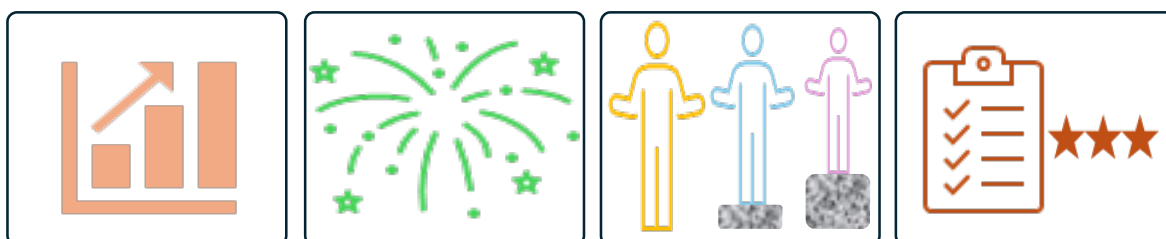


Equity and Excellence in Education



The National Improvement Framework

**Orkney Islands Council Review (2024-2025) &
Three Year Strategic Plan (2025-2028)**

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Introduction

In 2022, Orkney Islands Council published a 3-year improvement plan for the education service. An overview of the original plan (2022-2025) is given below:

| Priorities | Year 1 (22-23) | Year 2 (23-24) | Year 3 (24-25) |
|--------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Inclusion and Wellbeing | Staged Intervention | | |
| | Health and Wellbeing | | |
| | UNCRC | | |
| Learning and Achievement | Curriculum Review | | |
| | High Quality Learning and Teaching | | |
| | Scottish Attainment Challenge | | |
| Systems and Processes | Self-Evaluation for Continuous Improvement | | |
| | Professional Learning | | |
| | Resources and Management Systems | | |

Figure 1 Overview of themes within Excellence and Equity

In each of the subsequent years, the Council published a report on the work carried out over the preceding 12 months and details of the activities to be undertaken over the next 12 months. This process has involved 3 key elements:

- ✓ **Consideration of Progress and Impact:** This involves reviewing progress and impact, with respect to targets and outcomes set. It includes, where appropriate, any recommendation to 'park' or 'delete' aspects of the plan to make efficient and effective progress with identified priorities.
- ✓ **Consideration of Data:** This involves the collection, collation, evaluation, and analysis of key performance data (including Scottish Attainment Challenge Triannual Reports). It includes 'Horizon Scanning' with respect to the changing landscape of 'demand and expectation', both nationally and locally.
- ✓ **Consideration of Feedback:** This involves analysing ongoing and/or continuous (structured and informal) feedback, for example: from activities and meetings with individuals, teams, and heads of establishment. It includes observations made during school/setting visits by the extended directorate team as well as listening to specific feedback, for example: from inspection activity by HMIE (participative, thematic, school or setting specific) and the Care Inspectorate.

As the end of the original 3-year plan has now been reached, the aim (in the first part of the current document) is to once again report on the last 12 months, but also, with respect to the 3 key areas set out in the plan, reflect on the 3-year improvement period.

In the second part of the document, the aim is to set out a new 3-year plan, with additional details of the actions in year 1.

Vision, Values and Aims

The overall ambition of the Council's education service is for 'equity and excellence', hence the title of this plan. In practice, equity and excellence means:



Figure 2 Examples of Equity and Excellence in Education

'Equity and Excellence in Education', the plan, is encompassed by the Directorate Delivery Plan and aligned to Orkney Islands Council's Strategic Plan, in particular, its vision of 'Working Together for Orkney'. Equity and Excellence in Education is specifically aligned to the National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers, as illustrated below:

| Local Priorities | Link to NIF Priorities/Drivers |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Inclusion and Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education. • Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing. |
| Learning and Achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people. • Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people. • Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. |
| Systems and Processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and ELC leadership. • Teacher and practitioner professionalism. • Parent/carer involvement and engagement. • Curriculum and assessment. • School and ELC improvement. • Performance information. |

