

EDINBURGH CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

Children's Rights Report 2024-2026

THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

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Introduction

As part of the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, public bodies are required to produce a report every three years which sets out the steps they have taken to further the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This report has been produced by members of the Edinburgh Children's Partnership, which brings together staff from a wide range of organisations and services. The Children's Services Plan 2026 - 2029 provides an overview of the work programme of the Partnership.

This is the third report on the work the Partnership has been collectively undertaking to progress the UNCRC across all services in Edinburgh. It highlights the progress made with the actions we committed to in the last report, as well as areas where increased focus and attention are required over the next three years. One key priority for the Partnership is to ensure that the rights of every child and young person in Edinburgh are upheld. We will do this by embedding the UNCRC into daily practice and processes and across all areas of the Plan.

From July 2024, the provisions of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act requires all Scotland's public authorities to take proactive steps to ensure the protection of children's rights in their decision-making and service delivery and make it unlawful for public authorities, including the Scottish Government, to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements as set out in the Act. The intent behind the Act is to deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. This report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026 and reports on progress, challenges and next steps in relation to the eight clusters of rights that make up the UNCRC.

To help hold duty bearers to account, the report covers both new and continuing challenges. In response to feedback from children, young people and families, the report identifies gaps in support

that require urgent action, while also keeping us on track with those structural changes that can be achieved step by step over a number of years.

The findings of this report will guide us in the next three years as we strive to strengthen our shared values and empower children and communities in response to continuing social and economic pressures.

This report groups the UNCRC's articles into eight clusters for reporting purposes, based on the Scottish Government's grouping. The Scottish Government's original framework includes a ninth cluster covering Article 1 (Definition of a Child), which is not included here as a separate reporting area, since it does not describe a substantive area of Partnership activity. For clarity, the clusters are numbered 1 to 8 in this report rather than retaining the Scottish Government's original numbering (which runs 1, then 3 to 9). Readers should note that other UNCRC frameworks, including UNICEF's, group the articles slightly differently and this report follows the Scottish Government's approach throughout.

There is a huge amount of work being undertaken across Edinburgh to advance and uphold children's rights, and this report is unlikely to capture its full breadth. Given the volume of evidence submitted by partners, each cluster below presents a summary. Full partner contributions are preserved in the appendices so that the detail and effort behind this work is not lost. We would like to thank everyone who contributed their views and time to developing this report.

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About (Population Data)

57, 376 children under 18 years of age live in Edinburgh

45,935 births in 2023

6.3% of children were born at low birth weight in 2024/25

Registration of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds with the free early learning and childcare scheme dropped to 96% Sept 2025

27% (41,890) aged 0-24 have a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition

21% (18,000) of children in poverty

30,058 primary school attendees

23,150 secondary school attendees

686 special school attendees

Young Carers:

897 aged 3-15

2,940 aged 16-24

Primary, secondary and special school pupil ethnicity:

32,306 White British

7,060 White other

14,018 Minority ethnic group

Children who speak a language other than English as their main language:

5,621 aged 3-15

45.9% of school children with additional support needs* in 2023

*see JSNA for definition of additional support needs

The rate of looked after (care-experienced) children in Edinburgh is 10.2 per 1,000 0-17 population, and 1.4 per 1,000 children aged 0-15 are on the child protection register

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Cluster 1 – General measures of implementation



Cluster One focuses on what the government is expected to do to implement the UNCRC through law, policy and decisions that impact children. It applies to legal measures (through legislation). It also applies to non-legal measures which progress implementation of the Convention, including national strategies and action plans; resource allocation and monitoring; children's rights training, awareness-raising and capacity-building; development and collection of data on children's

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lives; collaboration with all sectors, including children. **Article 44**, paragraph 6, describes the measures undertaken to make reports widely available to the public. Following the UNCRC (Incorporation) Scotland Act 2024, the Children's Partnership established a UNCRC sub-group and self-assessment framework, which now forms the foundation of the 2026-2028 Edinburgh Children's Services Plan (**Article 4**).

In line with **Article 42**, rights-based training has reached practitioners across multiple sectors. Fifty-four staff have completed a joint Lothian Association of Youth Clubs (LAYC) / NHS Lothian UNCRC training programme, with participants reporting greater confidence in discussing and advocating for children's rights, while all Children's Partnership sub-groups completed Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) to strengthen rights-based planning. The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee (ECPC) has undertaken targeted work with minority ethnic communities, including a joint campaign with the West African community on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) following a legal challenge in The Gambia, which led to updated FGM guidance for schools published in October 2025 (**Articles 42 and 24**). On data, the Children's Partnership has moved to address long-standing fragmentation in children's services data by procuring a shared database with third sector partners to ensure the data collected is useful to those providing it, with a pilot scheme launched in April 2026. In the future, this is expected to positively impact how progress is reported to the public (**Article 44, para. 6**) by creating a consistent, central repository for evidence and clear reporting functionality. For more information on any of these topics, please see Appendix 1.

Cluster 2 - General Principles of the UNCRC



The *General Principles of the UNCRC* refer to the four core articles of the UNCRC, which guide how the other articles in the convention must be interpreted and implemented. The Children's Partnership has embedded child and family voice across multiple strands of work (**Article 12**): The city-wide Single Point of Access is joined up with GIRFEC planning, ensuring that children and families' own views are included in support requests; the Parent-Infant Partnership has adopted *the Voice of the Infant* practice[1], training practitioners in evidence-based tools such as the

[1] Voice of the Infant: best practice guidelines and infant pledge (Scottish Government, 2023)

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Alarm Distress Baby Scale (ADBB) to capture the views of pre-verbal infants; and the most recent Edinburgh Children's Services Plan consulted with children and young people to ensure the matters that concern them most were included in our plan. Edinburgh Youth Action has brought young people together with decision makers to discuss a diverse range of issues including community grant design, gender-based violence and social media safety, while Edinburgh members of the Scottish Youth Parliament have raised successful national motions to sit on national committees, including human rights and social security.

The Edinburgh Disability and Neurodivergence (EDAN) hub have delivered 648 play sessions as part of its holistic family-needs-based support model, with sessions able to link directly to a child's plan to support re-engagement with social activities and act as a bridge back into educational provision (**Articles 3 and 6**). A rights-based collaborative enquiry across three Learning Communities[2] has also informed the co-design of a Team Around the Community (TAC), a place-based poverty prevention model now running in two proof-of-concept areas, with around 60 requests for assistance to date.

The importance of Youth Work in facilitating all four of the *General Principles* is well recognised, with a five-year Youth and Children's Work Strategy and Youth Work plan, and Youth Work forming one of the six priorities in the new Edinburgh Children's Services Plan. Notable work this reporting period includes a Reconnector Event to mark the mid-way point of the strategy. Youth Work was recognised as non-stigmatising and accessible, helping to tackle inequality, support mental health, close the attainment gap and enable meaningful participation.

[2] "*Learning Communities are based on the cluster model, but now include special schools, denominational schools, early years establishments, wider council services and third sector organisations in the geographical area of the secondary school catchment area" (Edinburgh Council, 2023)*

Finally, in relation to **Article 12**, the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee (ECPC) has committed to improving understanding and implementation of family participation across Child Protection Processes, with the team joining up with other local teams and forums such as the Children's Partnership UNCRC working Group, Whole Family Wellbeing and Corporate Parenting (*See also Cluster 8 – Special Protection Measures*).

From Education Scotland, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me* emphasises that babies and young children learn best in environments shaped by high-quality relationships, responsive interactions, and meaningful contexts. The Whole Family Wellbeing funded Family Hub was designed to develop city-wide access to multi-disciplinary early intervention for families with young children. These include Universal and enhanced supports, which are flexible and responsive to need, easy to access throughout the city, whenever needed, via a consistent pathway. Group activities such as baby massage have offered inclusive entry points for families, while pop-up initiatives have created lasting legacies within local communities. The Family Hub has been key in expanding the evidence-based *PEEP Learning Together* provision across Edinburgh, with fourteen new groups established to date. Strong partnerships with organisations such as Aditi have created culturally safe spaces for families, and joint training has deepened trust and relationships. Improved understanding of cultural expectations around attachment has helped practitioners support families navigating complex circumstances, including those with no recourse to public funds. The Maternal and Early Years complex needs working group, established during the last Children's Service Plan, assessed the needs of the most vulnerable young families in the city, and work from that group will continue as part of the Early Years priority in the latest plan.

For more information on any of these topics, please see Appendix 2.

Cluster 3 – Civil Rights and Freedom



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This cluster focuses on children's civil rights and freedoms including children's right to move freely in public space and to meet with others; children's right to think and believe what they like, to access information and speak their mind as long it is not harmful to others; children's right to keep personal matters and communications private; and their right to be protected from inhumane or degrading treatment. LAYC has delivered consistent child protection and GIRFEC training to Youth Work providers across the reporting period, with 322 attendees completing core child protection training and 123 completing enhanced safeguarding training, alongside sustained demand evidenced by ongoing waiting lists. The Children's Partnership has also reviewed and refreshed its multi-agency GIRFEC guidance and Child Planning Framework documentation, clarifying the Named Person's supportive role and updating professional learning resources to support the refreshed, rights-based approach across services.

Article 17 states that every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them. The harms of social media are a current national talking point, with the UK Government announcing plans to restrict some content for children and young people, and young people themselves flagging social media as a concern in the current Children's Services Plan. The young people of EYA and Tynie Talking Points came together to construct guidelines around WhatApp (their most used platform) and social media usage.

For more information on any of these topics, please see Appendix 3.

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Cluster 4 – Violence against children

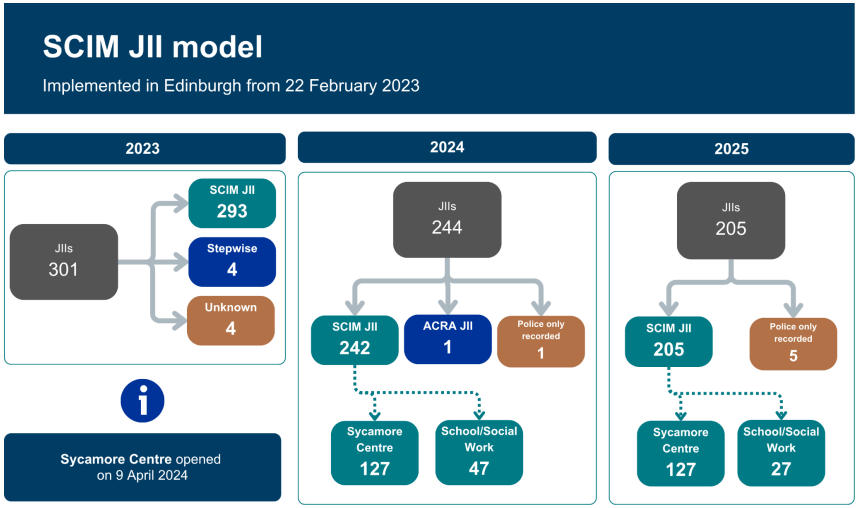


This cluster focuses on situations where children experience violence in all its forms. This includes physical and mental violence, abuse and neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse (**Article 19**). This cluster also encompasses approaches to managing behaviour and discipline in schools and other settings, such as residential care (**Article 28(2)**); emphasises that children should not be subjected to torture or to other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (**Article 37(a)**), including physical or corporal punishment; and highlights the right of children to services which support their physical and psychological recovery (**Article 39**).

The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM), implemented in Edinburgh in 2023, allows children who have experienced or witnessed abuse, violence, exploitation, or other traumatic events to

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give a single joint investigative interview (JII) in a trauma-informed setting, substantially reducing the need for them to appear as witnesses in court. JII numbers have remained high since implementation.



