that people may access many services for help and support. Work is also being undertaken through the Integrated Impact Assessment Steering Group, which has partner representation on it, to identify how to incorporate the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA).

The Partnership is committed to ensuring that every decision and action is made with the best interests of the child at the centre (Article 3). Our Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach to child planning ensures a collaborative and joined up approach to assessing a child's needs and implementing strategies and supports that will best meet those needs. This includes actively seeking the views of children, young people and their families and involving them as equal participants in this process.

Our GIRFEC values include 'minimum intervention': we are committed to, whenever possible, giving the right support to children and young people within their local communities and through the trusted relationships they already have. Where it has been agreed that an alternative provision would better suit the needs of the learner, we have decision-making forums like the Case Management Review Group where the child and family's views are a required and central element of the submission requesting pathway 4 provision.

Our city-wide 'Strengths-based Approaches' aims to ensure all our planning and decision-making is built on positive relationships and collaboration with the child or young person and their family.

The Edinburgh Together voluntary sector-city council partnership reports that *'we see a great deal of evidence of the Child Planning Meeting/Young Person Planning Meeting processes working successfully with families and multi-agency partners working collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.'* This success needs to be built on, with the voice of children and young people firmly at the centre.

We believe that children and young people's views on what they find helpful are crucial and we seek their views on how we improve and develop services (Article 12) through, for example, Youth Talk, the Champions Board and focus groups. Our local policy, procedures and guidance are written with the best interests of the child at the centre. The Included, Engaged and Involved in Edinburgh Policy and associated procedures are an example of this.

The Edinburgh Together partnership states that *'as we all seek to embed the learning of The Promise we must better consider how we do not simply make service-led decisions and instead create planning processes that are focused on removing barriers to attendance and engagement. This means ensuring that planning has the children's rights, voice and wishes at the centre and that we better understand how these processes are experienced by children – this requires us to listen to children about where we have meetings and how we pre-plan for them through to who attends and how we incorporate the wider family network into finding solutions for children.'*



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## Cluster 2: General principles of the UNCRC

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The Children's Partnership will give equal attention to the 4 general principles:

- Non-discrimination (article 2)
- Best interest of the child (article 3)
- Right to life, survival and development (article 6)
- Right to be heard (article 12)

We received feedback from organisations representing children, young people and families with a right to be protected against discrimination (Article 2) and having protected characteristics under the Equalities Act. This was a snapshot rather than the complete picture. In response, we identified priorities for learning and action planning by the Partnership.

Further investigation will be carried out regarding the rights of children with disabilities with regard to the use of restraint in health and education. This is an example of a right which relates to a small number of children and young people but that does not diminish its importance.

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### **How we listen to and respect the views of children and young people**

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What kind of Edinburgh? involved children and young people working in partnership with senior staff across the Children's Partnership from August 2018 – March 2019.

The aim of the programme was to develop relationships so decision-makers were able to form a clearer understanding of the child/young person's point of view, use this to deliver improved services and make sure that children and young people knew whether they had followed up the commitments.

The key question throughout was: 'What kind of Edinburgh?'

Children and young people's rights were at the heart with activities that used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a main reference. The final session enabled participants to identify six key messages:

- We want to be safe
- We want fairness in our schools and communities
- We want LOVE, kindness and respect
- We want adults to be honest
- We want to be happy
- We want to know our rights

The key messages from What kind of Edinburgh? formed the basis of our engagement for the Children's Services Plan 2020–23. Children and young people, parents and carers, and staff were asked to prioritise the messages under the plan's headings. This means the plan is shaped by feedback from children and young people as well as other stakeholders.

Youth Talk is a mass engagement programme involving almost 4,000 young people. It asks young people to identify common themes. They are then asked to provide more meaning to the issues, eg through community mapping, and the 'Gathering', where young people join elected members and the wider community to identify potential solutions.

Three main themes have emerged in the most recent programme:

- Safety
- Cyber safety
- Mental health

Edinburgh Champions Board aims to provide *'a platform for care experienced young people to influence the policy and practice of corporate parents through a range of participation and engagement activities'*.

The Board includes care experienced young people (Champions), senior managers with Corporate Parenting responsibilities (Ambassadors), and an elected member. Two Participation Officers – both care-experienced – work to increase membership and support young people to influence the way the Partnership delivers services.

The Health and Wellbeing Team, in partnership with Young Edinburgh Action (YEA), consulted with 450 children and young people on what was happening in schools to support mental health and emotional wellbeing and what could be improved. The feedback was turned into a Top Tips Document for Schools, Top Tips for Parents/Carers and Top Tips for Children and Young People.

Mind of My Own is an app which allows children and young people to express views. The Children's Practice Teams and Children and Young People's Review Team have used Mind of My Own mainly with children and young people who are looked after or subject to child protection registration.

Children and young people who found it difficult to express their views at children's hearings, Looked After Child Reviews, and Child Protection Case Conferences increasingly use technology to communicate and said they would like us to find more ways to engage using technology.

This small fund (maximum award £1500) is based on priorities identified by young people through Youth Talk, What Kind of Edinburgh and YEA.

Organisations work with young people to identify and agree a project. Young people play a central role in this process so that the applications are based on ideas from them.

Edinburgh is developing a City Sustainability Strategy to take action on climate change, aiming to become carbon-neutral by 2030. As part of this, the Council hosted a Youth Climate Action Summit in February 2020.

A small short-life planning group planned and delivered the Summit. This was young people-led, with participants drawn from School Climate Strikers and the Scottish Youth Parliament. The Summit was attended by over 100 S1–S3 young people.

All community-based youth and children's organisations use different methods to encourage youth and children's participation, ranging from after school clubs using play principles of child-led play and free play through to open-access youth clubs making sure that young people influence the programme. For some, participation at these levels is enough.


What is important is that all levels of participation should be respected – for some it will be having a say in the youth club weekly programme and others will strive for more involvement in political decision-making.

The Care Inspectorate report on the Partnership in 2019 noted that children and young people had opportunities to share their views but that the Partnership was aware that it had yet to fully use the data generated through these activities.

Since then, a Children and Young People Participation Group has been established. The membership is drawn from the Council, NHS and other partners. Its purposes are to:

- Co-ordinate children and young people's participation activities
- Feedback on the outcomes of children and young people's participation activities to: Children's Partnership; politicians; children and young people; staff
- Seek to influence, and keep under review, authority policy and planning in line with information gathered through children and young people's participation.

The group will report on progress to both the Education, Children and Families Committee and the Children's Partnership. The intention wherever possible is for children and young people themselves to deliver these reports, outlining how they have participated and what has happened as a result.