Figure 3 Links to National Improvement Framework Priorities and Drivers

Looking Back: Overview of Priorities for 2024-2025

The following table sets out an overview of the priorities and key activities (focus) for the academic year 2024-2025:

| Local Priorities | Focus for Year 3 (2024-2025) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Inclusion and Wellbeing | Staged Intervention: Getting it Right Refresh, Child's Plans, Team Around the Child. |
| | Health and Wellbeing: Trauma Informed Practice, Positive Mental Health, Whole Family Wellbeing, Staff and Team Wellbeing. |
| | UNCRC: Rights Respecting Schools, LGBT Charter, The Promise Award. |
| Learning and Achievement | Curriculum Review |
| | High-Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment Gathering feedback, peer observation, cross sector trio moderation, professional learning priorities. |
| | Scottish Attainment Challenge Working towards meeting stretch aims, BGE S1-S3 attainment. |
| Systems and Processes | Professional Learning Supporting Learners, Learning, People and Practice. |
| | Resources and Management Systems Self-evaluation and Quality Assurance, Balancing the Budget, DSM Implementation, Engaging with Communities, Digital Learning Strategy. |

Table 4 Overview of the Priorities and Key Activities 2024-2025

Inclusion and Wellbeing: Year 3 Progress Review

Theme 1: Staged Intervention

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Short-term working group reviews and refreshes the staged intervention process | A refresh of Staged Intervention practice, leading to robust practice guidance for schools and establishments. |
| Progress and Impact: <p>A short-term working group has been set up, and the first two meetings have taken place to review the staged intervention process, levels and evaluate against other authority guidance.</p> <p>The early years' guidance is in place and now sits within the Orkney Nursery Handbook Teams page. Support documents have been refreshed in line with current practice.</p> | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Refresh Getting it Right awareness, training and practice | Staff teams understand the principles of Getting it Right and are able to apply approaches in collaboration with colleagues across a range of services |
| Progress and Impact: <p>Work is in development and will be carried over. Progress to date includes:</p> <p>Modelling and developing along with members of the Support for Learning and Inclusion Team how Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support (SCERTS) targets can be incorporated into the Childs Planning process, continuing to stress the importance of long-term goaling as well as planning for short term outcomes. The early years family team have supported settings and parents to use SCERTS to plan for children more effectively, including establishing very small steps to support and measure progress.</p> <p>Seeking to link with Social Work to look at different levels of planning, including where Co-ordinated Support Plans are an appropriate measure</p> <p>Planning with Support for Learning and Inclusion Team Manager to deliver training to schools on the management of CSPs and taking the lead on creating CSPs</p> | |

Theme 2: Health and Wellbeing

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Promote cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) approaches with pupils in Personal and Social Education (PSE) eg Stress Control and Decider Skills | Young people develop independent strategies to manage stress and anxiety |
| Progress and Impact: | |

Work is in development and will be carried over. Progress to date includes:

Modelling the use of Decider Skills at a targeted level e.g. embedded in Childs Plans

Plans made to link with Shetland Educational Psychology Service to create Decider Skills interest groups for whole school approaches

Delivering training which links CBT based approaches with the use of CBT approaches, ie CBT approaches can be a part of children's emotional toolbox

Proposed Action**Outcome**

Educational Psychology will deliver Save a Life Training across all education settings.

Trained staff will feel confident holding conversations about mental health

Progress and Impact:

Work has begun and will continue. Progress includes:

Delivery of a multidisciplinary training session September 2025, which included Guidance Teachers

Multidisciplinary session planned for June 2025

Proposed Action**Outcome**

Promote relational approaches as key to quality learning and teaching

Nurseries and schools have both embedded practice and written guidance on relational approaches

Progress and Impact:

Creation of the Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy

Promoting the core concepts within the above policy

Offering and delivering training on relational approaches featured within the policy

Participating in the National Relational Network and disseminating information from the network meetings.

Proposed Action**Outcome**

Support Staff and Team Wellbeing through practices such as coaching, mentoring and supervision

Staff feel supported and safe in the work that they are doing

Progress and Impact:

Work is in development and will be carried over. Progress to date is described below

Highland Educational Psychology Service have shared their model for mentoring, and this has been discussed in approaches made to specific schools who have expressed an interest in staff wellbeing support.

The early supervision project has just started and has been carried forward into 2025-26, due to staffing pressures 2024-25.