The Sycamore Centre opened in April 2024, providing a facility where short-term, trauma-recovery linked to the SCIM process. In 2025, 87% of JIIs were conducted at the Sycamore Centre. Bairns' Hoose is the Scottish adaptation of the European Barnahus model, and the Sycamore Bairns' Hoose is the child-centred multi-agency approach to supporting child victims and witnesses of harm. Following or during a child's engagement with SCIM, a professional can refer them to Sycamore Support, where a team of three trauma practitioners deliver a CAMHS Tier 2 service focused on promoting safety, stabilisation, emotional wellbeing and recovery following trauma (**Article 39**). From mid-2026 Bairn's Hoose has three main action groups: Health and Recovery, Justice and Participation.

The Partnership has also established a Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding Oversight Group (**Article 19**), constituted in January 2025 which has produced Risks Outside the Home guidance and a screening tool, and is engaging with national work on missing children/trafficking, 'cuckooing', and group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE). Members of this oversight also continue to support the Global Centre for Contextual Safeguarding Local Area Interest Network; national Contextual Safeguarding Core Group; and the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation national group, as well as other regional work in this area. This is covered in

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more detail in Cluster 8. For more information on any of these topics, please see Appendix 4.

Cluster 5 – Family environment and alternative care

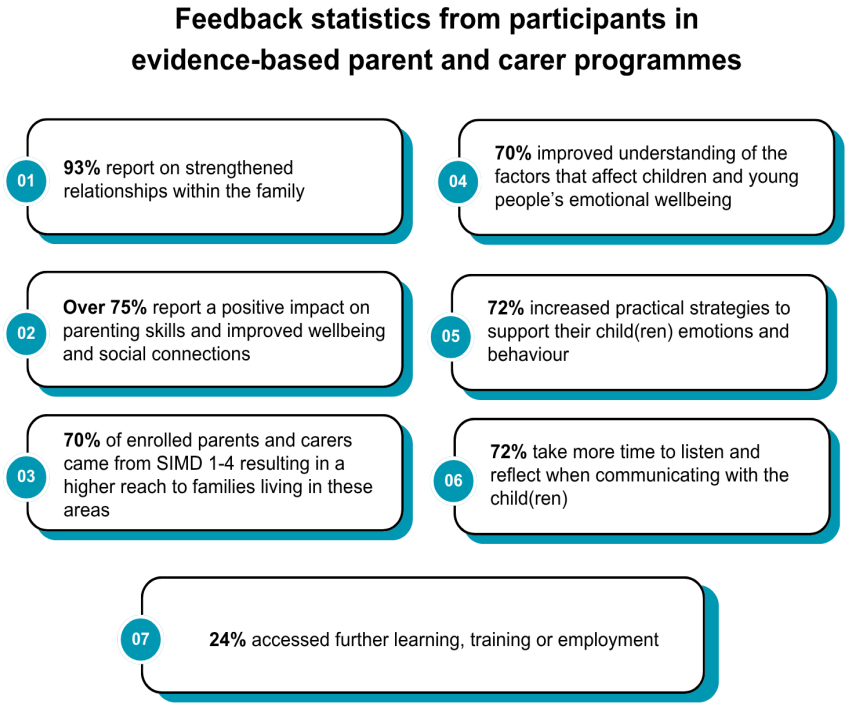


This cluster focuses on the primary role of parents and the support parents should have to bring up their children; the right of children to not be separated from parents unless this is in their best interests; the right of children to be well cared for where they live apart from their parents; the right of a child to maintain contact with both parents if that is in their best interests; the right of a child to have a say when decisions are made about where they should live, with placements subject to regular

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review; and the right of all children to be protected against all forms of violence and abuse.

Supporting Edinburgh's families has been a specific focus this reporting cycle, aligned with to the Scottish Government's commitment to whole family support. Between 2023 and 2026, Edinburgh Council's Parents and Carers Support Service handled over 1,200 enquiries, with requests for parenting programmes accounting for 90% of all enquiries. In line with this demand, the Children's Partnership's universal and targeted evidence-based parenting programmes, including Incredible Years, Triple P, Raising Children/Teens with Confidence, are delivered to families across the city, with 93% of participants reporting strengthened family relationships, over 75% reporting a positive impact on parenting skills and improved wellbeing and social connections, and 70% of enrolled parents coming from Scotland's most deprived neighbourhoods (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 - 4).



School readiness has been identified by the wider Edinburgh Partnership as a growing area of concern, given persistent inequalities in early childhood development across the city (**Articles 18 and 24**). The refreshed Edinburgh Community Plan (published in June 2026) commits, through its

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best start in life action, to improving equity of uptake of early years services. The Partnership is explicit that these actions address only part of the picture, and that a more comprehensive approach to school readiness will be needed in its next Community Plan.

During this reporting cycle, the Single Point of Access (SPA) was extended across the whole city, so any school can now request additional support as part of the GIRFEC framework. Where the team around the child is struggling to identify the right supports, monthly SPA networking meetings allow practitioners to draw on wider local knowledge, helping families access support close to home with minimal bureaucracy.

Parents and Carers are also able to access supports that explore the effects that bereavement, grief, and parental separation have on the wellbeing of children and young people via Seasons for Growth, while bite-sized learning sessions in partnership with Edinburgh Libraries provide support for key stages in a child's development (**Article 5**). The Council's Support for Families web pages have undergone a full refresh this reporting cycle, with up-to-date information on family activities, additional support needs, parenting courses, financial support and domestic abuse, providing parents with vital, accurate information. Families and professionals alike have long reported confusion over where to access support as a barrier to finding support, and these pages were updated in response to this.

Family Voice work has extended further through the Parent Panel, which was established by the Whole Family Wellbeing Team in November 2024. Insights from the Parent Panel directly informed the city's Neighbourhood Prevention Plan and were praised by NHS colleagues as reshaping their priorities. Trauma-informed practice has deepened significantly this reporting cycle, aligned with the National Trauma Transformation Programme. A trauma steering group now shapes the co-design of parent support, and an enhanced trauma training pilot is underway for Whole Family Wellbeing-funded practitioners. The Parent Infant Partnership's *Voice of the Infant* work directly

informed Edinburgh's newly launched Parenting Capacity Assessment. A Whole Family Wellbeing pilot in collaboration with Social Care Direct supported 15 families through a holistic whole family support approach, addressing requests for assistance that don't meet the threshold for statutory intervention. This was the precursor to the Umbrella Hubs, which fulfil a similar role in providing non-statutory whole family support.

Every local authority school now has an identified Care Experienced Lead Teacher.

In partnership with Education Psychology, the We Matter Team (WMT), which supports care-experienced children and young people in education, qualifications and life transitions, has delivered training to over 90 staff across 15 high schools and 14 primary schools. This has also developed a training package to help professionals understand the effects of grief and loss on the lives of Care Experienced Young People, which has been delivered to 31 schools between 2020 and 2025.

For more information please see Appendix 5.

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Cluster 6 – Basic health and welfare



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This cluster focuses on the health and welfare of all children and the consideration of disabled children's rights. All children should have the best possible standard of health, including access to relevant health services. There should be a focus on the determinants of children's health, including mental health. Under **Articles 26 and 27**, where families do not have enough to live on, children have a right to financial support from the Government to meet their basic needs.

This period saw progress against these duties, delivered through several of the Partnerships' Whole Family Wellbeing collaborations. EDAN Hub has transformed access to disability support by eliminating the requirements for a formal diagnosis in order to access support, with two-thirds of families self-referring rather than waiting for professional referral and its social work and CAHMS-ID pathways being sustained beyond the funding period (**Article 23**). Time to Talk is a city-wide youth mental health partnership operating within NHS emergency departments, as well as in community settings. NHS Lothian commissioned an independent evaluation of Time to Talk from the outset, to build a robust evidence base for its continuation. This relational, young-person-led approach has also supported school re-engagement and connection to wider youth work. The previous plan highlighted a need for increased independent advocacy provision for young people with mental and physical healthcare needs. The Time to Talk collaboration has reported supporting families with communication with health and educational professionals, however this does not include young people with advocacy support for physical health conditions. Wellbeing and Mental Health forms one of the six priorities in the Children's Services plan, and we will review the evidence when forming the actions under this priority.

Scotland's universal Health Visiting Pathway reviews a child's development at eleven points in their life from birth to age five. Since 2018 there has been a steady increase in the rates of emotional and behavioural concerns in 4 to 5 years

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olds in the Lothians (4% to 7.3%)[3]. In the previous plan, the Partnership acknowledged a need to respond, including determining which factors might be contributing to this increase. In response to this, one of the six priorities in the newly published Children's Services Plan includes Best Start in Life: Pregnancy, Infancy and Early Development, in recognition of the fact that there is no single cause of these concerns and requires a coordinated, multi-agency response. The Whole Family Wellbeing funded Family Hub has piloted embedding Health Visitors within community-based support pathways, and learning from this will inform the actions under this priority in the Children's Services plan.

Housing insecurity is a growing and significant threat to children's right to an adequate standard of living under **Article 27**. As of September 2025, 4,802 Edinburgh households were in temporary accommodation, including 3,640 children[4]. The refreshed Edinburgh Community Plan 2018-2028 commits to a joined-up, data-led approach to targeting anti-poverty and homelessness prevention, led jointly by the Housing Partnership and the Children's Partnership, alongside the *Ask & Act* homelessness prevention pilot and a specific commitment to investigate food support for children living in temporary accommodation. The scale of response required to tackle homelessness exceeds what any single plan can deliver, and this remains a named priority for future partnership work.

For more information, please see Appendix 6.

[3] Public Health Scotland Early Child Development Statistics Early child development statistics - Scotland 2023 to 2024 - Early child development - Publications - Public Health Scotland

[4] The Edinburgh Community Plan 2018 – 2028: June 2026 Refresh

Cluster 7 – Education, leisure and culture



This cluster focuses on the rights of all children to an education that will help them achieve their potential without discrimination (**Article 28**). Education should be child-centred and empowering and strengthen their capacity to enjoy the full range of children's human rights, including their right to express their views and participate in all aspects of their education. **Article 29** entitles children to a broad curriculum. **Article 31** states that children have a right to play, recreational activities, rest and leisure, and to take part in cultural life. After school care provides children

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with a safe space for rest, leisure, play and recreational activities (**Article 31**), while giving parents the wraparound childcare they need to work. However, several challenges mean provision is inconsistent across the city and clubs are often difficult to sustain. The Whole Family Wellbeing funded Edinburgh Parent-led Childcare Collaborative has delivered a capacity-building programme covering governance, fundraising and workforce training to support the sustainability of parent-led after-school clubs across the city. This work has supported a new club, situated in the Magdalene neighbourhood of the city, which has just gained Care Inspectorate approval and is set to open in summer 2026. In line with the UNCRC and Scottish Government Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations 2023, a city-wide play sufficiency assessment took place in 2026 and will feed directly into the Evidence Report for City Plan 2040, assessing the quality, quantity and accessibility of play space across Edinburgh (**Article 31**). Time to Talk's relational, young-person-led model has also supported re-engagement with education and connected young people to youth groups and drop-ins. Consistent arts and creative play provision from the voluntary sector partners remains a commitment from the previous report that remains outstanding. This reflects a wider challenge of short-term, insecure funding for the third sector. The Edinburgh Council's ongoing review of its Third Sector support arrangements is due to conclude in 2027/2028 and is expected to at least partially address this barrier going forward. A whole-system approach to participation barriers, also carried forward from the previous report. Progress against these themes will be confirmed in the next reporting period. For more information, please see Appendix 7.

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Cluster 8 – Special protection measures



This cluster focuses on groups of vulnerable and marginalised children who require special protection. These are often the children who are most at risk of having their rights ignored or infringed. They include asylum-seeking and refugee children, child victims of trafficking or exploitation, and children in conflict with the law. The Sycamore Centre and Bairns' Hoose Partnership, reported in detail under Cluster Appendix 4, provides recovery support for children who have experienced gender-based or sexual

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harm, and is progressing plans for a live court link so children can give evidence from a trauma-informed setting.

