

# Edinburgh Children's Partnership Annual Report 2025 – 2026



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# Introduction

This report presents the third and final annual review of progress under the Edinburgh Children's Services Plan 2023–2026, setting out the collective achievements of partners and reflecting on the impact of sustained multi-agency collaboration across the city.

The Edinburgh Children's Partnership (the Partnership) holds responsibility for the strategic planning, development and delivery of services for children and young people on behalf of the wider Edinburgh Partnership. Its membership spans statutory, third sector and community organisations, reflecting a shared accountability for improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for children, young people and families. The Partnership continues to be chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning, NHS Lothian, and vice-chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer and Service Director for Performance, Quality and Improvement (Children's and Criminal Justice Services), City of Edinburgh Council.

In this final year, partners have built on the strong foundations established in Years 1 and 2, further strengthening collaboration and maintaining a clear focus on prevention, early intervention and whole family support. Across the three-year period, activity has been driven by a shared commitment to embedding children's rights, delivering on The Promise,

and ensuring that children, young people and families receive the right support, at the right time and in the right place.











Multi-agency sub-groups have played a critical role in translating strategic priorities into tangible improvements in practice, driving forward action in areas such as child poverty, whole family wellbeing, youth work, and early years support. This has enabled a more coordinated, responsive and evidence-informed system of support across Edinburgh.

This report provides an overview of progress during Year 3, alongside reflection on achievements and learning across the full period of 2023–2026. It also recognises the ongoing challenges facing children, young people and families, including persistent poverty, increasing complexity of need, and sustained pressure on services.

As the Partnership concludes this Plan, it does so with a strengthened collaborative infrastructure, clear shared priorities, and a robust evidence base to inform future planning. There is a strong foundation on which to build the next phase of improvement, with continued focus required to address inequality and deliver lasting change.

# Performance Indicators

The Partnership's **10 high-level performance indicators** were established to measure progress and impact across key priorities in the **Children's Services Plan 2023–2026**. These indicators provide a clear and consistent framework for tracking outcomes for children, young people, and families in Edinburgh.

<p><b>Child Poverty</b></p> <p>1  ⇒ <b>Worse</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Worsening</b> over time</p> <p>Most recent data point 2023/24</p>	<p><b>P1 Healthy Weight</b></p> <p>6  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Worsening</b> over time</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>
<p><b>Looked After Children</b></p> <p>2  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Improving</b> over time</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>	<p><b>P1 Literacy</b></p> <p>7  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Improving</b> over time ⇒ <b>Reducing</b> inequalities gap</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>
<p><b>Smoking in Pregnancy</b></p> <p>3  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Stable</b> over time ⇒ <b>Reducing</b> inequalities gap</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>	<p><b>Secondary School Attendance</b></p> <p>8  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Improving</b> over time ⇒ <b>Widening</b> inequalities gap</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>
<p><b>Breastfeeding</b></p> <p>4  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Stable</b> over time ⇒ <b>Reducing</b> inequalities gap</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>	<p><b>School Leavers Positive Destinations</b></p> <p>9  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Improving</b> over time ⇒ <b>Reducing</b> inequalities gap</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>
<p><b>Developmental Concerns</b></p> <p>5  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Stable</b> over time ⇒ <b>Reducing</b> inequalities gap</p> <p>Most recent data point 2023/24</p>	<p><b>Looked After School Leavers</b></p> <p>10  ⇒ <b>Better</b> compared to National figures ⇒ <b>Worsening</b> over time</p> <p>Most recent data point 2024/25</p>

*Indicators are reported to be 'stable' when change has been calculated as not statistically significant change*

## Sub-Group Progress

### Complex Maternity and Early Years Social Factors /Neurodevelopment pathways

The Maternal and Early Years Complex Needs Working Group continued to deliver cross sector improvement work through three dedicated workstreams focused on:

#### Antenatal Pathway Workstream

Through the development of a dedicated short life sub-group, this workstream has brought together key participants and developed a plan to strengthen referral pathways between midwifery, third sector organisations (TSOs) and statutory services for families experiencing complex social factors. Planned work will continue into the next cycle of work to build on this and ensure referrals are streamlined, safe, and accessible.