A group of diverse school children in a hallway. In the center, a young boy with short dark hair and a white shirt with a dark vest is giving a thumbs up. To his left, a boy with reddish-brown hair looks towards the camera. To his right, a boy with dark hair and a green and white striped shirt is smiling. In the foreground, a girl with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue denim jacket over a light blue shirt, is giving a thumbs up. To her left, a boy in a blue and white striped shirt is also giving a thumbs up. In the bottom left, a girl with dark hair and a blue denim dress is looking towards the camera. In the bottom right, a girl with dark hair is giving a thumbs up. The background is a brick wall with a blue metal railing.

The work will also link to engagement work taking place in schools as part of Empowering Edinburgh/Edinburgh Learns.

The Children's Plan 2020–23 commits to the ongoing collection of feedback from children, young people and their families about their lives and the specific priorities set out in the plan. The Partnership is committed to seeking, listening to and acting upon the views of children and young people on how they would like services to be delivered.

There is room for improvement in making sure that the child/young person's voice is heard during GIRFEC child planning meetings and Family Courts. They must be able to express their views freely and what they say must be accurately recorded and presented.

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# Cluster 3 – Civil rights and freedoms

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## **What we provide**

**Right to education (Article 28):** Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice in Schools

- The Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice policy was revised and relaunched last year. It is being updated with specific sections that make it much easier to use directly with the Pupil Equalities Groups that are an intrinsic aspect of this work.
- An Equalities Tile on SharePoint is being set up and documents will be shared for ease of access.
- All schools have an Equalities representative who oversees this work.
- Equalities has been added to Theme 5 of the School Renewal Planning Framework, to become Equity, Equalities and Inclusion. This was to give prominence to an area which can sometimes be overlooked or assumed to be working well, but which requires ongoing attention, particularly in light of Black Lives Matter.
- Supporting resources have been packaged for schools to give everything for ease of access, but it will require time and thought to make it work in individual settings.
- Proposed briefings and opportunities for questions/workshops are being developed for session 2020–21.


## **Progress**

There continues to be progress with children's plans with a team around the child focus.

Parents/carers would benefit from clear communication around the specific strategies deployed to support their child.

Support for children and young people may appear to have changed in its offer; however, contrary to this the provision has increased but it is delivered differently, for example the presumption of inclusion has increased support in mainstream schools.

Educational settings continue to strive to provide the best learning environment for children and young people with learning support needs. When assessing and planning for the best support for all children and young people, there could be further improvement to ensure all those who are part of the team around the child are clear about the needs, support and provision available for that child. In addition, we can take further steps to ensure that parents/carers are informed of the processes and systems that lead to decision making and supported to engage with them through early and supportive conversations.



Primary school aged children tend to have more consistency in terms of effective child planning meetings due to the more consistent nature of teacher support in a primary environment. The transition to high school (supported by the enhanced transitions framework in legislation) can be a difficult time for school students and the planning which seemed participative and child centred can become more generalised once in secondary education. Due to the nature of secondary education, challenges with knowing who the one key adult for the young person is, and having sufficient contact with them, can make it difficult for families to build relationships and be confident in the support their child receives.

### **Next steps or actions**

- 1 Ensure consistent individual support planning for children and young people with additional support needs at nursery, primary and secondary stages.
- 2 Include measures addressing transitions from Primary to Secondary and from Secondary to leaver destinations, and continuation of sufficient support planning in S1–2.
- 3 Further strengthen connections with public and voluntary sector family support services at all stages, so team around the child can access resources where there are challenges in support.

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# Cluster 4 – Violence against children

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## **What we provide**

We are effective in our partnership to collaboratively protect children and young people, which is underpinned by the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland and GIRFEC.

A Quality Assurance framework is now available for the Child Protection Committee to monitor trends, identify risk and inform decision making.

The Child Protection Committee oversees strategic planning and improvement of Edinburgh's child protection services which includes protecting children from neglect, parental drug and alcohol misuse, emotional neglect, sexual abuse and online sexual abuse.

The partnership's response to children and young people who are trafficked encompasses a multi-agency victim-centred response ensuring that we recognise their needs within a care and protection context.

Prevention activity takes place through the delivery of joint public information campaigns and key messaging, in particular online child sexual abuse and neglect.

## **Progress – what is working well**

The partnership responds well when children and young people are at immediate risk of significant harm. Looking at it from a cradle to grave approach, from initial identification and assessment of risk, to referral, through to Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) and subsequent IRD review, the process is robust to ensure appropriate and proportionate decisions are made with the opportunity for scrutiny. Learning is cascaded through sub committees of the Child Protection Committee and IRD workshops.

One aspect to refer to is that more children are now being looked after in community settings as a result of planned initiatives to strengthen kinship care and keep children at home.

Another strength is our multi-agency commitment to managing risks associated with missing children and those at risk of sexual exploitation. Working in partnership with Barnardo's, early and effective intervention strategies are initiated with those at risk of, or who are experiencing, child sexual exploitation.

Where those children whose circumstances do not warrant or meet threshold for an IRD are concerned, assessments are made to the same standard of quality assurance as those that enter the child protection process.

As part of preventative work aimed at reducing online offending/online sexual abuse involving children and young people, the Youth Justice Sergeant developed and delivered a school talk programme covering 'sexting' and other associated online risks and dangers some young people may face. This has resulted in engagement and delivery to over 45,000 High School children, young people, parents and professionals in the last three years. This has been, and continues to be, delivered in Local Authority and Independent Schools. The nature of the input highlights what young people are doing, the dangers and offences as well as signposting people to support, all with the aim to reduce the risks and prevent offending.

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## **Gaps**

Strategic arrangements for corporate parenting are not clear and the full impact on improving outcomes is yet to be fully realised.

Although children and young people have the opportunity to share their views, it is recognised that the data is not fully exploited or utilised and hence it is difficult to measure what tangible outcomes are being achieved through this activity.

The partnership may make better use of quality assurance information, data and feedback to better inform our future priorities and use of resources.

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## **Evidence – baseline information**

The Joint Child Protection Inspection 2019 highlighted significant strengths within the partnership.

The Child Protection Register demonstrates the reduction of children on the CPR but also can be used to chart the reduction of children who are subject of recurring registration.

Data from the Performance Framework is submitted directly to the Child Protection Committee (CPC) which meets quarterly and reports to the Chief Officer Group. These statutory fora are critical to ensuring strategic and tactical plans are relevant and deliverable.

The number of referrals to partners including Scottish Children's Reporters Administration provides information on demand and thematic areas of concern.

Social Work undertakes sampling of children and young people's plans focussing on wellbeing outcomes, but the issues are discussed at partnership meetings for action to be taken on child protection processes and procedures.

Scottish Government Child Protection Outcomes Framework are measurable indicators of performance as a partnership.