Child exploitation (**Articles 34**, **35** and **36**) is a growing local concern, evidenced by the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee's own Learning Review activity, which has identified an increasing range of vulnerability factors including links to serious, organised crime, exploitation, trafficking and harmful sexual behaviour. In response, a multi-agency Child Exploitation Oversight Group was established in January 2025. Its 2025-28 workplan includes agreeing Risks Outside the Home guidance to replace current exploitation-specific guidance with a broader framework, revising the Human Trafficking Protocol, exploring a local pilot for National Referral Mechanism decision-making for children, and developing a full Sexual Abuse and Exploitation strategy by mid-2026. The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee also revised its Inter-Agency Procedures for the Protection of girls and women at risk of Female Genital Mutilation, and delivered the Edinburgh Talk PANTS campaign with NSPCC Scotland, directly reaching over 1,500 parents and carers and over 2,500 children with age-appropriate safety information. For more information, please see Appendices 4 and 8.

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Next Steps 2026 – 2029

The following actions represent the first steps within larger, ongoing pieces of work rather than standalone commitments. The UNCRC underpins the Edinburgh Children's Services Plan 2026 to 2029, rather than sitting alongside it as a related but separate framework. Therefore, the actions below are not reported here in isolation but will be taken forward and reported on in more detail through the relevant governing plan.

As many of the steps described mark the starting point for each workstream, the detailed steps and measures of success have not yet been fully defined and will be developed as the respective plans are implemented. This report notes where each action sits, and which plan will carry the work forward, so that progress can be tracked accordingly.

Table 1. Wider strategic priorities

Title	Description	Source of Action	How this furthers the UNCRC
Best Start in Life	Improving equity of uptake of early years services alongside a further commitment to strengthen community mental health support and inclusive youth and children's work to improve children's engagement in learning (linked to school readiness).	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029 (also aligns with the 2026 refresh of the Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan)	This relates to family support (Article 18), health (Article 24), development (Article 6) and education (Articles 28 and 29).
Lundy model and Infant voice, within the planning cycle	Embedding the Lundy model of participation, with particular emphasis on *Voice of the Infant* (which was adapted from the Lundy model) and LGBT Youth	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029, Children's Rights and Participation sub-group (Year 1).	Embedding the Lundy model across Partnership planning, delivery and evaluation related to making children's rights real and understood in practice

	across the planning cycle and all Partnership sub-group work.		(Articles 4 and 42). This work is about ensuring the child's best interests are identified and prioritised (Article 3) through respecting and acting on their views (Article 12). Strengthening how the voice of the infant is captured is significant for how social work assessments are conducted, supporting earlier and more accurate identification of risk (Article 19) and appropriate parental support (Article 18). It also relates to how a child's care and circumstances are reviewed (Article 25), and on ensuring the voices of disabled and neurodivergent children and young people are heard and acted upon on an equal basis with their peers (Article 23), as well as LGBT Youth (Articles 2, 16, 19, 24, 28 and 31).
Awareness raising and engagement on Children's Rights with the Edinburgh Board	Raising awareness of children's rights and Partnership reporting, specifically at the Edinburgh Board level.	Carried forward from previous UNCRC cycle.	Ensuring the Edinburgh board understands and engages with children's rights is central to making those rights real in practise across the partnership's governance (Article 4), and to the wide edge duty to make the convention widely known to

			both adults and children (Article 42).
Continue to prioritise early intervention and prevention	Continued focus on early intervention and prevention, integrating the Single Point of Access with Neighbourhood Prevention Partnerships (NPPs) and reflecting the foundations of the new Children's Services Plan.	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029, Mental Health and Wellbeing sub-group (Year 1 – 2).	The Single Point of Access and Neighbourhood Prevention Plans (NPPs) span all manner of support needs including health and wellbeing, financial, social, education and health, working to prevent families from reaching crisis point. As these services already exist, the Partnership's role will be to ensure they are fully supported to operate collaboratively and remain focused on the best interests of the child (Article 3), supporting families across a range of needs, including health (Article 24), adequate standard of living (Article 27), education (Article 28) and parental support (Article 18).
Further Scottish vision towards Whole Family Support	Ongoing alignment with national While Family Support policy underpinning the six Whole Family Wellbeing Funded collaborations.	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029, named as Principle 1 and a core approach of the plan.	The National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support were developed by the Scottish Government with the UNCRC in mind. For the purposes of this action, this work relates specifically to ensuring that everyone knows children's rights (Article 42) and the Articles covered under the UNCRC's General Principles

			(Cluster 2), which are non-discrimination (Article 2), best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to life, survival and development (Article 6) and respect for the views of the child (Article 12).
Play Strategy	Continued focus on early intervention and prevention, integrating the Single Point of Access with Neighbourhood Prevention Partnerships (NPPs) and reflecting the foundations of the new Children's Services Plan.	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029 (Year 1-3).	This priority relates to Article 31 (play, leisure and culture). Increasing equitable access to informal learning, play, leisure and culture also supports children's right to survival and development (Article 6), since play is an essential part of healthy child development.
Making Council Children's Rights webpages child-friendly	Joint work between the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee, the Public Protection Team and the strengthened Corporate Parenting and Participation Team to make the council website child friendly and accessible.	Carried forward from previous reporting cycle	Relates to Article 17, which recognises children's rights to access accurate information and requires that the information provided to them is presented in a way they can understand and use. This work also supports the wider duty to make the Convention and children's rights known and accessible (Article 42) and reflects the Council's Corporate Parenting duties by ensuring care experienced children and young people specifically can

			find information intended for them (Article 8).
Responding to Young People's concerns about racism, misogyny and social media	Working across community planning to develop a response to concerns raised directly by children and young people about racist bullying and misogynistic behaviour from peers, as well as social media harms and benefits.	Children's Services Plan 2026 - 2029, Children and Young People's priority (Years 1 – 3).	Article 2 (non-discrimination) and Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect, including peer-to-peer harm), 34 and 36 (protection from exploitation, including grooming, self-generated material, live-streamed abuse and sextortion). Also reflects Articles 12, since the priority originates from the children's own reported concerns and 13 (freedom of expression) and 17 (access to information).
Children's Ambassador role within the CLD Partnership	As ambassadors for children and young people, working with the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership to promote continued commitment to upholding children's rights across the Community Planning Partnership.	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029 (Years 1-3).	Article 42 (making the convention known) and Article 4 (general measures of implementation).
Child Poverty actions	A set of related actions calls for developing staff training on child poverty and money worries, including the identification of financially insecure households; identifying the financial costs	Children's Partnership Plan 2026 – 2029, Reducing child poverty priority (Years 1-3).	Article 26 (Social Security) and Article 27 (adequate standard of living).

	families face in accessing health and care systems; And monitoring welfare rights advice.		
Sexual Abuse and Exploitation strategy.	The Child Exploitation Oversight Group sexual abuse and exploitation strategy is expected Summer 2026. This will include local guidance and adjacent learning opportunities for the workforce.	Edinburgh Child Protection Committee	This strategy will relate to several Articles in Cluster 8, particularly 34, 35, and 36.
Expanding Bairn's Hoose recovery support	Drive forward the work of the three Bairn's Hoose Action Groups and create a 'single point of contact' for families, which will improve communication.	Identified priorities 1 & 2 from Sycamore Bairns' Hoose Evaluation	The three action groups (Health and Recovery, Justice and Participation) link directly to UNCRC articles 12, 19, 24, 34 and 39)
Edinburgh Child Protection Committee revision of inter-agency FGM procedures	ECPC is continuing work with statutory and voluntary partners across Edinburgh and the Lothians to revise the Inter-Agency Procedures for the protection of girls and woman at risk of FGM.	Edinburgh Child Protection Committee	This work relates to Article 24, which requires state parties to take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.
Child Friendly Reports; creation of guidance & toolkit			
Repository for CYP participation activities across ECP			

Conclusion

This reporting period has coincided with the UNCRC becoming law partway through the cycle, and progress across the Partnership reflects that transition. Clusters 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 show substantial, well-evidenced activity, from the Sycamore centre's transformation of how children engage with the justice system, to embed child and family voice through the parent panel and Youth Action, to a significantly strengthened trauma-informed workforce across Whole Family Wellbeing Services.

Clusters 3, 6, and 7 also show progress in this period, much of it delivered through services whose impact naturally spans several clusters at once (for example, the ECPCs work on FGM spans clusters one (Article 42) and 6 (Article 24)). The six Whole Family Wellbeing collaborations are each distinct pieces of work, addressing different needs across health, education, participation and family support. All six projects were guided by the same underlying principles of GIRFEC, the UNCRC, and the Scottish Government's National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support and have therefore helped to advance Children's Rights in Edinburgh, despite their different focuses. This collaborative way of working is a strength of the partnership model and reporting it more consistently against every relevant cluster is a priority for the next cycle.

There remains a small number of specific, named gaps rather than an absence of effort. Several commitments carried forward from the last report require confirmed status from leads (most notably clusters 3 and 8), and progress on consistent third sector arts and creative play provision is tied to the outcome of the Edinburgh Council's Third Sector review.

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Appendix

Overview

The following appendices accompany the Edinburgh Children's Partnership 2026 Children's Right's Report. The appendices are intended to give a more thorough overview of the work undertaken this reporting period.

Cluster 1 – General measures of implementation



Progress

Equality, Diversity and Rights

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Rights Framework 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, e.g.

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children's rights. **The City of Edinburgh Council** has an Equality, Diversity and Rights Framework 2021-2025, which focuses on five key themes:

- Inclusive communities
- Access to facilities and support
- Warm and affordable homes
- Health, wellbeing and attainment for children
- Diverse and inclusive workplace

NHS Lothian is committed to mainstreaming compliance with equality and human rights into everything it does because equality and human rights are a central part of providing everyone with access to high quality healthcare and to improve the health of everyone living in Lothian.

The Equality and Human Rights Strategy 2023 - 2028 sets out NHS Lothian's strategic priorities (or outcomes) for equality and human rights and what it wants to focus on achieving by March 2028. Of particular, importance to children and young people, and people working to support children and young people, in Edinburgh are:

- **Priority - Outcome 1** is driving NHS Lothian to embed equality and human rights into the planning, decision-making, delivery and reporting processes. This includes assessing the compatibility of proposed new or revised activities with children's human rights focusing on how NHS Lothian respects, protects and fulfils children's human rights as part of the Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment process.
- **Priority - Outcome 5** includes taking action to make sure that children and young people who use NHS Lothian mental health services know about and can claim their human rights, and can participate in decisions about their care and treatment.

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- **Priority - Outcome 6,** recognises that to fully embed equality and human rights into NHS Lothian's work, needs a programme of equality and human rights education and training that builds capability in staff to apply equality and human rights principles in their work to improve outcomes for the Lothian population. This includes human rights and children's human rights capability and using the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) FAIR approach.

Coordination and collaboration

The Edinburgh Children's Partnership established a UNCRC sub-group, which reviewed our approach in response to the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. This was built on strong collaborative approaches to test and pilot models to find closer and more consistent ways of working together to embed children's rights in practice. The self-assessment framework was shared with the full Partnership and underpins the next 3-year cycle of Children's Partnership reporting (2026 to 2029). The group acts as the children's rights coordination point of the Partnership to enable direct participation of children and young people in the co-production of children's rights.

Training and development

Training and development in the use of Integrated Impact Assessments in planning and commissioning across the partnership was underway during 2023-2024, and all sub-groups created an IIA to strengthen our rights-based approach.

Over the last 3 years, the LAYC Training Programme has continued to include delivery of 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): What, Why, how?', an interactive session designed to support practitioners to strengthen rights-based approaches in their work.

This aimed to:

- Raise practitioners' awareness and develop their knowledge of the UNCRC.
- Support the development of rights-based practice across organisations.
- Link rights-based practice to the Scottish legislative and policy context.
- Enable children and young people to know, understand, and claim their rights.

From 2024, recognising and building on the rights-based practice already taking place within youth work settings, and the opportunity to share good practice across sectors and learn together, NHS Lothian partnered with LAYC to co-deliver the training to staff across third sector and health services. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to strengthening the understanding of children's rights and supporting consistent, rights-based practice across health and community settings.