#### Father Inclusive- Practice Workstream

This workstream involved wide collaboration with father specific organisations, community groups, and lived experience consultation to embed father inclusive practices

across Edinburgh services working with babies, young children, and their families, from pregnancy to early years.

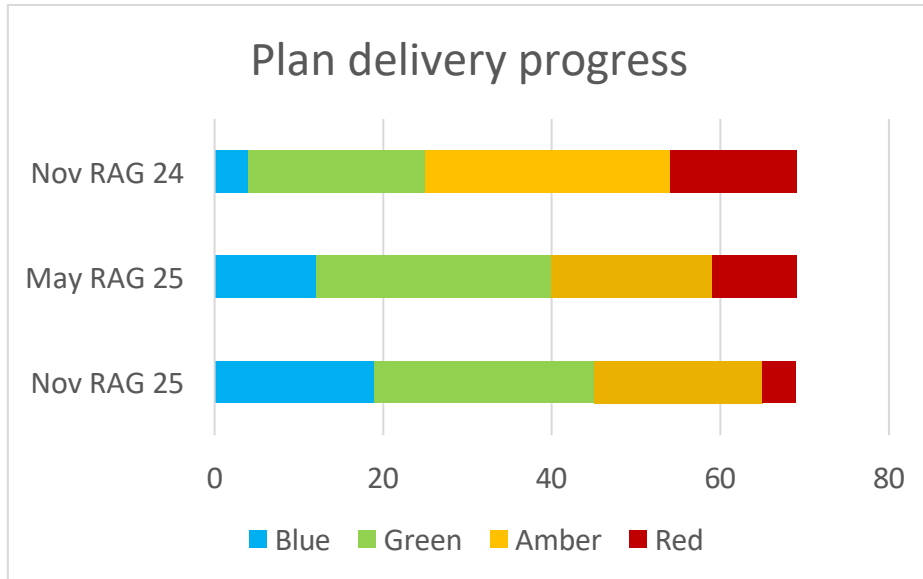
This consultation led to the development of Father Inclusive Principles of Practice and a new father referral pathway (prebirth to 5 years) which will sit on City of Edinburgh Council's Families Pages, with translation available. The next step for this workstream is the implementation of Father Inclusive Principles of Practice across the early years workforce.

#### No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Workstream

To support practitioners working with infants and young children whose families have NRPF, and create a central pathway ensuring safe access to support without risking immigration status, this sub-group developed an accessible **Early Years NRPF Pathway** for practitioners and families. This included information on safe referral options, services available without affecting immigration claims, legal entitlements for infants and children under 5 and practical supports (education, health, welfare advice, basic needs). The pathway will be hosted on the City of Edinburgh Council Families Pages (April 2026) with full translation function included for accessibility.

## Corporate Parenting and The Promise

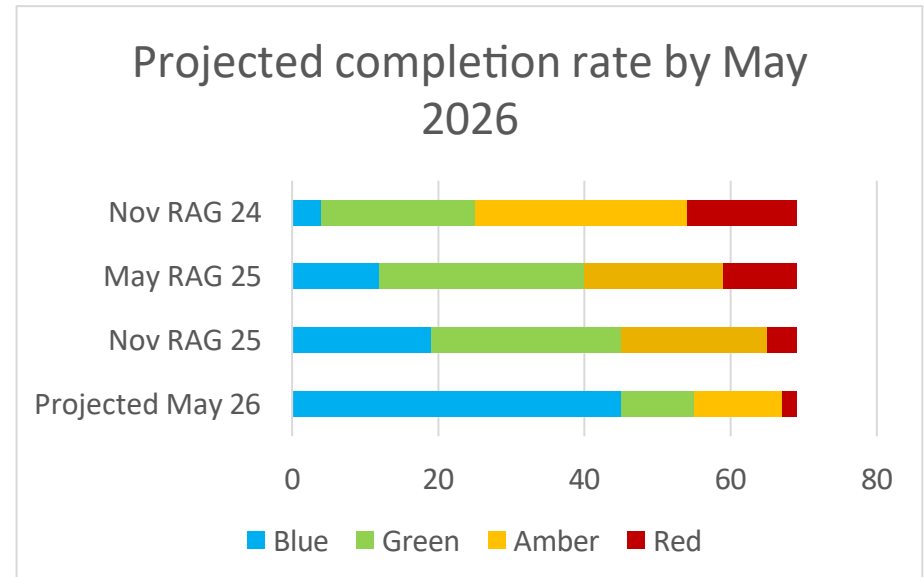
Of the 69 actions in the 2023-2026 City of Edinburgh Corporate Parenting Plan, we saw a marked shift in the number of on track or completed actions in 2025, as shown below.