Minimum Child Protection Dataset provides fixed data indicators assisting performance across the partnership and is used constructively to inform decision making.



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## **Evidence – outcomes for children and young people**

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Joint Child Protection Inspection 2019.  
Data from Performance Framework.  
Data from Minimum Child Protection Dataset.

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## **Evidence informed by views and experiences of children and young people**

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Feedback from engagement with children, young people and their families about services was commented on during Joint Services Inspection, was captured through the Child Protection Committee ongoing work strands and developed into practice where appropriate.

Our Joint Investigative Interviews are jointly quality assured and this informs directly our practice regarding the skills of our interviewers and other aspects of joint interviewing that require improvement, ie facilities, technology and follow up support.

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## **Next steps or actions**

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- 1 Strengthen engagement with statutory and third sector bodies who are gathering the views of children on a daily basis. There is an opportunity for the expanded membership of the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee to focus on this area in addition to the CPC.
- 2 As part of the CPC, establish where policing can contribute to any proposed next stage of the minimum dataset.
- 3 Improve engagement with SCRA to ensure that referral for children who require to be referred definitely takes place and improve feedback for children who are in need of compulsory measures of supervision.
- 4 Improve early identification of children and young people on cusp of child protection through effective communication with front line officers and staff in terms of their understanding of child protection and GIRFEC.





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# Cluster 5 – Family environment and alternative care: Support for parents, carers and families

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## **What we provide**

Coordinated support from public and voluntary sector services to vulnerable families to address parenting difficulties and inequalities and offer opportunities to change parenting practices.

This involves working with partners and identifying appropriate early interventions for families who need help, tailoring the support to address the needs of families to overcome difficulties and improve safe and stable family environments.

## **Progress – what is working well**

We have implemented city-wide universal and targeted parenting interventions which help to facilitate positive parenting, improve parent and child communication and relationships and enhance the quality of home learning environments thus preventing difficulties from escalating.

The evidence-based parenting programmes promote positive parenting strategies. Many parents have been subject to punitive and at times violent parenting themselves as children. Parents who attend parenting programmes are often looking for different ways to parent.

In 2017/2018, we delivered a Looked After Children specific programme to support parents. The recommendations were that all parents who had children returning to their care after being Looked After and Accommodated were offered this support. We continue to offer this support.

All programmes aim to improve family environments by creating a greater equilibrium.

The Systemic Family Service provides family sessions to individuals and families. The service empowers families to find their own solutions by using reflective and therapeutic conversations. The sessions support families to gain a wider perspective of their difficulties, explore patterns of interactions and break unhealthy cycles, helping to reduce stress and restore family connections and relationships. The main themes from referrals are attachment, loss, separation, trauma, domestic abuse, emotional literacy, substance abuse, anti-social behaviour and relational issues. Some of the families we work with have had a child at risk of, or returning from, being accommodated.

In line with the Scotland-wide Independent Care Review, 'The Promise', services in Edinburgh continue to seek wherever possible to maintain and support family units and therefore avoid an increase in children being accommodated. We seek to intervene early with the sorts of preventative support that keeps families together. This is in line with the Care Review's findings that most young people removed from their families would rather have had support provided to their parents and carers so they could have stayed at home and addressed the problems that they faced.

Building on the strengths-based approach which has been firmly embedded in services across the partnership, Locality Operational Groups have been set up in the city's localities that combine public and voluntary sector staff from across service areas. The groups identify opportunities to work together so that families are supported in ways that are non-stigmatising, that are for all members of the family and that are based on a broad definition of family support.

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## **Gaps**

What is missing is a multi-agency approach that works in tandem with the parents. Currently, planning focuses mainly on child welfare and safety and often does not address underlying factors within the family, specifically issues that affect adults being the best parents they can be. If earlier and more supportive conversations took place and services were more able to listen to parents' needs rather than the focus being on issues such as school attendance, problem behaviours and additional support needs, this could lead to less escalation and fewer children being looked after.

Limited staffing capacity and lack of sustained funding for parenting programmes and services can contribute to gaps.

*Professionals also told us how the positive development delivered through early learning, childcare and education can be limited or undermined when it is delivered in isolation for the child and not integrated with wider family support. This is particularly illustrated in attainment for looked after children, which is consistently lower than for those living in the most deprived areas, and is reflected in The Promise's focus on more integrated family support following the Independent Care Review.*

**A Just Capital (Edinburgh Poverty Commission report)**

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## **Evidence – baseline information and outcomes for children and young people**

Baseline assessment tools indicate a reduction in problematic behaviours and improved quality of parent – child relationship.

Parents report a reduction in parental stress and family conflict, increased self-confidence and improved understanding of positive parenting. They also report improved family relationships and environment, reductions in problematic behaviour and improvements in emotional and social skills.

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## **Next steps or actions**

- 1 Further develop evidence-based parenting programmes as a key/supportive intervention of the delivery of children's services.
- 2 Services/staff will engage and consult with families on the support they feel would be beneficial and support different levels of need, preventing concerns from escalating.
- 3 Make available dedicated funding to increase training for programme facilitators and protect/increase provision.
- 4 Put supporting parents at the heart of our commitment to children's wellbeing and children's rights – and increase training on parental engagement and support, additional parenting/family support, eg systemic sessions, support and information sessions, campaigns encouraging parents to ask for help.
- 5 Continue to develop and embed the Locality Operational Groups.





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# Cluster 6 – Basic health and welfare/ wellbeing

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## **What we provide**

Across Edinburgh, the health and wellbeing of children and young people is supported by many partners including NHS Lothian, the City of Edinburgh Council and many Third Sector organisations. While each organisation supports children and young people in different ways the principles of Children's Rights are threaded through their approaches to enable outcomes that are child and young person centred. These approaches are particularly important when trying to mitigate against health inequalities and the determinants of health.

NHS Lothian provides person-centred approaches in line with UNCRC supporting children, young people and families with their health and wellbeing from conception to adult hood. Services include early intervention and prevention to acute care. NHS Lothian supports a continuity of care with additional tailored support for vulnerable families and families with complex health needs. Examples of provision include: respite support from Sunndach & Calareigh, support for children with complex health needs to reduce the need for hospital admissions and consultation with the family unit to ensure appropriate levels of care are in place.

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## **Progress – what is working well**

Strategically NHS Lothian have implemented various pathways and strategies including: NHS Lothian Strategy for Children and Young People, Getting it Right for Every Child, Best Start: maternity and neonatal care plan, the Health Visiting Pathway, the Family Nurse Partnership and the School Nursing Framework. Approaches across the pathways include the development of programmes that support the UNCRC, such as Baby Friendly accreditation (a holistic, child-rights based pathway for improving care). Immunisation programmes are delivered from birth and support for young people's mental health includes: Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) delivered by School Nurses.