To date, 57 participants have attended the training, and participants consistently report greater knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and its legal significance, alongside clearer language to discuss rights with children, families and colleagues. This growth in understanding is coupled with increased confidence to talk about, explain and advocate for children's rights, including challenging misconceptions and ensuring children's voices are heard.

A strong implementation focus also runs through the feedback: practitioners emphasise embedding rights in everyday practice and services (from Youth Work sessions to hospital settings), building team capacity by sharing learning and aligning documentation and procedures, and valuing interactive, practical and cross-professional learning methods (e.g. activities, visuals, and GIRFEC-UNCRC mapping) that translate rights into action. Together, these themes demonstrate a shift from awareness to application and culture change across settings.

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Building on the success of this training, collaboration with Children's Parliament delivered pan-Lothian UNCRC workshops for NHS Lothian and third sector staff to explore embedding the UNCRC in practice. These workshops supported staff to build on knowledge and skills from the 'UNCRC: What, why, how?' training, explore the UNCRC Skills and Knowledge Framework, and consider how to build a children's rights movement.

NHS Lothian and LAYC continue to work together to progress cross-sector training opportunities.

Culture, Rights and Edinburgh Child Protection Committee

Throughout the most recent period of reporting, the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee (**ECPC**) has continued to be mindful of the increasingly multi-cultural make-up of the city in our strategic planning for prevention and response to child protection, actively referencing this in our Annual Reports (2024, 2025).

The ECPC has promoted culturally competent practice with the African Diaspora, supporting the launch and use of '*Working with African Diaspora families: A supportive toolkit for the social care workforce'*[5] through signposting the local workforce to events and making the tools available on the Committee's Knowledge Hub network pages. These tools are also referred to within the Inter-Agency Risk Assessment learning events and have been embedded in the City of Edinburgh's Children's Social Work Teams.

The Child Protection Lead Officer has also encouraged discussion with other minority groups, and there has been work undertaken that better addresses the needs and understanding of minority ethnic children in the city. For example, in spring-summer 2024, the ECPC became aware of The Gambia's intentions to repeal

[5]Working with African Diaspora families: A supportive toolkit for the social care workforce', co-developed by The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (Iriss) and Passion4Fusion.

laws against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the impact this may have on the Gambian and West African communities living in Edinburgh.

The ECPC worked, together with Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee and third sector partners, who were subject matter experts such as Fontana Diaspora, to hold a mini-campaign using a range of resources from FGM Aware, Scottish Government, locally developed tools and NSPCC. This included a community event held over the weekend with Gambian community leaders to explore the issues and raise awareness. As part of this work, the ECPC put a stand-alone briefing out to all Education establishments in Edinburgh to explain the circumstances in West Africa and encourage school staff to be vigilant about the signs and indicators in relation to FGM and offered tips about how to address this with families in a trauma-informed way.



Figure 1 - Working with African Diaspora families

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While the Gambia did not reverse their laws, the piece of work was hugely valuable in raising visibility, trust and awareness between mainstream, statutory services and the West African community and opening lines of communication. It also led to a wider piece of work to update the Guidance to schools on FGM, which was launched in October 2025 and can be found on the ECPC website.

Shared Database [6]

Nationally, data on children and families' services is fragmented [1].. This is especially relevant in the context of universal early intervention and prevention, multi-agency family support services, or services that do not neatly fit into a 'category', such as financial assistance. The result is a system where it is difficult to evidence unmet need, understand what works well, or share information across organisations that would support staff and families. At present, duplication is common across service provision and reporting. As multi-agency working becomes the norm, the challenge of recording, sharing and using data in a way that is meaningful across the Children's Partnership has become increasingly apparent.

WFWF created an opportunity to rethink how short-life projects collect and use data. We initially explored piloting a shared database across our collaborations, however given the stage of the projects and the limited time remaining, this was not considered a suitable vehicle for test of change. Instead, the Children's Partnership Joint Commissioning working group agreed to pilot a database for Connected Communities funding. Data submitted to the platform will be on a population level (e.g. number of families supported for a given fund). The chosen platform was selected due to its adaptability and security. This will allow the pilot to refine the data we collect and the way we report it, in collaboration with the third sector parters. The platform has now been procured, and testing will begin in April 2026.

A common and justified criticism from funded third sector organisations, is that they rarely benefit from the resource-intensive data they are required to collect. If we continue to ask organisations to gather detailed information, it should serve a wider purpose than compliance alone. This pilot offers the opportunity to work with the third sector to ensure that the insights generated are genuinely useful to those providing the data. If

[6] Taken from Whole Family Wellbeing 2026 Mid-Way progress report.

successful, this would represent a transformational shift in how funds are monitored and how learning is shared across the system.

[1] Independent Care Review (The Promise), 2020

Cluster 1 – Case Study

Time to Talk - Taking a Young People's Rights Approach*:* Every child has the right to the best possible health, and good mental health is essential for young people to develop, feel safe, and participate fully in society — all core rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Time to Talk is a city-wide youth work partnership supporting young people's mental health through one-to-one work across Edinburgh and targeted interventions within NHS emergency departments. The programme responds to rising demand while ensuring support is holistic, flexible, and centred on young people's needs.

Respecting children's rights is central to its approach. During development, the partnership used the NHS Lothian Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool to identify key practice principles. This helped embed a commitment to rights-based practice, reasonable adjustments, cultural awareness, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and trauma-informed approaches. Crucially, youth workers prioritise listening to young people's views and recognising them as experts in their own lives.

The Time to Talk collaboration provides far more than a supportive conversation. Young people are helped to build skills and confidence, strengthen social connections through youth groups and drop-ins, and explore hopes for the future. This work contributes directly to Article 6 of the UNCRC, supporting young people's development, and Article 31, upholding their right to play and leisure. Youth workers also support young people's right to education by helping those struggling with attendance to develop coping strategies, engage with flexible timetables, or explore positive destinations.

Transformational change is built into the delivery model. This includes engaging parents and carers, offering brief interventions, and connecting families with wider services. Such involvement requires careful consideration, as young people need confidential spaces where they can speak openly. By taking a

rights-based approach that centres young people's voices, the partnership is able to make informed decisions about when and how to involve parents and carers in ways that genuinely work for each young person.

Article 24 – Every child has the right to the best possible health

Good mental health is essential for children to survive, develop, be protected, and participate fully in society — all core rights outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Time to Talk is a city-wide youth work partnership designed to support and improve young people's mental health. It delivers one-to-one support across the city and provides interventions for young people in NHS emergency departments. The programme responds to the growing demand for mental health support while ensuring that young people receive holistic and flexible support.

Article 12 – Respect for the views of the child

Upholding young people's rights is central to the programme's approach. Every interaction prioritises listening to their views, feelings, and lived experiences — recognising that young people are experts in their own lives.

Article 6 – Life, survival and development

Article 31 – Access to leisure, play and culture

While having 'someone to talk to' is vital, once a young person is ready, the focus can shift to their development and hopes for the future. Many young people also benefit from connected youth services that offer wrap-around and longer-term support. These groups and drop-ins help them build friendships, explore new interests, and strengthen their social wellbeing.

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Article 28 – Right to education

For young people struggling to attend school, youth workers can help identify coping strategies or advocate on their behalf for reasonable adjustments. Young people can also access youth groups that build social confidence or take part in informal learning activities that are engaging, supportive, and fun.

Article 12 – Respect for the views of the child

As part of its transformative approach, Time to Talk has developed new ways of engaging parents and carers, which offers brief interventions when needed and connecting families with wider support services. Case studies show that this can have significant benefits for the whole family. However, maintaining young people's voices at the centre of a whole-family wellbeing approach requires careful consideration, as it is vital that young people have a confidential space where they can speak openly. Taking a children's rights-based approach across the partnership has helped ensure decisions are made based on their needs and listening to their views. This has been particularly important when considering the needs of care experienced young people.

Cluster 2 - General Principles of the UNCRC



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. The Children's Services Plan 2023-2026 is committed to the ongoing collection of feedback from children, young people and their families about their lives and the priorities set out in the Plan. This includes more formal processes, such as Impact Assessment, as well as more informal methods where appropriate. 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

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involving them as equal participants in this process. Within the work of the Partnership, a GIRFEC refresh has been produced to ensure that the positive work in Edinburgh is continued (Also links to Cluster 1, Article 42 – everyone must know children's rights).

Cultural communities

The Children's Partnership actively built networks among different cultural communities to help support children's upbringing and their right to cultural life, ensuring that the best interests of the child are identified within a holistic, culturally nuanced approach (**Articles 2 and 3**). This included supporting two community-based representatives to join the Partnership, bringing expertise, knowledge and experience to uphold and extend rights for children and young people.

Rights Awareness

Partnership webpages have been created to provide information so that children, young people and their families are aware of their rights, and the choices open to them so they can exercise those rights (Article 3, also Cluster 3, Article 17). This is at an introductory level, and those partnership bodies will have more bespoke information within their field of delivery.

ECP Maternal and Early Years – Complex Needs Working Group

Across early years professionals are shifting from "speaking for" infants to noticing, interpreting and acting on what infants tell us, ensuring their needs, feelings and experiences meaningfully shape planning, learning and care (**Articles 2, 3 and 12**). From Education Scotland, Realising the Ambition: Being Me emphasises that babies and young children learn best in environments shaped by high-quality relationships, responsive interactions, and meaningful contexts. Practitioners are encouraged to be intentional in how they plan

experiences, as well as how they listen, respond and create spaces where even the youngest children can influence their own learning. This aligns strongly with the UNCRC view of the child as a rights-holder, capable of expressing views from birth.

Both *Realising the Ambition* and the UNCRC promote the idea of the capable child, recognising that infants and toddlers communicate their interests, ideas, and needs through their whole bodies—gaze, movement, vocalisations, and behaviour. When adults include children in planning and decision-making, they demonstrate that children's ideas matter and uphold their right to participate meaningfully in their own learning (**Articles 5, 12 and 13**).

Parent Infant Partnership response for progress and planning for children's rights

The Parent Infant Partnership was established alongside Whole Family Wellbeing Fund principles, rooted in UNCRC and aims to support parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities (Article 5); mitigate separation from parents (Article 9); support family reunification (Article 10) and uphold parental responsibilities and state assistance (Article 18(1-2)).

The Parent Infant Partnership has worked with a range of families where vulnerabilities have been identified pre-birth, to strengthen parent-infant relationships, increase parenting capacity and consider the Voice of the Infant at the heart of all of our interventions, assessments and outcomes.

The term 'Voice of the Infant' is used to convey our understanding that babies have their own minds and have things to communicate from birth. The Guidelines offer suggestions about how those who work with babies and very young children can notice, facilitate and share the infant's feelings, ideas and preferences which they have let us know about through their gaze, body language and vocalisations. The Infant Pledge (Appendix 2) sets out what infants should expect from those around them. It encourages mindful

commitment to facilitate infants to express their feelings, and to consider their views, uphold their rights and take action accordingly. It highlights that all babies, and young children have a right to meaningful participation and good practice includes ensuring the infant's voice is put at the centre. These guidelines promote practitioners to use innovative ways that go beyond relying on parents and carers as proxies for infant's and babies who are non-verbal, instead following close observation of the baby's behaviour. "Observing and noting the baby's posture and movements, eye contact and other non-verbal communications is crucial, as is listening carefully to their vocalisations…Their silence may also represent a communication" ('Voice of the infant', Scottish Government, March 2023).

The World Association for Infant Mental Health's *Position Paper on the Rights of Infants*[4] argues that the UNCRC "does not sufficiently differentiate the needs of infants and toddlers from those of older children". This risks their unique needs and experiences being overlooked.

Infants often have many important adults in their lives. The advice from Lansdown[5] about young children's participation in decision-making, that "the most meaningful opportunities will be created closest to their immediate environments" is pertinent to the task of facilitating infant voice. Babies are particularly sensitive to their primary caregiver's emotional state and look to them to understand the world and know whether a situation is safe or not. However, it is also important to remember that while parents and carers are well-placed to give an insight into the baby's views and wishes, these may not be the same as their own.