The percentage of red and amber actions also reduced significantly throughout 2025.

Percentage of tasks ranked as blue, green, amber and red at each RAG status meeting				
	November 2024	May 2025	November 2025	Percentage change
Blue	6%	17%	28%	<b>+22%</b>
Green	30%	41%	37%	<b>+7%</b>
Amber	42%	28%	29%	<b>-13%</b>
Red	22%	14%	6%	<b>-16%</b>

Should the plan progress as predicted then it is likely that there will be around a 75-80% completion rate by May/June 2026.



The board have acknowledged that some actions may not be achievable by plan end. This is a combination of priorities and needs changing over the three years that the plan has covered, and pressures/resources making progress challenging. All efforts to complete the plan are being made, with a renewed focus on any actions marked as Amber and Red in particular. These actions are being reviewed at every Corporate Parenting Board in the first half of 2026.

The Corporate Parenting Board and Edinburgh's Champions Boards are spending time considering targets that are looking unlikely to be completed by plan end, to make decisions about whether these are still relevant and necessary going forward into the new plan. These conversations will happen alongside creation of the new plan and priorities.

Alongside the monitoring of the Corporate Parenting Plan, the team oversaw the opening of the refurbished Corporate Parenting Hub in October 2025 and have been working hard to increase use of the spaces and promote the hub to the Community.

The Promise Learning Network has continued to meet over the last year and they have developed a Mural online working space that will be launched in Spring 2026.

The Youth Led Grant Programme provided a variety of opportunities for the Champs and the wider Care Experienced Community throughout 2025. Reporting back to CORRA was undertaken regarding the impact of the various projects, which included a visit to Copenhagen to learn about the Danish Care System; creation of Setting Up Home Packs; commissioning of an App for the Care Community in Edinburgh; Writing a

Cookbook; Equipment for the Hub including interactive screens, music equipment and a coffee machine.

# GIRFEC

The Edinburgh Children's Partnership has undertaken a comprehensive review and redevelopment of its multi-agency Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) guidance to ensure it remains aligned with current national policy and best practice. This refreshed guidance has been formally launched alongside updated Child Planning Framework documentation, providing a coherent and consistent approach to supporting children, young people and their families across services.

The revised guidance places a strong emphasis on a rights-based approach, ensuring that the voices, experiences and needs of children and young people are central to all decision-making processes. It promotes a more streamlined and accessible model of practice, with a focus on reducing complexity and supporting practitioners to respond more effectively and proportionately to need.

A key area of development has been the strengthening of early intervention and prevention. The guidance encourages practitioners to identify and respond to emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity, helping to prevent escalation and improve long-term outcomes. In parallel, the Child's Plan process has been simplified to reduce duplication, improve clarity, and ensure plans are meaningful, coordinated and outcome-focused.

Improvements to information sharing are also a central feature of the refreshed guidance. Clearer expectations and supporting materials have been introduced to build practitioner confidence, promote timely and appropriate

sharing of information, and support more effective multi-agency collaboration.