In partnership with other statutory organisations such as local authorities, NHS Lothian carries out Integrated Impact Assessments when developing policy, strategies or new services. This helps to ensure that when something new is being developed or a major change is happening those involved in the process consider children, young people and their rights.

In the community, NHS Lothian delivers many programmes often in partnership with others, ranging from midwives, health visitors, school nursing, family nurse partnership, Childsmile, education and training, Welfare Advice Services and health improvement programmes – that focus on family attachment and mental health and wellbeing. It is important to develop these opportunities in the community for children and young people to thrive and flourish and that approaches, work with children,

young people and family units. The school nurse (SN) role for example, is a significant support for children's rights as it is a universally accessible service provided to children and young people, aged 5–19 years and their families. The Scottish Government committed to redefine the SN role to focus on delivering consistent and more efficient services across Scotland in order to deliver safe, effective and person-centred care based on the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) National Practice Model. When working with partners as approaches are developed, the learning and skills can then be shared wider, for example: the roll out of LIAM to the youth work sector or joint work between City of Edinburgh Children and Families and Healthy Respect.

NHS Lothian consults and engages children and young people on various issues including their own health and wellbeing journey and on larger service projects. Examples include: involving the young person in preparation for discharge from hospital to the design of the new Hospital for Sick Children. NHS Lothian has various forums to support consultation and engagement for example – the NHS Lothian's Youth Forum. Wider than health settings, NHS Lothian supports joint approaches with partners including: What Kind of Edinburgh and Youth Talk.

During the Covid pandemic the views of young people have been collected online on mental health services that have been delivered online due to the impact of COVID-19.

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## **Gaps**

There are gaps which services strive to overcome. For example, transition work for young people with exceptional and complex health care needs, or the transition of young people into adult services. To address issues relating to transition a Pan Lothian Action Group is being set up. Gaps can include short-term funding which is also an issue for other sectors.

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## **Evidence – baseline information and outcomes for children and young people**

Quantitative evidence includes data on the number of appointments attended, percentage of childhood inoculations, number of babies breastfed at six weeks through to wider public health data such as mental health and wellbeing concerns are collated. This is balanced by incorporating qualitative data that brings the work alive and may include: case studies from projects, comments from children and young people and the use of IT to capture opinions.

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## **Evidence informed by the views and experiences of children and young people**

As part of the individual's health and wellbeing journey, pathways are created by consulting, where possible, with the child or young person to involve them in their care.

While we appreciate that services have a focus, the way in which delivery occurs incorporates person-centred or family-centred practices and encompasses the Getting it Right for Every Child principles to ensure that children and young people get the right care at the right time from the right people.



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## **Supporting health and wellbeing (curriculum/schools-based support)**

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Since returning to school in August 2020:

- Health and Wellbeing (HWB) is phase 2 of school renewal planning. Career-long Professional Learning has been provided for all staff regarding supporting their own HWB and also supporting the HWB of children and young people post lockdown.
- Covid specific transition projects with a HWB focus were developed to support Early Years (EY)/Primary and Primary/Secondary transitions and additional supports were also provided for those children and young people requiring an enhanced transition. In addition, clusters worked collaboratively to provide a range of other virtual supports for children and young people.
- New resources were developed by teams across the authority to help secondary practitioners support the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people on their return to school. These resources were well received and utilised.
- Renewal planning guidance has provided schools with a structure from which they can plan HWB into the future. This was developed by the HWB Strategic Group and signposts staff to concise and relevant resources and support for their own HWB and that of their learners.
- Guidance provided to schools for renewal planning in HWB identified four key areas of focus thus providing consistency to strategic direction.
- Psychological Services, Additional Support for Learning (ASL) and our HWB team continue to offer a wide range of training to support a variety of areas of emotional wellbeing including: nurture, building resilience, relationships, learning and behaviour, managing anxiety, stress and trauma.

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## **Universal delivery of HWB**

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- Progression frameworks have been developed for all aspects of HWB.
- The Building Resilience programme is a major feature of our support for mental, emotional and social wellbeing across all of our primary schools.
- We have developed a collaborative approach to training Relationships Sexual Health and Parenthood champions in each primary and special schools with 'Healthy Respect' to enable each school to have an Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenting champion. Bespoke training is offered to our secondary schools.
- Our Primary, Secondary, Deputy Head Teacher Pupil Support and Curriculum Leader Pupil support networks continue to support staff to meet the universal delivery of HWB in our schools.
- A partnership approach to training, in collaboration with Respect Me, enabled senior leaders to receive anti-bullying training. There are plans to deliver further training which focuses on reporting hate crime and supporting those affected, in conjunction with Police Scotland. The HWB and Equalities Strategic Groups liaise closely over this work.

- School staff continue to use the wellbeing indicators as the main tool to reflect on progress and priorities of HWB at both individual and whole school level. Staff report this consistent approach is helpful in identifying priorities in consultation with the whole school community.
- The HWB Strategic Group shapes and monitors progress in HWB across our schools. Young people continue to attend this group and inform its direction.
- Consistent use of the HWB indicators and values and practice provided in Edinburgh Learns materials to support self-evaluation.

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### **School counselling service**

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NHS Lothian are finalising the initial recruitment of 20 School Counsellors. The aim is to have one counsellor in each school cluster based in the secondary school but available to offer counselling where appropriate to children aged 10 and above in the feeder primary schools. In 2020–2021 there will be a counsellor in 20 of the 23 secondaries and the remaining three will have counselling provided through Place2Be. Once in post, there will be training offered centrally and there is a plan to have a second run of recruitment to achieve the target complement of approximately 23 full time counsellors across the city. The allocation of counsellors per cluster is based on the size of the 10 to 18 year population therefore some schools will have less than a full-time counsellor and some will have more dependent on their size. The approach to counsellors will complement the established Wellbeing Academy approach and the developing work around the Scottish Government Community Mental Health funds.

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### **Next steps or actions**

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- 1 Development of Pan Lothian Transitions Action Group
- 2 NHS Lothian are currently in the process of redesigning and rebranding Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This will look at how to provide the optimal care for Children and Young people and focus on early intervention and prevention. The redesign will aim to effectively use technology and workforce skill mix to enable this aim.
- 3 NHS Lothian to continue to implement the new model of care for school nursing that has been designed to have greater emphasis on home visiting and addressing wider policy and public health priorities.

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# Cluster 7 – Education, leisure and culture

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## What we provide

### ***Young People's Participation in Schools***

Quality Improvement Education Officers have been working directly with schools, delivering professional learning for school staff on empowering learners through participation in decision-making across the four arenas of: Learning, Teaching and Assessment; Opportunities for Personal Achievement; Decision Making Groups; and Links with the Wider Community.