Keeping a focus on the infant can sometimes be a challenge if the adults present have a lot to say. It is important for those around babies to be on the lookout for their communications.

We have chosen to invest in particular interventions and tools that upskill practitioners in being able to capture the Voice of the Infant to inform overall planning. This includes practitioners being trained in Parents Under Pressure, Video Interaction Guidance, and the Alarm Distress Baby Scale (ADBB). Ensuring

that the Voice of the Infant is captured enhances the capacity of the practitioner to ensure that the best interests of the child are consistently at the centre of all assessments, planning and decision making.

In addition to capturing the Voice of the Infant, we have sought to obtain regular feedback and views from parents and families working with our service. We have chosen to frame the standard reporting questions from the point of view of the infant rather than the parent, showing a change from more typical outcome-measuring tools. Alongside regular reporting and evaluation, we held an initial participation event open to all families of our service in January 2026 to consider their experiences of the service thus far and their hopes for future service delivery. Some key themes that emerged during conversations were:

Parents spoke about the importance of receiving the right care and support, having access to good-quality advice that could be put into practice, and feeling listened to rather than judged. Many highlighted the importance of having the "*right person*" alongside them, someone who walks with them, understands them, and supports them without judgment. Being heard, respected and believed were repeatedly described as fundamental to positive experiences of services.

During individual conversations, parents spoke powerfully and spontaneously about their relationships with their PIP key workers. Several parents shared reflections such as: **"If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here" and "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have my daughter/son in my care."**

Parents spoke about the importance of earlier help and earlier listening, support that begins before difficulties escalate. Others spoke about the need for more time with practitioners, more one-to-one advice, and better access to multi-agency support.

Across all conversations during this event, there was a strong and consistent emphasis on relationships, trust and feeling supported as a parent.

Edinburgh Disability and Neurodiversity Hubs

Through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, the Partnership allocated a grant to EDAN. A concern and area of focus in the Children's Plan was neurodiversity. EDAN provides a holistic, family needs-based delivery model. This includes parent and carer support and information, play sessions. With the play sessions having the ability to link to a Child's Plan supporting children and young people to re-engage with social and meaningful activities and as a bridge back into educational provision.

Team Around the Community and a Rights-Based Approach to Service Design

Between August 2023 and September 2024, a rights-based collaborative enquiry was developed in the Liberton, Gracemount and Craigroyston learning communities. The consultation supported the development of a more coordinated approach to partnership and support for young people across learning communities. Views were gathered from seldom heard voices of children and young people, as well as their parents and carers, alongside school staff, CEC staff and community third sector partners. The findings have been used for co-design of a place-based poverty prevention model, Team Around the Community, as well as informing equity-funded education provision, whilst aligning to the wider work of Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 3 – A Good Place to Live. The learning from this process was also used to co-construct a blueprint template for consultation and partnership development in other learning communities. The overarching enquiry question explored was:

> **How can we (young people, parents and carers, formal education team and youth work practitioners) work together to ensure that all young people in our learning community can access and enjoy engaging and effective learning experiences?**

Team Around the Community (TAC) is a place-based, cross-functional team that works collaboratively to respond at the earliest stage of need and prevent poverty, education and household difficulties from becoming entrenched. TAC works with council, health, justice and voluntary sector services to notice and listen to what people need and respond collaboratively. This is built on trust in professional judgement and expertise, to empower families and build capacity.

TAC is being developed in two proof-of-concept areas: Liberton and Gracemount (south-east) and Pilton (north-west). There have been around 60 Requests for Assistance to date (March 26), with 15 different services representing the multi-disciplinary team. The Requests for Assistance are overseen by a TAC Coordinator. Cases which are out-of-scope are triaged amongst other statutory services, including Umbrella Hubs and Single Point of Access, to ensure clients are getting appropriate support.

The learning from TAC will facilitate effectively designing and embedding the Neighbourhood Prevention Partnerships, as a part of the Living Well Locally overarching city-wide strategy. This includes embedding a place-based partnership approach across the city, with all partners working better together to reshape the way we support citizens.

For the full background of TAC see also: Education, Children and Families Committee: Teams Around the Learning Communities 7.8 Teams Around the Learning Communities.pdf

Strengthening participation in Child Protection

As part of the 2024/5 ECPC Improvement Plan, the ECPC has committed to improving our collective understanding of participation and of children and families across Child Protection processes. During that year, we aimed to scope and join up with other local forums in which children's rights and participation work were embedded and made the following progress:

- The Child Protection Lead Officer is a member of the Edinburgh Children's Partnership and the UNCRC Working Group

ECPC has had inputs from Corporate Parenting and Whole Family Wellbeing in December 2024 and February 2025, respectively. The Lead Officer for Corporate Parenting and the Promise plan provided updates to ECPC in December 2024 and is due to attend again in January 2026. The Child Protection Lead Officer took part in the recruitment of Participation Officers in October 2024.

Youth Work

Edinburgh launched a 5-year Youth and Children's Work Strategy in May 2023. The Strategy recognises that youth and children's work takes place in a variety of settings, including community venues, schools, youth cafés, and on the street, whilst using numerous approaches such as outdoor pursuits, drama workshops, health initiatives, peer education and single issue and single gender work to engage with children and young people. It aims to provide prolonged and stable engagement over time. In June 2025, a Reconnector event was held to mark the midway point of the Strategy and to highlight its priorities with new key stakeholders [7]. Building on the successful format of the original launch, the event featured keynote contributions from partner agencies and case studies showcasing practice. It also provided space to take stock of progress under each of the Strategy's priorities. A group flipchart exercise was used to capture reflections, and these form the basis of this report.

Youth work was recognised as free, non-stigmatising and accessible, with a strong contribution to reducing inequality, supporting mental health, closing the attainment gap and enabling meaningful participation. It

[7] Strategy Reconnector Report: LAYC, Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian

plays a preventative role, identifying emerging needs early and supporting children and families to navigate services.

Challenges identified included rising mental health needs, workforce sustainability, inconsistent feedback loops in participation processes, and limited recognition of youth work's professional expertise and accredited achievements. Concerns were also raised about funding uncertainty and system complexity for families.

The reconnector event reaffirmed commitment across the sector and with stakeholders. Alongside the Opportunities and Challenges identified, 'Calls to Action' were developed to continue to highlight the role and impact of youth work services alongside partners and stakeholders. These will be driven forward by the Youth Work Working Group in partnership.

Edinburgh Youth Action

Following an instruction from Council in November 2022 to set up a Young People's Forum, a Steering Group was established to look at how best to develop this work. The Steering Group met monthly and was made up of Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (as elected representatives of young people in the city) and Council officers. The main focus was to ensure that the work was led by the young people and focused on the issues that are of most interest and concern to them. Young people on the group decided to call this forum Edinburgh Youth Action (EYA) and were determined that its work should aim to bring about change. Additionally, the group looked at how to achieve a broad representation of young people from across the city and how to raise the profile of EYA.

EYA met for the first time in June 2023 in the City Chambers. Seventeen young people attended the session. In addition to six MSYPs from the Steering Group, these were young people from Liberton, Balerno,

Currie and Queensferry high schools, Kaimes special school and LGBT Youth Scotland. We contacted these young people via the pupil-led Equalities Groups in high schools and, with LAYC's help, through the voluntary sector in the case of LGBT Youth Scotland. Four Elected Members also attended, and Council Officers were in attendance to provide support as required.

The Big Idea

Edinburgh Youth Action's overall aim is to improve the conditions that enable learning through children's rights and social action to thrive and is better understood across different departments and contexts. This learning and young people's lived experiences are shared and will be drawn upon to maximise the power of young people's rights and activism. EYA continues to ensure that young people's voices are heard and contribute to community development and decision-making. EYA continues to enable young people to be amplifying influencers in their own and other people's lives through identification, meaningful participation and potential action on matters which affect them and their communities most. Young people continue to raise and discuss issues directly with decision-makers and thus provide gateways for their voices and experiences to be explored and subsequently acted upon. In terms of content, issues of interest to young people should not be too narrowly defined, i.e. solely in relation to youth work or challenges within schools.

Consolidating

The four existing groups will meet fortnightly to discuss matters which they feel are important in their lives. They will develop their ideas and seek other opinions and views across the ecosystem of young people. Where there is synergy, EYA locality groups will interact and work collectively on issues of common concern with a wider cohort of young people.

Developing

Seeking new voices to the process, EYA will continue to host publicity campaigns so as to have a wider reach in encouraging YP to share their voice and experiences. EYA will foster and develop a larger youth voice by setting up another 2 groups across Edinburgh, bringing the total to six. Young people identifying within these new groups will begin to formulate their ideas and feed into the wider EYA network.

Conduit

Matters of importance to young people will be shared with decision makers, including MSYPs, and there will be a closer alignment of policy and place in that the work that EYA members do in the group will feed in and potentially influence policy, bringing about positive social change.

Creating Change

There are many ways to bring about positive social change, and here is a snapshot of some of the work that the young people have become involved in:

CEC Community Grant Design

The Ask: Article 12 acknowledges that 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.

Young people from EYA were asked to take part in a series of focus groups which were aimed at making the funding programme for communities more accessible and ensure that there was a wider representation of youth voice. Please follow the link to see the Community Grant Reflections presented by Edinburgh Youth Action Reps.

16 Days of Activism (NNS 16 Days of Activism):

The Ask: Article 19 states, 'Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence'. Young people wanted to amplify this cause whilst challenging adults and others in exploring Gender Based Violence.

Under the banner of 'justice being unavoidable whilst making injustice visible', the group of young people worked alongside the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee as part of a range of events across the city. The Theme for 2025's 16 Days of Activism is 'All Together to prevent and end Violence Against Women and Girls'. In Edinburgh, it had been decided to make our local theme 'Violence, Abuse and Exploitation in the lives of Children and Young People'. Edinburgh Youth Action's big idea was to spread a message of hope and transformation where the city is safer for women and girls. NNS 16 Days of Activism

Social Media

The Ask: Article 17 states that every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

The young people of EYA understand that social media and connectivity have many positive benefits; however, they are well aware of the pitfalls, and as such, they came together to construct guidelines around their most used platform and social media usage EYA social media Guidelines Here.

Action for Change – Gender Based Violence Youth Assembly 2025

This event was organised by Young and Equally Safe in Renfrewshire in partnership with Education Scotland and Renfrewshire Council's Youth Services and Children's Services, offering a unique opportunity for young people to engage in meaningful conversations about gender-based violence and share their experience of the Mentors in Violence Prevention.

The theme for the day was “Action for Change”, and the programme provided interactive sessions for young people and leaders to discuss their thoughts, share ideas, and collaborate on campaign strategies aimed at raising awareness and promoting change. This event provided an opportunity for EYA and MSYPs to join together in one cause. Young people created a blog about the event - see here Action for Change

Key Next Steps

The main next step is to consolidate EYA forums in localities. Their purpose will be to gather the concerns of the young people attending so that these can be prioritised and taken to the central EYA forum. To meet GIRFEC and UNCRC objectives, we will be seeking the support of EYA on issues we know nationally and locally are of great importance to young people. Gaining a youth voice in policy revision in this theme will be a major advantage.

Understanding the impact is vitally important in Edinburg Youth Action, and as such, here are some of the young people’s reflections:

Edinburgh Youth Action Evaluation - Results

Scottish Youth Parliament

Background

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratically elected voice of Scottish young people. The values of SYP are democracy, rights, inclusion/diversity and political impartiality. SYP’s Mission is to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them.

In Edinburgh, there are 12 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP's) across the 6 local constituencies: Central, East, North & Leith, Pentland, South and Western. The MSYPs are elected by young people aged 11-25 from Edinburgh. SYP elections run on the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. At the last SYP election, 1945 votes were cast in support of the 22 candidates who stood for election.