The updated guidance further clarifies the distinct roles within the GIRFEC approach. The role of the Named Person is reinforced as a supportive, non-statutory function, focused on promoting wellbeing and acting as a consistent point of contact for children, young people and families. In addition, the responsibilities of the Lead Professional have been more clearly defined, particularly in relation to coordinating multi-agency support and ensuring the effective delivery of the Child's Plan.

Alongside the guidance refresh, significant work has been undertaken to update and enhance the suite of professional learning resources. These resources are designed to support a "refresh and reset" of GIRFEC practice across all partner agencies, enabling practitioners to build confidence, develop shared understanding, and embed consistent, high-quality approaches across services.

Collectively, this programme of work represents a significant step forward in strengthening multi-agency collaboration, improving practice consistency, and ensuring that children, young people and their families remain at the heart of service design and delivery in Edinburgh.

## Healthy Places

Phases one and two of the pilot work with children and young people in Craigmillar, carried out in collaboration with A Place in Childhood (APiC), are now complete. Phase two, the Art Park, required clearing and landscaping to be carried out and now comprises collaboratively designed ground murals, planters, and tree planting. This fulfils two key aspects of the priorities identified by young people from two of the local Primary schools and the Secondary School in the first phase of the pilot: the paucity of public art as well as lack of spaces to hang out.

In order to launch the second phase of the project, APiC organised a local community event at the beginning of April 2025 to introduce the proposals to the wider community. This attracted around 300 people, with activities including rock painting, flower and seed planting, free food and ice cream, and a smoothie bike. The proposals were positively received by all attendees and connections were made with local community groups.

The Healthy Places group has been in discussion with local groups and organisations towards holding a similar event to celebrate the completion of the pilot project as well as to further develop and embed the work carried out in the first phase of the pilot. This will be dependent on identifying funding.

Over the course of the year, the membership of the group has been expanded to include representation from Edinburgh and

Lothian Greenspace Trust, Edinburgh Leisure, CEC Library and Culture services, the CEC active travel team, as well as the Planning Team within City of Edinburgh Council. This has enhanced the group's role as a hub for networking, discussion, consultation, and inter-agency collaboration. Through networking and connecting stakeholders, the group has contributed to various initiatives including library registration at birth, links to leisure services, implementation of the Edinburgh Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, and the incorporation of children and young people's views into consultation on the development of the Local Development Plan (City Plan 2040).



The Art Park in progress

## **Joint Commissioning**

In 2025-26 the Joint Commissioning Group (in conjunction with the working / steering groups for each programme) continued to oversee the allocation / administration of funding in relation to the following three programmes of work.

### **Connected Communities Programme:**

Oversight of partnership working continued through the monitoring of the Connected Communities (2024-27) grant programme, drawing on the learning in the previously published Lessons Learned Report. Work began with partners from University of Edinburgh, inviting Connected Communities Grant recipients to participate in an optional external evaluation of the impact of their work.

### **Community Mental Health Funding Programme:**

Scottish Government confirmed continued funding of this programme of work, and specifications to procure further mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people have now been developed, in order to complement and enhance existing offers in the city. Following recommendations from the evaluation of the previous phase of community mental health grants, interventions are being sought that will focus on helping children and young people to develop relationships, skills and strategies that support their mental health and wellbeing as well as providing access to interventions that are shown to improve mental health and reduce mental distress. It is aimed that new provision will be in place from October 2026.

### **Whole Family Wellbeing Programme:**

Work has progressed on a pilot of a digital data platform to support more effective delivery, monitoring and evaluation of supports from children, young people and their families in the city. The platform will be made available to the recipients of Connected Communities Grants (phase 1 of the trial) and wider funding where applicable, with the aim to digitally transform the way we collect monitoring data and inform future commissioning cycles.

### **Ongoing work and Next Steps:**

In 2025-26 financial year, the Joint Commissioning group has continued to support the ongoing allocation of funding in relation to these programmes.