Learners from **Wester Hailes Education Centre** undertook successful learner participation in decision-making in the arena of Learning, Teaching and Assessment through the Classroom Partnership they created, which formed part of their Rights Respecting Schools Silver accreditation. They focussed on Article 13 (Freedom of expression) and Article 28 (Right to an education) to create a model by which learners established their core expectations of teacher actions during lessons, and equivalent expectations were established regarding pupil actions within lessons.

**St Peter's RC Primary School** – Every child participates in a fortnightly pupil voice group during curricular time, centred around the themes of the UN Sustainable Development goals, where pupils self-select the group they wish to contribute to, and groups have an opportunity to feed back to the whole school.

**Dean Park Primary School** – Learners have been engaging in whole-school self-evaluation using the Scottish Government How Good is OUR School document. They have been focussing on evaluating the theme of 'our school and community', and pupils from Liberton Primary have also begun to engage with this resource for participation.

**Hermitage Park Primary School** has been increasing pupil participation in decision-making across the school through the work of their pupil community groups including Leafy Leithers, Bully Busters, Hermie's Rights Protectors, and Hermie Helps Community Group.

Pupils from **Broughton High, Corstorphine Primary, Murrayburn Primary, St Cuthbert's RC Primary and St John Vianney RC Primary** took part in the Future Schools Project which involved them designing learning environments for their school which would lead to improved learning and teaching. They presented their submissions at the Education Buildings Scotland Conference where John Swinney, Deputy First Minister, announced the winner: **St John Vianney**.

Pupils from **St Andrew's Fox Covert RC Primary School and Gracemount High School** presented at the Scottish Parliament on World Children's day to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the UNCRC. This included St Andrew's Fox Covert pupils talking about gender inequality and stereotypes, and a Gracemount pupil giving a short talk to the whole conference about the importance of young people engaging in discussion around children's rights and how their voice is so important as it represents the future of our country.

The **Rights Respecting Schools Award** encourages schools to place the UNCRC at the heart of their ethos and curricula, modelling rights and respect in all relationships. Staff create an environment that is conducive to participation and opportunities are provided for all children to become involved in decision-making in different contexts, including in governing bodies, staff appointments, curriculum planning and evaluating teaching and learning. Children and young people are supported to get involved and the impact of participation on policy development and outcomes for children is reviewed. Currently 51 primary schools are accredited (7 at gold, 17 at silver and 27 at bronze) and 19 are registered; 16 secondary schools are accredited (2 at gold, 4 at silver and 10 at bronze) and 4 are registered; and 9 special schools are accredited (1 at gold, 2 at silver and 6 at bronze).

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### **Leadership of learning**

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The Edinburgh Learns Teaching and Learning Team has developed professional learning for school practitioners entitled Leadership of Learning. This training aims to develop teacher knowledge and understanding of how to develop young people as leaders of their own learning. The course shares a range of practical approaches and explores how the Rights of the Child underpins the rationale behind these approaches, including our focus on listening to and acting on learner voice.

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### **Blended learning guidance**

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The Edinburgh Learns Teaching and Learning Team has developed guidance for City of Edinburgh Council schools for blended learning. This guidance shares information on the following:

- 1 What is blended learning
- 2 What are the benefits of a blended learning model?
- 3 Blended learning in our context

The guidance that accompanies this information focusses on four key guiding principles of effective learning and teaching, namely Plan, Share, Guide and Review. A series of key messages and supporting videos sit under each of the key principles and aim to support schools and practitioners in identifying the key elements of practice to be focussed on in a blended model. Also, within this guidance, there are a number of links to professional learning videos that suggest practical approaches that can be used in a blended learning approach.

## Equalities

A range of allegations were made that a culture of racism existed within certain schools in the city. An investigation was launched into each allegation by interviewing those involved and examining records. The investigation was overseen by an independent advisor and with recourse to specialist legal advice. The majority of the investigation centred on two schools but three others were also included. The overall conclusions were that while there was no evidence that a culture of racism existed, there were learning and development needs for certain schools and for the authority overall.

A recurring theme that arose from complaints related to the process of complaining itself. Various reasons emerged, including: a lack of a clear complaints process for pupils to report racist incidents; lack of feedback from staff as to the outcome or progress of their complaint; or a sense that by making the complaint pupils were made to feel it was their fault. As such, many pupils stopped making complaints or reporting incidents because they felt that their complaints or the incident would not be taken seriously.

All schools could demonstrate examples where they had successfully handled racist incidents and had shared the outcomes with the complainants to their satisfaction; however, the complainants provided examples where this had not happened. A small number of complaints highlighted the use of certain resources to teach aspects of the curriculum. A related issue was the importance of ensuring the culture and ethos are supportive and inclusive of all faiths and ethnicities.

Following the investigation, the subsequent report made a number of recommendations under four main headings. These recommendations will be taken forward as children and young people's rights.

- 1 **Improving the process to report incidents (Article 12 – respect for the views of the child.** Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life).
  - The school needs to review its practice in recording incidents and reporting back to the young people affected by them.
  - The school should ensure that there are clear mechanisms for pupils and staff, including temporary staff, to report racist incidents.
  
- 2 **Managing the process once an incident is reported (Article 3 – best interests of the child.** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.)
  - The school needs to improve its practice on checking on the welfare of those affected by racist incidents
  - The school should also review procedures for sharing information with other agencies to ensure that records of actions are maintained and reviewed as appropriate

- 3 **Curriculum (Article 29 – goals of education.** Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.)
  - The school should review its practice in this area to make sure that material is used appropriately with particular sensitivity to any impact on BAME students, and possible racist behaviour is both anticipated and dealt with.
- 4 **Culture (Article 30 – children from minority or indigenous groups.** Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.)
  - The school should ensure that decisions to reflect diversity and inclusion are done sensitively and in partnership with young people.
  - The school should ensure effective professional learning for all staff to improve practice in this area.
  - The school should work to improve the culture such that microaggressions are not tolerated.
  - The school should act to ensure that staff are aware of the dangers of actions being interpreted as racist, anticipate any such dangers, and act to reassure pupils that any actions taken by the school are fair and appropriate.

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### **Progress – what is working well**

As we move forward from March 2020 we have developed a Quality Assurance system which supports school to self-evaluate, improve and develop the blended learning approach. All information to support blended learning is held on a central SharePoint system for practitioners to engage with.

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### **Evidence – baseline information and outcomes for children and young people**

Individual schools have a variety of processes to capture their level of engagement with pupils. Best practice is shared through weekly headteacher briefings. Gathering the views and experiences of children and young people will be a continuous piece of work.