National Sittings

Since being elected, the MSYPs have represented Edinburgh young people at the national sittings held across Scotland. In Stirling (June 24), one MSYP raised a motion about the rural travel issues they had campaigned on,

> **'The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that public transport companies and Scottish Government should consult with residents to ensure public transport better connects communities'.**

MSYPs also attended the sitting in Edinburgh at the Scottish Parliament on October 24, where they welcomed the MSYPs from across the country in the main chamber and hosted a very successful evening reception. They also attended the sitting in Paisley on September 25, where a successful motion was raised by Edinburgh MSYPs

> **'The Scottish Youth Parliament proposes that young people are Key participants in the planning and ongoing provision of technology, in support of the Scottish curriculum'.**

The Edinburgh MSYP group throughout the current term have been involved in the business of the sittings, led sessions and has spoken frequently in support and provided critical opposition to many of the motions

raised during the three sittings attended. The final sitting for this term will be in June 2026 with the venue still to be confirmed.

National Work

Edinburgh's MSYPs have taken part in many national initiatives offered by the Scottish Youth Parliament throughout their term. One Edinburgh MSYP has been involved as part of the SYPs Education Reform team and a member of the Education for Lifelong Learning Committee. They also took part in "an Education Scotland" podcast. Edinburgh's MSYPs have contributed to a diverse range of project work, such as green issues in 'Learning for Sustainability', mental health in 'Mind Yer Time' and social media in 'Screensavers'. They have been instrumental in the consultation and development of the SYP Manifesto and attended the launch of the final document. On the 18th of November 2025, they were involved in the 9th Annual Cabinet Takeover at the Scottish Parliament.

As part of the SYP structure, Edinburgh's MSYPs are currently involved in the following committees: Culture and Media, Justice and Equality, Human Rights and Social Security. Edinburgh MSYPs have held both convenor and vice convenor roles, in addition to one Edinburgh MSYP who is a Member of the UK Youth Parliament for East Scotland

The Edinburgh group have strong links with other local authorities MSYPs and has attended First Minister's Questions with young people from East Lothian, Scottish Borders, West Dunbartonshire and Aberdeen City.

Local Work

Locally, MSYPs have been part of interview panels for senior roles within the Education directorate. They have attended and spoken at local events such as the 2025 Equalities Review, as well as a question-and-answer session held by the EIS. MSYPs are integral to Edinburgh Youth Action (EYA), our local youth

voice/participation network. This has involved them taking part in the Edinburgh Festival of Politics, contributing to work on IT systems in schools and facilitating focus groups on the use of mobile phones within schools.

Finally, it is worth noting that one MSYP is very active within the Ukrainian community in Scotland and has been commended and recognised for the work in this area. They have also used their role to represent Edinburgh's young people internationally, as well as events at local universities.

Cluster 3 – Civil Rights and Freedom



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Updates, development and good practice

Child protection training delivery to youth work providers, ensuring a strong knowledge base of child protection amongst children's services. LAYC also provide policy and procedure support to children and youth work organisations to ensure good practice and protect children from harm. As part of the LAYC Training Programme, child protection and GIRFEC training has been delivered consistently between 2023 and 2026, demonstrating strong and sustained engagement from practitioners across the sector. Attendance remained steady each year, with ongoing demand for both introductory and advanced child protection courses. The pattern of high participation—often with waiting lists—highlights the continued need for clear, practical safeguarding training that equips staff to recognise concerns, follow established procedures confidently, and respond appropriately. The inclusion of annual GIRFEC sessions within the programme further reinforces this approach by strengthening practitioners' understanding of the wellbeing framework that underpins child-centred decision-making in Scotland.

Taken together, this suite of training complements the UNCRC work delivered by LAYC by strengthening practitioners' joined-up understanding of rights, wellbeing and safeguarding. It illustrates how rights-based practice, GIRFEC and child protection are closely interconnected, and how building knowledge across all three areas enables organisations to create safer, more responsive environments for children and young people.

Across the three-year period, participation in child protection training remained high, with a combined total of 322 attendees, evidencing consistently strong demand. Child protection officer training also maintained high engagement, with 123 participants completing enhanced safeguarding training. GIRFEC sessions have engaged 26 participants, with more sessions coming. These trends indicate a sustained sector-wide

commitment to child protection, rights-based practice, and the wellbeing principles central to Scotland's policy landscape.

To complement this area of capacity building, LAYC offers Governance Health Checks with Member Groups to help sustain safe, inclusive environments for children and young people while strengthening safeguarding and organisational practice. This process supports community-based youth work organisations to embed a rights-based approach, ensuring children's rights to protection, participation and development are upheld.

GIRFEC

The Edinburgh Children's Partnership has reviewed and developed refreshed multiagency GIRFEC guidance. This guidance has been updated to reflect national guidance and has been launched alongside new Child Planning Framework documentation. The updates focus on a refreshed rights-based and simplified approach to meeting the needs of children and young people. It emphasises strengthening early intervention, streamlining Children's Plans, improving information sharing and placing children, young people and their families at the centre of decision making. The refreshed guidance clarifies the role of the Named Person, emphasising it as a supportive, non-statutory role and clarifies the function of the Lead Professional. Alongside this work, an update to the suite of professional learning resources is being developed to support a refresh and reset of practice across multi-agency teams and services.

Cluster 4 – Violence against children



Scottish Child Interview Model and The Sycamore Centre

The Sycamore Centre is a dedicated facility where NHS Lothian, the Police and Social Services work together to deliver a key specialist service to individuals who have encountered gender-based violence, rape, or sexual assault. The centre is located within a secluded area of a residential space in Edinburgh. The views of children and young people have been incorporated into the design. The location was agreed with cognition to the proximity of Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) within Edinburgh. The Sycamore Centre includes Aspen and Rowan houses, which have been specially designed to feel welcoming and safe for children and young people. Aspen and Rowan houses each have two private floors, enabling four Bairns Hoose services to be provided simultaneously. This has supported the reduction of

children required to be witnesses in the court system and also offered them trauma-informed wraparound support and recovery where they have been the victim or witness of a crime.

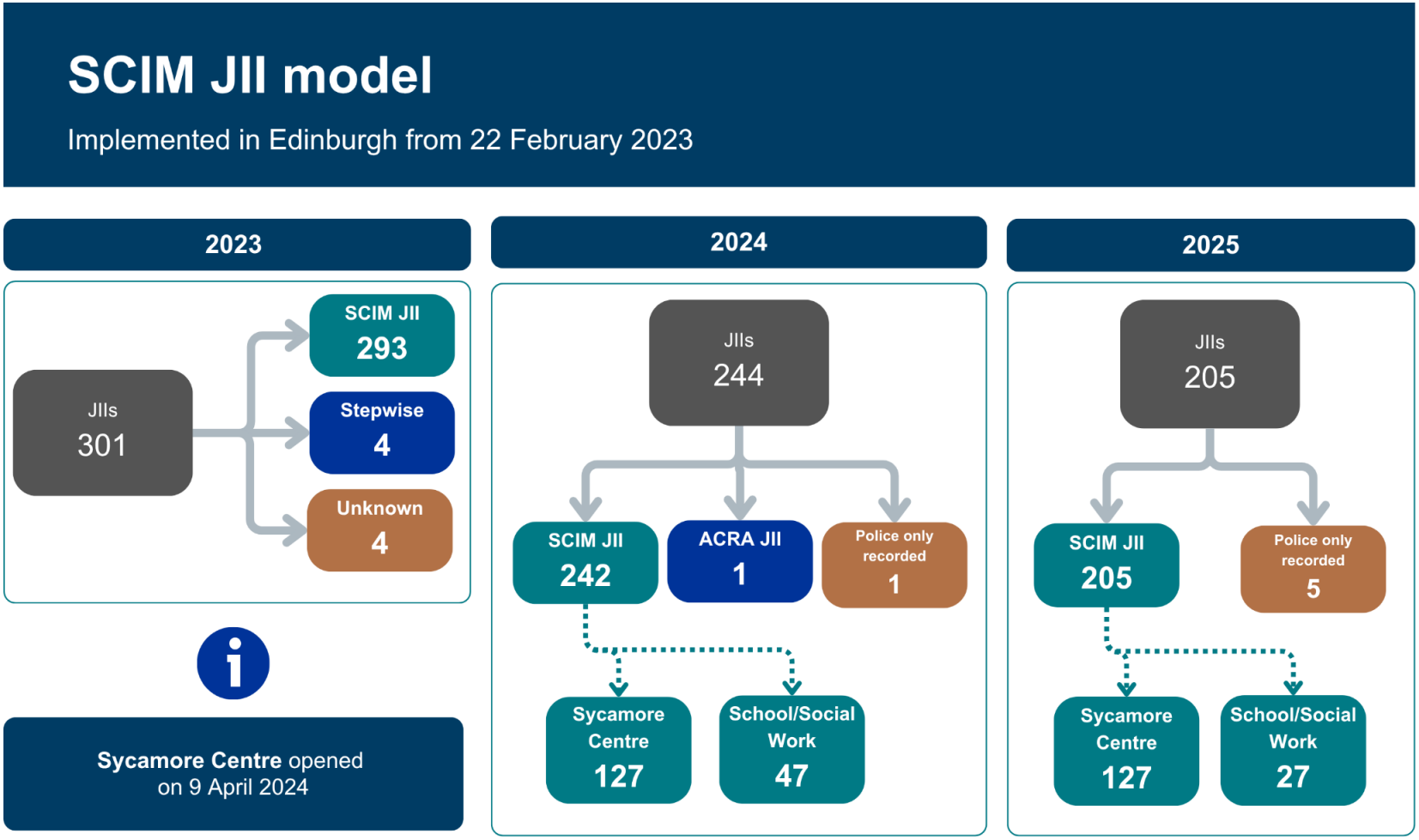


Figure 3 - SCIM JLL Model (2023)

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Contextual safeguarding

Throughout the remainder of 2023, there remained a strong focus on how to realise Contextual Safeguarding as an approach to the issues of Child Exploitation and trafficking and scale this across the whole city.

This resulted in the Chief Social Work Officer bringing a proposal to the ECPC to form an additional strategic sub-group focused on these matters. The Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding Oversight group was constituted in January 2025 with the Terms of Reference agreed in May 2025.

This is a multi-agency strategic group which has worked to establish a Risks Outside the Home Guidance and Screening Tool, push out briefings and awareness raising materials for workforce and interested community guardians (which are available on the ECPC Child Protection for Professionals webpages), and explore a range of other pertinent local and national issues such as: thresholds and pathways for children who go missing; cuckooing; Scotland's Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy 2025; and the National Review into group based CSAE. Members of this oversight also continue to support the Global Centre for Contextual Safeguarding Local Area Interest Network; national Contextual Safeguarding Core Group; and the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation national group, as well as other regional work in this area.

Children in detention

A 2026 Report[8] following an inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) found that Edinburgh has improved its management of children in custody, reporting that children were managed appropriately, with "with no children placed in cells and no unnecessary detention following decisions to release" (Article 37).

[8] HMICS Custody inspection report Edinburgh 2026

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Cluster 4 – Case Study

The Sycamore Centre is located within a secluded area of a residential space in Edinburgh. The views of children and young people have been incorporated into the design. The location was agreed with cognition to the proximity of Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) within Edinburgh.

The Sycamore Centre includes Aspen and Rowan houses, which have been specially designed to feel welcoming and safe for children and young people. Aspen and Rowan houses each have two private floors, enabling four Bairns Hoose services to be provided simultaneously. Each floor has:

- a welcome area - where children and their families can spend time when they arrive, they can access refreshments and take time to attune to the surroundings
- a 'Your Space' area -where children can spend time before, during breaks and following Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs) taking place or can access support services. These rooms are named 'Your Space' as the child is encouraged to individualise this to meet their needs with various seating options, autonomy over lighting, etc
- an interview room and monitoring suite
- a toilet
- The bottom floors each have a wellbeing room, and the upper floors each have a smaller counselling room where children can access 1:1 support or a quiet, contained space. The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) is fully implemented within The Sycamore Partnership.