Learning from the first year of the Connected Communities Grant Programme has been used to influence discussions within the wider Edinburgh Community Planning Partnership about the value of working differently with the Third Sector, as well as the value of jointly commissioning where possible.

Work has begun to consider development opportunities, including for partnership involvement, for the programme beyond April 2027 and how the Joint Commissioning Group can support the Connected Communities Steering Group. This will include consideration of how learning from joint commissioning opportunities can inform future funding of Third Sector work including learning relating to effective and proportionate monitoring and evaluation of impact

## Poverty

In 2025-26 the child poverty sub-group continued progressing action to support local and national child poverty targets through collaborative, cross-sectional partnership working and focusing on the development of sustainable welfare rights advice pathways for early years services, supporting frontline practitioners and developing a child poverty indicator set to monitor and inform progress towards child poverty targets.

The Edinburgh infant food insecurity pathway has been developed for practitioners and families and outlines cash first options, basic support information on infant feeding and access to wider holistic support. It will be ready for publishing in Q2 2026 and links to the early years welfare rights advice pathway pilot for midwifery, health visiting and family nurse partnership. This pilot will provide a seamless, no wrong door approach for any family with a child under 5 years of age with dedicated referral pathways to ensure families receive support with money worries at the earliest opportunity. Frontline practitioners identified the need for further information in order to support children and families facing precarious immigration status and a resource tool is under development to ensure practitioners can confidently help families access the benefits and services they are entitled to. Work is ongoing to identify opportunities to facilitate NHS staff in accessing child poverty training to highlight the different ways poverty affects people accessing services and where to obtain help locally.

The Edinburgh Partnership and Place team together with NHS Lothian Public Health Intelligence have developed a set of

child poverty indicator infographics to be included in the Edinburgh Local Child Poverty Action Report. These indicators allow easy, visual access to trends in several social, health and wellbeing factors known to contribute to and be affected by children living in poverty.

The strengths and achievements of the group over the duration of the current children's services plan 2023-26 include the development of strong, multi-agency engagement from partners in the child poverty agenda. This has informed and progressed cross-sectional pieces of work to advance child poverty actions focused on a rights-based approach to access to financial help and to holistic support for families with young children.

## **Single Point of Access and Community Mental Health**

During 2025 to 2026 the Single Point of Access continued to successfully operate citywide. During this phase of development there was a focus on sustainability, proportionate information sharing, relational approaches and capacity building.

The weekly Immediate Response Meetings (IRM) now effectively actions all support requests. This change has ensured proportionate information sharing and reduced the workload for most SPA members. A smaller core membership attends the IRM meetings and in 2025 to 2026 this increased to include health representation (CAMHS tier 2 and school nursing) this has increased collaboration and connecting supports with NHS.

There has continued to be successful integration with Whole Family Wellbeing (WFWF) through the participation of the locality co-ordinators. They have had a central role liaising directly with families and requesters. The Umbrella Hub lead (WFWF) has also attended the IRM's and chaired the monthly locality networks in North Edinburgh. This has also provided a link with Social Work.

The wider locality SPA membership are invited to attend monthly SPA network meetings. In 2025 to 2026 these meetings transitioned to focus on developing locality partnerships, the sharing of monthly locality request data and locality and service developments. The reduced frequency and move away from direct case discussion has reduced the

workload for the wider membership whilst maintaining up to date links with service providers in each locality.

The SPA continues to be successfully integrated with our Getting it Right for Every Child framework (GIRFEC). Almost all requests come from the GIRFEC named person or lead professional and the information submitted almost always evidences prior GIRFEC planning. Feedback from NHS indicates increased confidence in schools making requests to CAMHS through this integrated process.

During the 2024 to 2025 academic session there was a total of 277 requests to the Single Point of Access. Between July 2025 and the end of March 2026 there were a total of 183 requests.

### **Community Mental Health**

In October 2025 the final working group recommendations on the next phase of the Community Mental Health Strategy, including the use of associated funds, were presented to and agreed by the Children's Partnership. As Scottish Government baselined these funds within the core council budget from April 2025 the new strategic approach was also presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee in January 2026.