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### **Next steps or actions**

- 1 This work will continue to be reviewed and evolved as we work our way through and out of the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, it will become a sustainable approach to learning and teaching.
- 2 Actions to deal with racist incidents in school and promote greater respect, understanding and inclusion will be taken forward as set out above and with a focus on rights.

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# Cluster 8 – Special protection measures

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## **What we provide**

Whenever a child or young person is identified as potentially requiring special protection measures as a consequence of, for example, serious offending, exploitation or other matters, every effort is made to liaise with relevant professionals from stakeholder agencies to ensure relevant information surrounding risk and concern is shared and the most appropriate response is provided.

### ***Youth Offending***

A Whole Systems Approach (WSA) is delivered to reduce re-offending by young people through appropriate interventions.

Whole Systems Approach workstreams:

- Early and Effective Intervention
- Diversion from Prosecution
- Court Support
- Alternatives to Secure Care and Custody
- Reintegration and Transitions

WSA places partnership working at its core to build more consistent approaches to prevent and reduce offending by children and young people. Support can be offered to those who offend through Early and Effective Interventions (EEI) to provide robust solutions for those who present the greatest risk.

EEI, or as it is known in Edinburgh as Pre-Referral Screening (PRS) takes the form of a multi-agency meeting held weekly to screen certain children and young people who have been reported to the police as a result of coming into conflict with the law for an offence. A discussion is held about each individual and a collective decision made regarding who is best placed to work with that young person in order to address their offending behaviour. To ensure we all act in the best interest of the child (Article 3) a review of process was carried out. As part of this, it was identified and agreed that where a child or young person had an allocated worker, for 20/21 this equated to 50% of those being referred, instead of duplication of work and discussions, the case would be diverted straight to the allocated worker, as this would allow for the child or young person's needs to be assessed and addressed in a more timely manner, with minimal intervention.

Disposals available to the multi-agency group include: Police Warning Letters, Police Restorative Justice process, Diversion to Education, Family and Household Support Teams, Social Work Practice Teams or Young People Service. Where it is not felt appropriate to opt for such diversionary route then a referral would be submitted to the Children's Reporter and or the Procurator Fiscal.

### ***Children in looked after and accommodated care and affected by Child Human Trafficking***

Oversight of missing accommodated and looked after children is maintained via a daily multi-agency meeting to review/mitigate associated threat, risk and harm.

Oversight of potential victims of human trafficking is maintained through multi-agency case conferences as and when required to ensure appropriate safeguarding. Services participate in Secure Referral Discussions as required.

We encourage a less punitive approach to low-level offending within residential units to avoid the unnecessary criminalisation of young people.

All officers, special constables and probationers are briefed on the importance of understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), Corporate Parenting and Missing Persons Investigations.

Also beneficial and worthy of highlighting is the extensive work that is carried out by the Violent Offender Watch (VOW) staff, made up from a small Police Team in conjunction with mentors who have lived care experience and also that of the criminal justice system. Through good partnership working as well as early identification of potential young people to approach, the knowledge and style taken by the team allows for liaison with young people and offering support, help and guidance, hopefully leading to more positive outcomes.

In terms of exploitation surrounding drugs and trafficking, the Side Step diversionary programme has been initiated and will be delivered by Action for Children in collaboration with City of Edinburgh Council and Police Scotland. This is designed to provide bespoke support in various forms for the child or young person and, where necessary, their family.

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### **Progress – working well and gaps**

Offences committed within residential care have reduced by 40% between 2015 and 2019.

The levels of absconding within residential care have reduced by 54% between 2014 and 2019.

There is a gap in service provision in relation to Secure Care with lack of capacity for those who are in need of such protection through their own vulnerability. Males and females are accommodated together; however, their needs tend to be very different and they may benefit from stand-alone services.

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### **Evidence – baseline information**

In respect of offending, the evidence is in the amount of reduction in offending and lack of requirement of follow-up risk management meetings. This is due to detailed plans being identified and agreed and specific work undertaken, particularly protecting young people and the public. This often leads to more young people achieving positive destinations.



Baseline information for all areas of missing persons analysis is taken from a database, all based on information taken from the Police STORM Incident Management system. Reductions in absconding and offending within residential care have clear benefits for young people in terms of their safety and wellbeing.

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## **Evidence on outcomes for children and young people and informed by the views and experiences of children and young people**

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In relation to offending, the child or young person's views are captured within the police report to inform decision-making in respect of disposal options. The Youth Justice Sergeant regularly meets children and young people who have been involved in offending behaviour and offers support, guidance, potential diversionary avenues and ways of keeping themselves safe. When these visits take place, feedback from parents/guardians and the young people is generally positive. In respect of missing children or young people, their views are captured through return discussions following a period of being missing. Similar to the Youth Justice Sergeant, the Missing Person Co-ordinator for Edinburgh, is also heavily involved in intervention and prevention work regularly visiting young people who are going missing, either from home or a young person's unit.

Child Planning Meetings are held to capture the views of care experienced young people, which is used in concert with other information, including the missing person return interview, to form the basis of risk assessments and safety plans within residential care. Again often the Missing Person Co-ordinator and or the Youth Justice Sergeant are involved in this process, which is part of our collaborative and joined up approach under GIRFEC.

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## **Next steps or actions**

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- 1 We will continue to highlight the importance of good Corporate Parenting and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) awareness to all officers.
- 2 We will promote increased liaison between community policing and Children's Homes to enhance relationships between police and young people.

**Lessons learnt:** What are the lessons learnt through partnership working?

<b>Lesson learnt</b>	<b>Next steps/recommendations</b>
<p>1 We have learnt that a general concern across all rights is to strengthen participation by improving the quality of communication, in particular listening and awareness of power relationships, between services' staff and children, young people and families in order to respect their rights. All staff have a duty to improve communication and uphold rights.</p>	<p>1 The partnership will agree several actions designed to have the maximum impact to improve communications across all services staff. This will include a short quarterly bulletin on the three Bs from the Children's Partnership lead to staff of all partners across the city. This will also be published on partners' websites. It will include a short narrative about the 'direction of travel' and how rights are being fulfilled.</p>
<p>2 We have learnt that by strengthening connections between child rights, equalities and poverty initiatives we can maximise learning and improvement. Services are at the initial stage of absorbing the findings of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission.</p>	<p>2 Use the findings of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission to guide the work of the Children's Partnership by all services and ensure that improvements are made in response as a long-term project.</p>
<p>3 We have learnt that we need to prioritise children's rights training, awareness-raising and capacity-building.</p>	<p>3 Expand relevant child rights education and training for children, young people, parents and professionals, taking advantage of national partnership opportunities.</p>
<p>4 We have learnt that we need to have carefully targeted initiatives which demonstrate that we can and do listen to children, young people and families and change services to better respect and support their rights.</p>	<p>4 A small number of targeted initiatives listening to children, young people and families, which lead to a change in services and greater respect and support for their rights. All partners will commit to change the way they work based on what we learn from these initiatives.</p>
<p>5 We have learnt that services for children with additional support needs must have a strong focus on the rights of the child.</p>	<p>5 We will ensure that children and young people with additional support needs, and their parents and carers, are made aware of advocacy services. In addition to this, our Edinburgh Learns for Life: Inclusion Board will develop the citywide Additional Support for Learning Review implementation plan in response to the Scottish Government recommendations following the national Additional Support for Learning Review, with a particular focus on the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>