The Sycamore Partnership consists of the City of Edinburgh Council, Mid Lothian Council, East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, E and J Division of Police Scotland and has developed further to include

representation from Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Court and Tribunal Service, and other NHS services such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

The child's journey has been central to the development of The Sycamore Centre. Prior to the Scottish Government's commitment to Bairns Hoose, multiagency meetings between the Sycamore Partnership took place, which focused on the child's journey through the service as this was being developed. This enabled a child's lens focus to remain as plans progressed.

Each child's journey through the Sycamore Centre is unique and will be dependent on a number of variables. At the moment, this is coordinated by the Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) with input from health, social work, and police, as well as contributions from education.

Currently, the main reason for a child accessing the Sycamore Centre is for the purpose of SCIM JII. The child is supported to attend the Sycamore Centre to complete the SCIM JII, and an update is given back to the IRD to inform ongoing coordination of assessments and planning. A named person would remain in contact with the child and their family to update as assessments continued.

Next steps

The ultimate vision for our Bairns' Hoose service is to be able to offer recovery support to all children who visit Sycamore. We have been working in partnership with NHS CAMHS to develop further recovery support and have included within our 2026/2027 funding application a request to fund two recovery workers and one recovery coordinator posts to enable this to progress.

If children or young people require medical care, this is currently taking place within the RHCYP. The child's health needs are coordinated within the IRD, where a multiagency strategy for Child Protection concerns is progressed. The Sycamore Partnership has developed links with Child Protection Paediatric leads within

NHS Lothian to further incorporate the holistic health needs of children into our Bairns Hoose Service. Within our 2026/2027 affiliate fund application, we have requested funds to recruit a play therapist based within the RHCYP with a focus on supporting children and young people who are referred to Sycamore Centre before, during and following medical investigations. This aims to provide a more cohesive Bairns Hoose journey for them.

Throughout 2025/2026, the partnership has continued to strengthen links with the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). We are progressing plans to install a live link to court within Rowan, which would enable children to give their evidence to court from the trauma-informed setting of the Sycamore Centre in the future, alongside Scottish Court and Tribunal Services (SCTS). We have sought funding within our 2026/2027 application to enable this to progress.

Throughout 2025/2026, the partnership worked closely with the University of Edinburgh, and research regarding the experiences of children, young people, their families and professionals who access the Sycamore Centre was undertaken. This informed a Joining the Dots report and learning events. The learning from this has helped to inform service development for 2026/2207 – if our funding application is successful, we plan to recruit a Bairns Hoose Coordinator and a Link Worker. The Link Worker role will offer a single point of contact for children and young people, and their families, who are accessing the Sycamore Bairns Hoose service from the point of referral until the outcome. The Link Worker will also have a key role in the development of children and young people's participation plans and groups. The Sycamore Partnership will continue to work alongside Edinburgh University to inform a programme theory for our Bairns Hoose development throughout 2026/2027. This will ensure ongoing links from the experiences of children, young people and families who access the Sycamore Bairns Hoose service within the development of the service.

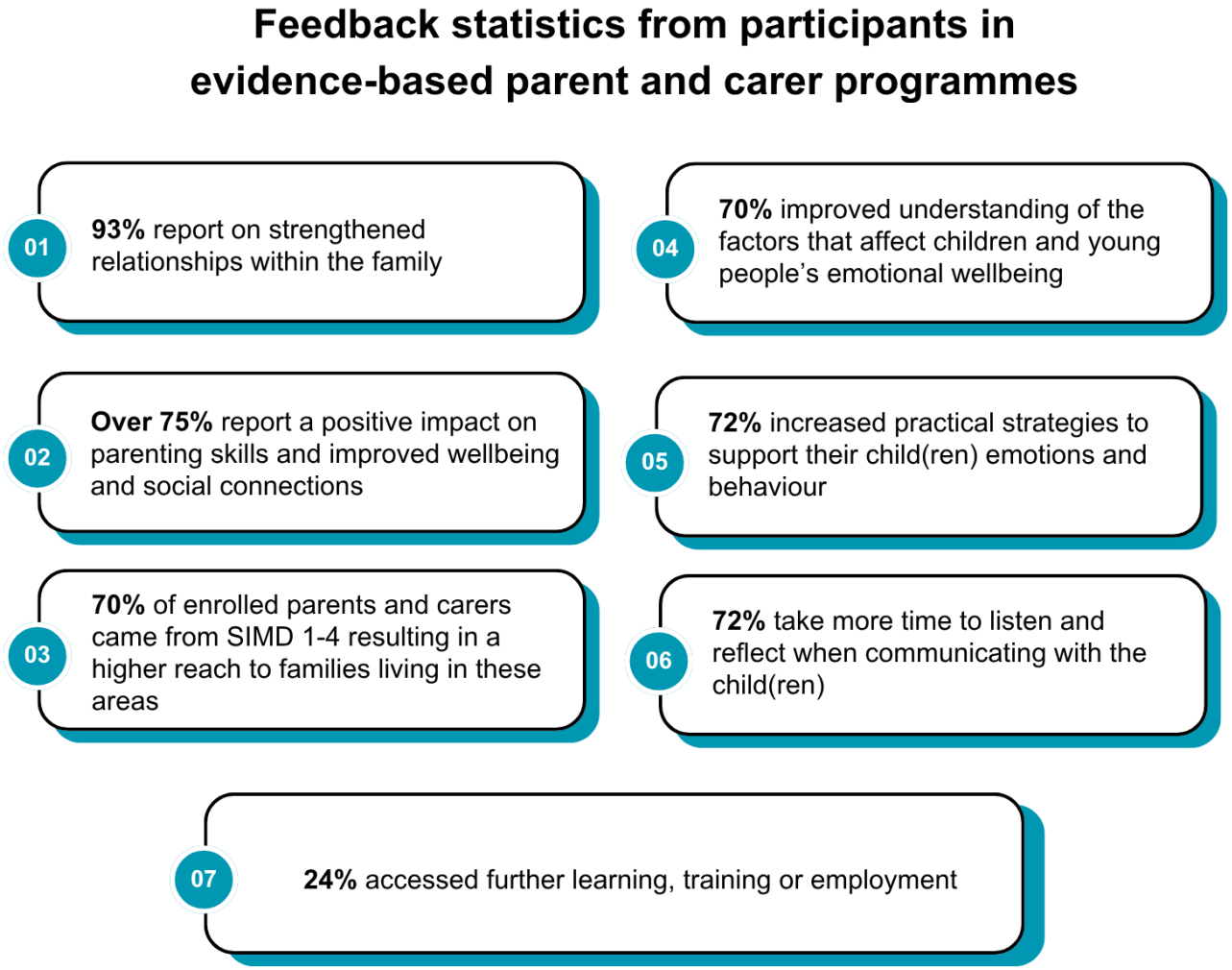
Cluster 5 – Family environment and alternative care



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Evidence-based parenting programmes

During this planning cycle we further developed our evidence-based parenting programmes as a key/supportive intervention of the delivery of children's services. Our long-established evidence-based universal and targeted parenting programmes, the Incredible Years, Triple P, Raising Children with Confidence, and Raising Teens with Confidence, provide learning opportunities for parents and carers to develop their understanding and skills, strengthening the parent - child relationships and enhancing their parenting capacity. These focus on reducing isolation, by promoting emotional health and wellbeing. Raising Children with Confidence and Raising Teens



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with Confidence courses explicitly mention Getting it Right for Every child to enshrine children's rights in the learning. Parents and carers participated in these programmes, and the course evaluations found that:

Bitesize Learning information Sessions in partnership with Edinburgh Libraries, provide support sessions on key stages of children's development: weaning, sleep, speech and language, toilet training, digital wellbeing and neurodiversity, facilitated by colleagues from NHS Lothian, The City of Edinburgh Council and the Third Sector.

Seasons for Growth programme for parents and carers provides a supportive environment to explore the impact of bereavement, grief, loss, separation and divorce on a child's wellbeing. It focuses on communication as a tool to help children navigate their experiences with parents and carers providing the scaffolding for this. Open access community-based courses are available across the city.

The Parents and Carers Information and Support Service provide a person-centred response to over 1200 direct requests from parents and carers, and professionals. Requests for parenting programme information accounted for 90% of all enquiries.The team continues to signpost and promote the Togetherness Library Pathway to parents and carers seeking support via the Parents and Carers Information and Support Service. New parent registrations record the most viewed bitesize modules accessed are Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby; Understanding your baby; Understanding your Child and Understanding your teenager's brain.

The Support for Families webpages analytics report an increase in engagement and active users seeking information on parenting support and information. Analysis of website analytics identified the five top-viewed pages recorded are 1. Family Activities, 2. Additional Support Needs, 3. Parenting Courses and Support, 4. Financial Support 5. Domestic Abuse. These results are reviewed regularly to inform service development and improve access to signposting parenting support and information.

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WFW and the collabs

Engaging and consulting with families

The Partnership held a whole family wellbeing fund, and delivery enabled additional engagement and consultation with families, on the support they feel would be beneficial, supporting different levels of need, preventing concerns from escalating. Embedded within the design and systems of the collaborations and the central team.

A WFW Parent Panel of parents with experience of accessing services was developed over the last year, providing participation opportunities to improve access to support for families. The WFW Participation Officer took time to develop trusting relationships within the group, ensuring the parents had autonomy, choice and felt safe to share their experiences and views. Opportunities were developed with the parents and partners to ensure sessions were meaningful and allowed for a sharing of perspectives and knowledge between parents, professionals and leaders. Feedback loops were incorporated into the process to ensure the parents received responses on the impact their involvement had made and where changes in access to support for families. The WFW Participation Officer took time to develop trusting relationships within the group, ensuring the parents had autonomy, choice and felt safe to share their experiences and views. Opportunities were developed with the parents and partners to ensure sessions were meaningful and allowed for a sharing of perspectives and knowledge between parents, professionals and leaders. Feedback loops were incorporated into the process to ensure the parents received responses on the impact their involvement had made and where changes where influenced. The panel have provided feedback for family support awareness material, input for staff development events, family journey experiences for the policy and sustainability committee and valuable insight for managers in CAMHS during the development of the Neurodevelopmental pathway.

Digital wellbeing and online safety sessions are running in collaboration with schools at the request of their parent and carer community. The sessions are designed around responses from consultation with the parents and carers and include signposting to the Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety resources curated by the Digital Education Team within The City of Edinburgh Council.

Whole Family Wellbeing (WFW) Trauma Coordinator role has a focus on improving the support available for families affected by trauma. Supporting parents to gain a greater understanding of their own experiences of trauma and learn effective coping strategies to help support their own and their child's emotional responses.

The WFW trauma steering group has been set up to support parents with lived experience of trauma to be involved in the codesign, pilot and evaluation of trauma support for parents and carers. With the support of partner agencies this will include psychoeducation sessions including therapeutic parenting approaches for parents and carers. The parents completed an experiential evaluation of the Solihull Understanding Your Own Trauma course and are using their learning from this and other programme materials to support the development and delivery of an initial Introduction to Trauma session for parents.

Parent and Carers, Wellbeing and Child Poverty Team

The team delivers high-quality capacity building and workforce learning opportunities to develop skills, enhance and inform practice to support children, parents, carers and families. These include Connecting with Parents Motivations, Solihull Approach, Mental Health Matters, Enriching Play, Turn Your Life Around (TYLA), Raising Children with Confidence Train the Trainer, Raising Teens with Confidence Train the Trainer, and 1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty. Bespoke training and information sessions for staff continue to be delivered by request from schools and Third sector partners. Follow-up staff evaluation

shows that 98% feel that it has improved practice, supporting staff to work within an evidence-based framework and to employ a trauma-informed approach to supporting parents and carers.

The Whole Family Wellbeing Team have also been running an Enhanced Trauma training pilot with a cohort of WFW-funded practitioners. The pilot allowed practitioners to receive enhanced level training, support and coaching to develop their trauma-informed and responsive practice and, where appropriate, provide safety and stabilisation support to children, young people and parents who have been impacted by trauma. Leadership reflective sessions have also been provided. The recruitment of a CAMHS Clinical Psychologist will enable the pilot to be extended.