The recommendations were informed by the evaluation work previously undertaken by the implementation group. This included stakeholder engagement with children, young people, parent / carers, third sector and other professionals alongside an independently commissioned impact report. It was agreed that provision from the current community providers would be extended through contract variations until

October 2026. This was successfully taken forward and provides sufficient time for a planned transition to the new model of provision.

The revised strategic approach aims to strengthen Community Mental Health support which provides targeted evidence-based interventions for children and young people.

Interventions will focus on helping children and young people to develop relationships, skills and strategies that support their mental health and wellbeing as well as providing access to interventions that are shown to improve mental health and reduce mental distress.

The strategy aims to strengthen, and deepen, partnerships between the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS and third sector partners to enable a systems-wide approach to supporting children and young people's Mental Health and Wellbeing. Funding will continue to be used to commission community services. Alongside this enhanced staffing capacity in the Education Wellbeing Service will enable the development of a partnership approach to providing preventative mental health interventions and support for children, young people and families who would benefit from additional help to promote, manage and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

### **Working Group Achievements (2023-26)**

#### **Single Point of Access**

The Single Point of Access is fully operational across the city. It has successfully integrated Whole Family Wellbeing and interfaced with our GIRFEC framework. It has increased collaboration across health, social work and education to support children, young people and families access support.

### **Community Mental Health**

The working group has reviewed the community mental health strategic approach including engagement with children, young people, families and wider stakeholders such as education and third sector. The revised strategic approach has been agreed and will be launched in October 2026.

## Trauma Informed Practice

Over the past three years the Edinburgh Children's Partnership Multiagency Trauma Subgroup has acted as a single point of contact, raising awareness of the prevalence and impact of trauma and supporting organisational transformational culture and practice change.

### Staff Knowledge and Skills

The development of a consistency in staff knowledge, skills and language across the partnership is required to meet the Scottish Government vision for a trauma informed workforce.

Level 1 online Trauma training has become Essential Learning for all City of Edinburgh council staff from March 2026. Level 1 National Trauma Transformation Programme (NTTP) resources are available to all staff on [Turas Learn](#).

A Whole Family Wellbeing (WFW) Trauma Coordinator offers Level 2 Trauma Skilled training, advanced modules, Trauma lens support and reflective practice sessions to children and families' practitioners and managers in the voluntary sector and WFW funded organisations.

A WFW Enhanced Level 3 Trauma training pilot is also underway with a cohort of practitioners. This has included the development and delivery of the 2-day Safety and Stabilisation training programme, monthly coaching sessions and reflective leadership sessions to help embed practice. A part time Specialist Clinical Psychologist post is being recruited through CAMHS to expand the model and evaluate the pilot over another year.

The Trauma Ambassadors: Passionate About Trauma Network is a well-established community of practice for colleagues across a range of sectors to come together to share learning and examples of good practice.

### Staff Wellbeing

Facilitated, monthly Staff Wellbeing sessions are being trialled, offering a confidential space for practitioners, Team Leaders and Directors/CEOs to reflect, share and support others doing similar roles.

### Lived Experience

Parents with lived experience of trauma are involved in steering the codesign, pilot and evaluation of trauma support for parents and carers. The project aims to support parents to understand their own experiences of trauma and learn effective coping strategies for themselves and their children.

### Leadership/ Culture

The subgroup completed the 2024-25 Edinburgh response for the Improvement Service Annual Trauma National Learning Report highlighting Edinburgh's progress towards meeting the NTTP agenda. The CEC Trauma Lead post contract ended in September 2025, this along with a long-term absence of the CEC Trauma Champion resulted in some of the strategic actions of the group not being fully met.

## UNCRC

United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC) Act came into effect in July 2024, giving children and young people legal redress if their rights are breached. The purpose of the UNCRC - Edinburgh Children's Partnership (ECP) working group is to provide strategic oversight and drive forward action to deliver on the ECP plan 2023-2026 priority: 'We will ensure the rights of all children and young people in Edinburgh are upheld by embedding UNCRC into daily practice and processes.' The group leads on the timely production of the three-yearly Children's Rights Report in respect of partnership activity.'