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# Appendix 1

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## **Children and young people's rights in action – some examples from youth work**

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**The Green Team's** Youth Panel, an advisory young persons' board, involves young people who are taking part in Green Team programmes. The Youth Panel contributes ideas to the board and reports back on the views of young people who are stakeholders within the organisation.

Young people contribute their ideas in four key areas:

- Decision-making – how young people share making key decisions
- Delivery – how the Green Team works with young people to design projects and programmes
- Operations – how the Green Team is run
- Influence – how we talk to young people who are external to our organisation; how we create a platform for young people's voices

The Green Team is developing an asset-based approach which will utilise the strengths and resources that young people bring to the organisation rather than simply looking to meet their needs.

Through young people involved in programmes joining the Youth Panel, the Green Team is able to support a core group of diverse young people to help reach a stage where young people design programmes, choose activities, set their own goals and have their voices heard in every key area of the organisation.

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### **YMCA Edinburgh**

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YMCA Edinburgh delivers two mentoring programmes, Plusone and intandem. Plusone is an international model of 1:1 mentoring for vulnerable young people aged 8–14 and was developed by YMCA Scotland, the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Violence Reduction Unit. Intandem is a Scottish Government funded mentoring programme delivered across the nation. In Edinburgh both YMCA Edinburgh and Move On deliver intandem mentoring to young people looked after at home aged 8–14. Both Plusone and intandem train community volunteers to be matched with and mentor vulnerable young people identified by partners in social work, education and other voluntary sector organisations. Mentors meet with the young person weekly, offering a listening ear, support to take part in positive activities, and help to make informed choices and to set and work towards personal goals.

YMCA also delivers a group mentoring programme for young people that focuses upon health and wellbeing to help build resilience.

The impacts of the programmes are reduced offending, improved school engagement, improved relationships, improved happiness/wellbeing.

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## **Holy Cross After School Club**

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The club has been using mind maps with different age groups of on various topics such as what snacks they enjoy or do not enjoy and what activities or toys they like or would like in the club. The information has been used to plan, introduce new ideas and buy new equipment.

This ensures that a wide range of healthy options (this is discussed when evaluating snacks) that the children will enjoy is provided. The mind maps for activities and toys are helpful when providing for a wide age range, from 5–11 years.

The club has worked in partnership with and helped the school achieve the Gold Award for Rights Respecting Schools. The deputy head teacher came into the club and discussed the UNCRC and ways in which their rights are promoted within the school.

The children have signed up to the Out of School Club UNCRC Charter, this has helped to promote their rights and helped them to know the role of the adults working in the service and what adults do to ensure the UNCRC is embedded in the ethos and play experiences within the club. The charter also helps adults to think about what they should be doing to promote children's rights.

During lockdown, we sent out birthday cards and postcards to every child saying we hoped to see them soon. We also delivered a small bag to all children which contained fruit, raisins, homemade strawberry muffin (with recipe), small plant pot with a bag of soil and a packet of herb seeds to encourage them to grow food as well as eat healthily.

We had weekly online activities which were mostly suggested by the children. We were mindful that any items had to be easily obtainable. Once they had completed their challenge, they were encouraged to take a photo and put it on their learning journal. Older children were not tuning in, so we contacted them to see if they would like an online session just to chat, a few did this as they were missing speaking to staff.

To remind them of the club, we ran an escape room challenge online where they had to work together to find clues which were in the dining hall and gym hall of Trinity Primary as well as do little online challenges – this was very popular.

For the new intake we did an online session inviting all families to tune in to meet the staff.

We encourage children to get in touch with nature – we take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch and gardening (which has resulted in taking control of the local community garden). The children's favourite outing is going to the Braid Hills, packed with tarpaulins, hammocks, etc and walking in the woods.

**Edinburgh Young Carers Forum** is a monthly group which gives young and young adult carers (YC and YAC) the opportunity to share views and experiences on current policy and changes which could/will affect them both within EYC and on a council/ government level. The forum has worked alongside the Scottish Government and the Council on numerous projects to ensure YC/YAC voices are central to discussions. The Forum is run and chaired by young people themselves, mostly led by the 16+ members with reps allocated to ensure the voices of the wider service including younger age groups are incorporated.

The forum enables young people to make positive change to any new policy or support. The forum also provides a safe and empowering space in which young people can share their past experience and create targeted positive change in areas where they feel they did not receive enough support, eg working with the EYC schools team to ensure all schools in Edinburgh are aware of young carers and how to support them.

As a result, our young people have been able to feed into the design of the Young Scot Carers Package, the Scottish Government's Young Carer Grant and the Young Carers' Statements in Edinburgh. They have been able to host politicians, Edinburgh Council employees and researchers and discuss what has worked well for them and what could be better. The young people have done great work on raising awareness of young carers and ensuring their voice is heard and their needs listened to.

The Schools' Project has an overview of young carer awareness-raising throughout primary and secondary schools in Edinburgh. The project ensures that schools have a dedicated contact within the young carer organisation, that training is offered for school staff, that there is a clear pathway to make referrals and that there is a named colleague to ask for specific help and guidance.

A focus for the project in 2020/2021 has been identifying a named, young carer coordinator within each primary/secondary school in Edinburgh and working with 'hard to reach' schools. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, the project had been very successful at doing this and the move to online CLPL has engaged more schools and school staff to work with the charity.

Schools are vital to identifying hidden young carers. All staff need to be 'young carer aware'. They need to understand the hidden signs of a caring role and know how to make a referral to give the child and their family the support to thrive. The awareness-raising project helps staff to create carer friendly schools that enable young carers to succeed within their education on an equal footing to their peers.

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### **Wester Hailes Youth Agency**

We always aim to involve young people, we ask them what they want, how they want it to look, where and how they want it to be. This means young people get the services they want and that meet their needs. They also learn that their opinions matter and they can our trust staff.

We contribute to discussions on services that affect and support young people. This could be on local services, a national consultation on youth provision or reporting on what works and what doesn't work. Because we work with young people, we're able to ask what they think and help get their views across.