WFW Locality Coordinators, school staff and the Education Wellbeing Service have been piloting the Mellow for Young People programme with young people in S1 in Drummond and Liberton High School. With training and support provided by Mellow Parenting, the programme aims to improve young people's mental health, well-being and confidence by supporting them to explore and build healthy relationships within a safe, supportive and nurturing group. Following the initial programme, young people reported a decrease in conduct and peer problems as well as improvement in feelings of self-judgement and isolation. Some of the young people have indicated an interest in becoming peer supporters within future groups. Getting the Right Support at the Right Time workshops have been delivered to staff teams to increase awareness of the supports available for families and support the development of the key Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support.

Ensure that supporting parents and carers is at the heart of our commitment to children's wellbeing and children's rights

The Whole Family Wellbeing team have completed a pilot in partnership with Social Care Direct (SCD), in response to the recognition that a high number of calls to SCD do not meet the threshold to receive Social

Work intervention. 15 families benefited from a Holistic Whole Family Support approach, ensuring they were linked to appropriate support when they needed it, providing early intervention or a more joined-up approach to try to prevent issues escalating or requiring crisis support.

56% percent of the families supported during the pilot had previously contacted other services to seek support, and 75% had attended a child planning meeting for their child. Indicating that despite processes being in place, many of the families did not feel they were receiving the support their family needed.

The support offered involved the crucial element of 'holding' families until a suitable package of support was in place. This ensured families felt supported and were able to reach in for support as and when they needed it. This prevented the 'revolving door' where families were labelled by services as 'not engaging', or their cases being 'closed' following a brief period of stability or once their allocated period of support had ended, resulting in a referral to a different service. Families valued having a trusted person to contact who understood their situation and reported an increase in confidence in where to access support, a higher satisfaction that the right support was in place for their family and although for some, circumstances were still challenging, most reported an increase in family wellbeing by the end of the pilot.

The Single Point of Access (SPA)

It is now operational across City of Edinburgh. Most supports for children, young people and their families continue to be agreed and progressed through our Getting it Right for Every Child framework. The SPA supports GIRFEC and the Team Around the Child when they are struggling to find access to the supports they are seeking. The aim is to facilitate access to timely support. The request proforma includes the views of the family, and whenever possible, the child and young person, on the supports that they feel would be most helpful. This forms the most important aspect of the information submitted in terms of seeking to identify appropriate support options. Alongside this, the SPA has monthly locality networking meetings. The

aim of these meetings is to support local collaboration and knowledge so that those supporting children, young people and families can help them access support as close to home as possible and with minimal bureaucracy.'

Every CEC school has an identified Care Experienced Lead Teacher. Throughout session 2024/25, the Quality Improvement Education Officer Care Experience and the We Matter Team (WMT) have delivered updates, professional learning and opportunities to celebrate success through the Care Experience Network, which meets three times per year. Themes are based on staff feedback and need. The dedicated MS Teams site provides an effective city-wide platform for sharing information. There is an open forum and channel to share discussions and ask questions to collaborate on practice. The We Matter Team manage this and gathers feedback; staff feel that regular updates across the network are most beneficial and would also like the opportunity to have smaller discussions in breakout rooms to share practice. We have also expanded the number of members on the network across the CEC Inclusion Team. Evaluation and themes from sessions 24-25 indicated that the network would like further training and information on Tracking and monitoring, trauma-informed practice and continuation of sharing good practice.

In partnership with the Educational Psychology team, we have enhanced professional learning to over 90 staff members in schools through Care for a Cuppa, "We Matter in the Classroom", and the Change, Loss and Grief training, delivering to staff in 15 high schools and 14 primary schools. All participants rated the quality and content of the training 8/10 or above, and almost all participants showed a 2-point scale increase when assessing their knowledge and understanding after the training.

We Matter in the Classroom

This project aims to build teacher knowledge, skill set, and confidence in addressing pupils' emotional wellbeing and self-regulation needs, to improve the experience and access to education for care-experienced children and young people, as well as other vulnerable learners.

Fundamental principles considered include nurture-based, restorative practice; awareness of the impact of trauma/ adverse experiences; brain development and plasticity; importance of school environment and key relationships; potential for small changes to have impact; use of practical evaluation methods.

Whole staff training is followed by small groups of teachers working with a mentor to identify a test of change they want to explore to improve the outcomes for individual and groups of care-experienced children and young people that they work with. This year, the We Matters team worked with 4 schools and 8 teachers. Class teachers have evaluated the project very positively, noting the benefit of time for reflection along with support with making adaptations to the learning environment and strategies such as the use of 'scripts'.

Grief and Loss in Residential Settings Training

Experiences of loss and change are significant in the lives of care-experienced people. Loss and change, whether through bereavement or other events, can incite a grief reaction. This training aims to build staff confidence in supporting young people who have experienced significant loss and change in their lives. Developed by Educational Psychological Services, the training content was informed by conversations with staff members working in residential care settings in Edinburgh.

The overall aims of the project are to increase staff knowledge and understanding of how young people deal with change, loss and grief, as well as how to support young people during this time.

CEC QIEO and We Matter Team staff deliver training in schools with Who Cares? Scotland for all staff. The aim of the training is to inform staff about the care experience and its potential impact on a pupil's

educational journey. The training included practical solutions and strategies for supporting care. Between 2020 and 2025, we have delivered training in 31 schools. Impact was positive from staff across the primary and secondary sectors. Over 80% of staff strongly agreed that the training enhanced their knowledge of what life is like for young people in care and helped include and support Care Experienced young people more effectively. enhanced their knowledge of what life is like for young people in care and help include and support Care Experienced young people more effectively.

Cluster 5 – Case Study

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Cluster 6 – Basic Health and Welfare



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Table 2: Looking back 2023-2026 (Cluster 6)

Looking back 2023 to 2026	Progressing children's rights
Consider our response to the increase in cause for concern at 27-30 month reviews for children in Scotland, the factors in their life that are likely to influence (positively or negatively) their future progress, and their need for additional support to attain good outcomes.	This will be considered by the Best Start in Life working group in the Edinburgh Children's Services Partnership Plan (see Cluster 6 in the main report for further detail).
Provide increased independent advocacy provision for young people with mental and physical healthcare needs (excluding statutory CAMHS advocacy for those receiving tier 4 input).	Time to Talk offers advocacy for Young People with mental health difficulties, when accessing GPs and Education supports. Wellbeing and mental health are joint priorities in the latest Children's Services Plan, and this will be considered when forming actions under this priority.
Provide a range of training and resources to ensure that there is equity of access to education for all children and young people who are absent from school due to their health.	As of 2026, children and young people normally resident in the City of Edinburgh, but attending an independent school, can access teaching provision at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People free of charge if they meet the medical criteria (source: Edinburgh Council)
When parents have conditions that limit their ability to provide activities outside the home, and where children and young people may be carers, ensure there is sufficient provision of one-to-one support by workers, befriending by volunteers and social groups in community settings.	Befriending is available to children and young people via the Umbrella Hubs. We will continue to work closely with families and professionals, and welcome further information that helps us understand where additional partnership support may be needed.

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Looking back 2023 to 2026	Progressing children's rights
More sexual health training in community settings for young people with learning disabilities or who are neurodivergent.	Specialist sexual wellbeing training is available for professionals working with young people with additional needs via Public Health's 'Healthy Respect' team, organised via LAYC. An e-learning course is also available.

Cluster 7 – Education, leisure and culture



The Whole Family Wellbeing funded Edinburgh Parent-led Childcare Collaborative was designed to strengthen parent-led out-of-school care by developing a structured package of capacity-building support in the areas known to present the greatest challenges: organisational set-up; workforce learning and qualifications; fundraising; and governance. In addition, the collaboration aimed to respond to the needs of existing Clubs as prioritised by them, while also supporting the creation of a new parent-led after-school club in a targeted area of need. The capacity building programme was developed in Year one and involved

significant collaboration with external organisations. This programme was launched at the start of 2025, and existing clubs have been accessing it over the course of the last year. Ongoing evaluation and feedback processes were introduced from the outset, to build on learning from earlier work and ensure that the programme continued to be led by the needs of the clubs. Some sessions were identified by collaborative partners at the planning stage, while others were developed in response to participant requests and feedback gathered through session evaluations. These included:

- A Good Governance webinar with a question-and-answer session delivered with the law firm Gillespie Macandrew.
- Business Development and Sustainability delivered by Business Gateway, a publicly funded service that provides free business support advice, networking and practical tools to help building businesses.
- A short series of bespoke fundraising courses developed and delivered in partnership with Queen Margaret University.
- A session on writing effective funding bids delivered by a fundraising specialist.
- 'Finance for Non-Financial Managers' training, delivered by Queen Margaret University.

Alongside the in-person training sessions, the collaboration developed a mandatory and best practice policy and procedure checklist to support good governance. This resource will inform future capacity building activity, based on the most common challenges identified by school age childcare providers. A facilitated conversation was also held with EDAN Hub to explore inclusive practice and consider both the opportunities and the challenges for universal school age childcare providers. The collaboration is now assessing what further capacity building support may be needed in this area.

For Year 3, the collaboration has gained an additional formal partner in the Parental Employability Team, funded by the Scottish Government and based within the City of Edinburgh Council. This follows informal but

close joint working during the first two years. Consultation with parents and carers identified Magdalene as the location for a new parent led after school club. Following a lengthy Care Inspectorate approval process the Club became operational in Summer 2026. The capacity building programme developed during Years one and two has supported the design and application of the new provision in Magdalene and will continue to do so as the club becomes established.

Table 3: Looking back 2023-2026 (Cluster 7)

Looking back 2023-2026	Progressing children's rights
Continue to build a whole system approach across public and voluntary sector to create networks of support for children, young people, parents and carers when they face barriers to participation in learning, including signposting, navigation and access for professionals and families to supports/services.	Children and Young People and their families can access support, including signposting and navigation through EDAN and the Umbrella Hubs, while professionals can request signposting via the Umbrella Hubs professional support line. The Partnership recognises that entry points to support can still be confusing to navigate and will continue to build upon progress in this area in the coming years.
Enable voluntary sector organisations based in communities to provide consistent arts and creative play experiences for babies, young children, parents and carers.	Voluntary sector organisations based in communities provide arts and creative play experiences for babies, young children, parents and carers. Some of this activity is supported by funding independent of the partnership (such

as Creative Scotland), and some organisations also access partnership-linked funding such as Connected Communities, which is awarded competitively across three funding strands. We recognise the value of this provision and will continue to monitor activity in this area.

Cluster 8 – Special protection measures



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Table 4: Looking back 2023-2026 (Cluster 8)

Looking back 2023-2026	Progressing children's rights
We will continue to highlight the importance of good Corporate Parenting and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) awareness to all officers.	Within the WFWF team, Trauma coordinators deliver cross-sector training and a reflective practice calendar, assess workforce need and develop an enhanced trauma-informed pathway for the Third Sector. Trauma-informed practice underpins the latest Children's Partnership Plan and the Children's Partnership is committed promoting the integration of the five core principles into all strands of work across policies, practice, systems and organisational culture.
We will promote increased liaison between Community Policing and Children's Homes to enhance relationships between police and young people	
Continue to develop the action outlined in the Corporate Parenting Plan which focuses on ensuring children and young people on special measures are able to participate in provision of their choice in their 'home community' in acknowledgement of the support and consistency this provides.	
Continue to develop and improve approaches designed to protect from and prevent Female Genital Mutilation, including ensuring accountability for those responsible.	ECPC is continuing work with statutory and voluntary partners across Edinburgh and the Lothians to revise the Inter-Agency Procedures for the protection of girls and woman at risk of Female Genital Mutilation.

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Looking back 2023-2026	Progressing children's rights
Develop better restorative learning and protections for young people both victims and perpetrators	