The model of UNCRC reporting and self- assessment has been shared across the Edinburgh Children's Partnership. Ongoing work of the current UNCRC sub-group will extend into the next plan and transition to the Children's Rights and Participation sub-group. There is a system in place to capture progress on the previous plans 'next steps' and the early analysis. Which will be followed in late spring / early summer 2026 to explore and define next steps for 2026-2029 through the data and voice collected. The reporting form continues to be a live document, which is for all those within the partnership to capture their work to further children's rights in the city [Progressing Children's Right's in Edinburgh \(UNCRC Reporting\) – Fill in form](#) This page also functions as an introduction to the UNCRC / Children's rights with accessible video, links with GIRFEC and further information.

Engagement work with Children, Young People and their families has been carried out. This was grouped under the consultation for the next Children's Plan. However, included

specific areas to explore around how children and young people wanted to participate within the children's partnership. Alongside meaningful indicators that their participation had been meaningful. This provides an updated starting point for the development of a CYP partnership participation strategy in Year one of the next plan. Basing this strategy on the Lundy model, with build in feedback loops and ongoing engagement.

## Whole Family Wellbeing

The period of 2025 -2026 has seen the funded Whole Family Wellbeing (WFW) collaborations deliver effective services, upscaled or new models of practice and early steps to systems changes. With continued support around monitoring, impact and evaluation. The midway report has been shared which tracks progress made, key themes and overview of each collaboration. The extension to the fund until June 2027 provides opportunity to both embed the transformational changes in line with local and national evidence, and to support the principles of sustainability.

### **Skilled and supported workforce:**

There is continued focus on increasing the visibility and adoption of Whole Family Support (WFS) principles. Through reflective sessions, upskilling and peer models. Further to this a Legacy Learning series is underway taking place monthly during 2026. These are WFS principle shaped sessions based on the analysis from the Implementation Report and ongoing Impact reporting. The learning goes beyond Children's Services and is intended to support new thinking across public bodies and the third sector. These sessions will be recorded and made available to a wider audience via the WFWF website. The audience has been diverse and reaching into community planning, adult services, national agencies & other local authorities in attendance. The peer model of workshops "Getting it right for families" has seen a steady and positive uptake. A school pilot has been running since August 2025 to improve supports available for families, within two learning communities) to understand how schools can ensure more families get the right support when they feel they need it. A

survey was designed in collaboration with the schools to ensure we were asking the right questions in the right way. The focus was on how information was shared, how confident families felt approaching school for support and their experiences of this. To date we have attended in person parent consultations to ask families to complete the survey which will let us know what schools are already doing well and if there is anything families think could be done differently. The next stage was participation sessions with families, these were offered in person during the day, online evening sessions and 1:1 phone consultation. Following on from this is the professional survey which has been distributed to staff. The aim is for the information gathered to help identify areas where the Whole Family Wellbeing and other partners could provide additional support.

Ongoing roll-out of evidence-based Trauma Informed models in line with the Trauma Informed Working Group and delivery of a suite of trauma based, holistic family support training and upskilling (through reflective spaces and use of the National Trauma Roadmap and Family Support Self-Assessment). With an enhanced offering including reflective spaces for leaders and practitioners across the third sector, systemic case consultations and bespoke trauma lens workshops.

### **Participation and co-design:**

Co-production remains as a key stone to the WFW approach. Co-designing services with families implementing effective feedback loops can be daunting and are often difficult to do well. Through the life of Whole Family Wellbeing, we have seen an increased interest in these practices, and we would like to encourage this further by sharing stories of our

successes. Since November 2024, the Whole Family Wellbeing team has worked closely with a group of parents who have had varied experiences of both statutory and third sector support services. As we've worked with the Parent Panel, we have aimed to ensure their voices are heard by the right services and that services provide regular feedback loops to illustrate how the panel's contributions are influencing decisions.