### **School partnership**

We work closely with local schools. This means we can provide services to support young people in different ways including groupwork, issue-based work around sexual health and risk-taking behaviour, health drop-ins and one-to-one support as well as connecting with schools to deliver programmes such as Relationship, Sexual Health and Parenting classes (RSHP).

Our school partners do a great job but sometimes it works for young people to have someone outside the school environment to help and support them. Young people trust youth workers and we respond to their needs, whether that is around their education, health, home life or relationships and friendships. This kind of support gives young people another option and another trusted adult to turn to when things are difficult or when they need advice and information.

### **Health and wellbeing**

We provide a range of services focused on physical and mental health and wellbeing, but the physical and emotional wellbeing of young people runs through all our services. We provide a health drop-in offering support on everything from sexual health, substance use to anxiety, self-harm and mental health as well as individual support sessions.

Many young people already know and trust us so it's natural to come to us when they need information or advice. We can also help young people access other services such as sexual health or mental health services where this is appropriate.

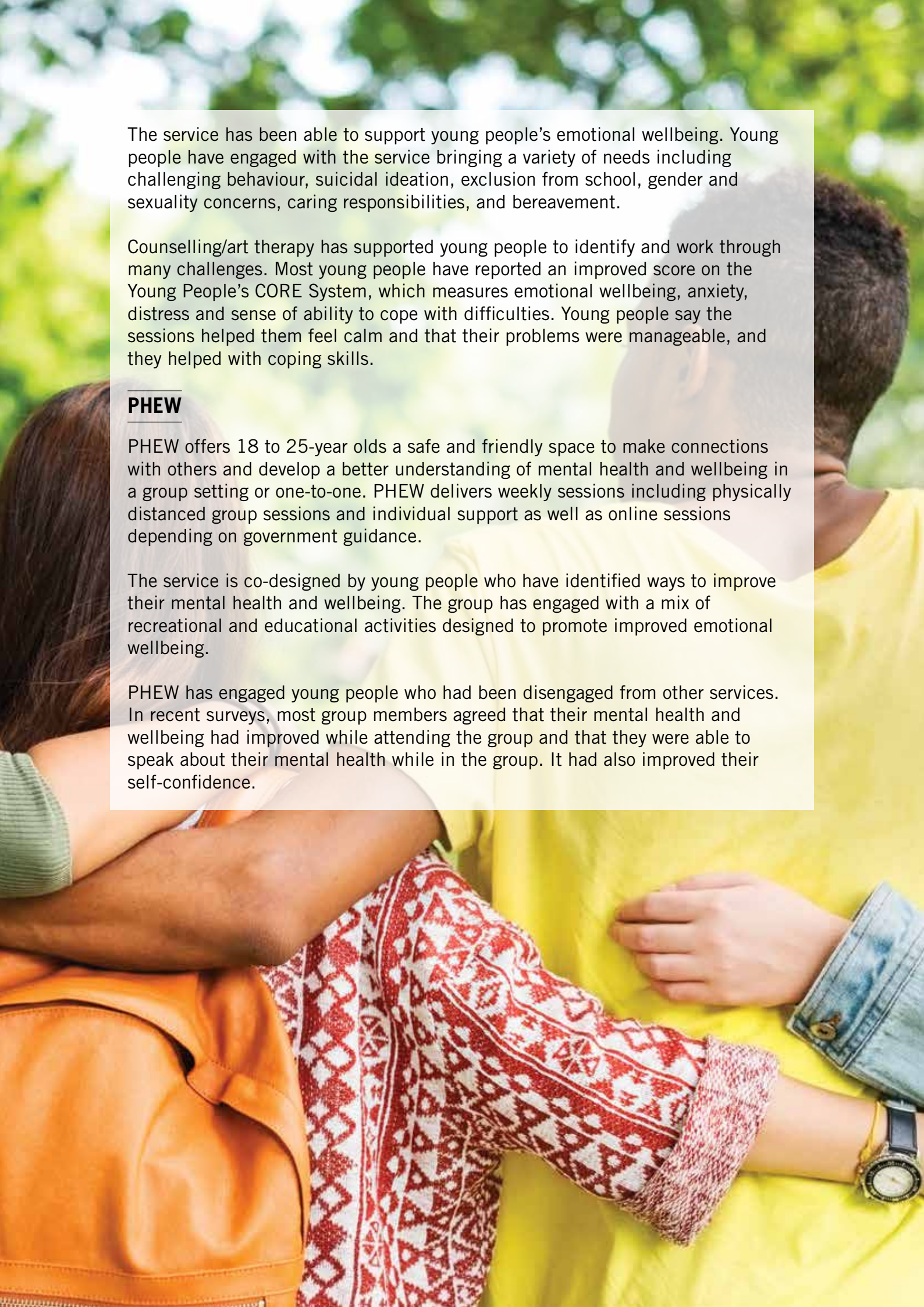
Our staff offer the best possible support and are trained in Mental Health First Aid, self-harm, counselling skills and delivering Low Intensity Anxiety Management (LIAM). This is good for young people as it often prevents their difficulties from escalating; it can also help other services that are busy and sometimes overstretched. As one young person put it 'I wouldn't be here now if it wasn't for the Youth Agency.'

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### **SPACE/Broomhouse Hub**

Space provides counselling/art therapy for young people aged 5 to 18 through eight weekly sessions in schools or in our community hub. Young people have engaged well with the service taking part in sessions in person and remotely depending on their needs and government guidance during the pandemic.





The service has been able to support young people's emotional wellbeing. Young people have engaged with the service bringing a variety of needs including challenging behaviour, suicidal ideation, exclusion from school, gender and sexuality concerns, caring responsibilities, and bereavement.

Counselling/art therapy has supported young people to identify and work through many challenges. Most young people have reported an improved score on the Young People's CORE System, which measures emotional wellbeing, anxiety, distress and sense of ability to cope with difficulties. Young people say the sessions helped them feel calm and that their problems were manageable, and they helped with coping skills.

## **PHEW**

PHEW offers 18 to 25-year olds a safe and friendly space to make connections with others and develop a better understanding of mental health and wellbeing in a group setting or one-to-one. PHEW delivers weekly sessions including physically distanced group sessions and individual support as well as online sessions depending on government guidance.

The service is co-designed by young people who have identified ways to improve their mental health and wellbeing. The group has engaged with a mix of recreational and educational activities designed to promote improved emotional wellbeing.

PHEW has engaged young people who had been disengaged from other services. In recent surveys, most group members agreed that their mental health and wellbeing had improved while attending the group and that they were able to speak about their mental health while in the group. It had also improved their self-confidence.