One example was presented to the council's Policy and Sustainability committee in August 2025<sup>7</sup>. In collaboration with an Edinburgh Council Information Analyst, our parent panel helped map how families experience 'the system' – which demonstrated how fragmented, complex and siloed the family support system is, and was used as evidence to support proposals for a new city-wide approach to prevention, early intervention and mitigation (Neighbourhood Prevention Plan, NPP). Importantly, this input was fed back to families, who could see that their experiences were being heard by people who could make improvements, not just by an empathetic facilitator. Although just a snapshot, these activities show how direct engagement with families can provide practical insight that professional can't access from within their own system, and how this can improve services and relationships between families and professionals.

The projects funded through WFW were originally designed in 2023. All organisations exist in dynamic environments that must respond to disruption, and these collaborations are no exception. Since 2023, the funded landscape across the public and third sectors has changed considerably. Services that were intended to provide additional support have, in some areas, become the only available support.

In some cases, projects are being delivered by professionals who were not involved in the original design. This creates a valuable opportunity to reflect and redesign where needed with fresh insight. To support this, we are facilitating Design School sessions in collaboration with The Promise with selected collaborations. The Design School offers an idea space to revisit assumptions, consider emerging challenges and draw on everything we have learned so far, without being constrained by outdated assumptions.

Being taken forward into the next iteration of the children's plan is the commitment and embedding of the Whole Family Support Principles across the identified priorities. Additionally the learning related to data sharing and evidence base data collection will be taken forward within the Delivery element of the Partnership. While the reflective experiences of the WFW sub-group related to developing an effective, responsive model of funding specifically when it is allocated to the Children's Partnership will be considered through the JCG.

## Youth Work

During 2025–2026, the Youth Work Sub-Group focused on collaborative activities that recognised and strengthened the contribution youth work makes to other priority areas within the Children’s Services Plan. This work remained aligned with the eight priorities of Edinburgh’s Youth and Children’s Work Strategy: reducing inequality and the impact of poverty; health and wellbeing; closing the attainment gap; rights and participation; improving communication with a range of stakeholders; increasing partnership working between youth and children’s services; and improving equality and diversity within youth and children’s work services.

The sub-group worked with the Child Poverty Sub-Group to contribute to the Local Child Poverty Action Report. This involved synthesising the wide range of youth work activities taking place across the city that support children, young people and families and help mitigate the impacts of child poverty.

The working group also collaborated with the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group to contribute to a symposium event. This event brought together youth work services that support care experienced young people and created opportunities for information sharing about service provision, increasing awareness of the range of support available across the city.

The sub-group continued to progress the ‘Calls to Action’ developed following the Youth and Children’s Work Strategy Reconnector event. This work has involved engagement with wider Community Planning Partners to develop a shared approach to addressing the identified challenge areas, including a planned collaboration with the Local Employability Partnership.

Throughout the lifespan of the Children’s Services Plan 2023–2026, the Youth Work Sub-Group has strengthened the strategic visibility of youth work within the wider Children’s Partnership. By connecting youth work activity to priority areas such as child poverty, corporate parenting and employability, the group has helped highlight the sector’s role in prevention, early intervention and supporting positive outcomes for children and young people. The sub-group has also created opportunities for shared learning and collaboration across partners.

## Next Steps

The conclusion of the Edinburgh Children's Services Plan 2023–2026 marks a transition point for the Partnership as it moves towards the publication of the next Children's Services Plan (2026–2029).

Development of the new Plan is already underway and has been informed by the learning, evidence and engagement gathered throughout the current planning period. This includes feedback from children, young people and families, insights from practitioners and partners, and analysis of data and emerging need across the city.

The next Plan will build on the progress achieved to date, renew Edinburgh Children's Partnership's shared vision and set out clear priorities for the city. Building on a strong foundation of partnership working, the Partnership is well positioned to continue improving outcomes and ensure that Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and achieve their potential.