Theme 3: UNCRC

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| All schools and establishments to engage in the inclusive schools' network facilitated by the Service Manager, Support for Learning and Inclusion. | All Primary, Junior High and Secondary schools awarded Silver Rights Respecting Award. |
| Progress and Impact: <p>This group has been established and has agreed terms of reference. Next steps for schools and establishments to self-evaluate practice using the UNCRC framework self-evaluation tool.</p> <p>Parallel to this, a corporate strategy group will explore responsibilities and approach across OIC. Initial meeting set up with Rebecca Spillane (National Lead Officer) for May 2025.</p> | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|---|
| Monthly rolling agenda to include a range of key areas including UNCRC, Rights Respecting School, LGBT award, The Promise award and additional agenda items as identified. | Junior High School and Senior Secondary schools achieve LGBT award. |
| Progress and Impact: <p>This is a work in progress and is a continuing action for 2025-2026.</p> | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|---|---|
| All schools and establishments are working towards compliance and service awards. | All schools complete the Promise Award programme. |
| Progress and Impact: <p>The Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) coordinator ran a training session in May 2024 for education Heads of Establishment in relation to the roll out of Promise training for staff. To date thirteen schools and Early Learning and Childcare establishments have enrolled and are taking part in the training. One school has received their 'We Promise' award and five other schools are close to completing. Three Early Learning and Childcare settings have also achieved their 'We Promise' award.</p> <p>Across Orkney, two hundred and ten 'I Promise' certificates have been issued to individual staff members.</p> <p>Moving ahead, schools and settings will continue to be supported to raise awareness of 'The Promise' and staff encouraged to complete the training.</p> | |

Link to Council Delivery Plan:

Embed the vision and outcome of The Promise (C6)

In partnership with other services and sectors, support the delivery of The Promise to support children and young people who are Care Experienced. Education Service, Service Manager, Support for Learning and Inclusion engaged in the promise subgroup of the Children's Services Strategy Group.

Progress and Impact:

A Promise Board, led by the Chief Social Work Officer, has been established during 2024-2025. This brings a wide partnership which is invested in ensuring the best possible outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

From September 2023, the Quality Improvement Officer for attainment and achievement and the Care Experienced Children and Young People's (CECYP) Coordinator ran awareness raising sessions for all schools on the Scottish Attainment Challenge which included looking at the impact of poverty on families and the key features of The Promise. Out of 22 schools, 16 schools (73%) ran these sessions for their staff. This introduced staff to The Promise and feedback from surveys at the end of each session were positive in relation to the improved understanding highlighted by staff.

The CECYP coordinator facilitated a kinship carers group from Nov 2022 for approximately 18 months. There has been a fluctuating attendance by families but those who did attend appreciated the opportunity to get together and share experiences.

A young people's group was established in November 2024 to run parallel to Orkney's Promise Board for children and young people aged between 12-17. This is held monthly and incorporates activity opportunities while giving space for young people to share their experiences of the care system. Discussions and views are then fed back to the Promise Board, as and when required, opening communication channels with corporate parents and young people.

In moving ahead, planning sessions are being organised to outline projects that young people feel are important to them, including planning an event for care experienced week and ways to reduce the stigma around care within school environments.

Inclusion and Wellbeing: Other relevant Developments

Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Orkney

The service's QIO (Attainment and Achievement) has a remit to raise awareness of child poverty and the impact of this on families and children/young people. Since the posts inception in Jan 2023 activity has focused on raising awareness through the following key activities:

Book group Using Morag Treanor's book, 'Aspiring to Survive Childhood Poverty', a 10 week programme of professional learning was created in partnership with the Third Sector. This programme has now run twice and approximately 17 teaching staff have attended along with a few others. This has led to staff being more aware of the impact of poverty and as a result, staff in their schools have begun to implement actions to support families to mitigate against poverty and the cost of the school day. For example, increased use of clothing swap shops, having food more readily available to those who need it, costumes and resources provided for key events, eg World Book Day, a very successful toy swap at Christmas 2024 was supported by many headteachers. Staff who attended were more confident in talking to families about money and they were also more confident in making referrals to the Orkney Foodbank. Morag Treanor also attended the last session of each book group which added hugely to the depth of the discussions which took place.

Let's talk money As an offshoot from the Book Group, the QIO teamed up with the OIC communications team and the Third Sector to raise further awareness of the help available to families. This resulted in a monthly media communication, focussing on a different aspect of financial support each month, eg free school meals, CAB support for debt, foodbank, Thaw Orkney etc. It has not been possible to have clear data on the impact of this. Anecdotally, families who attended the toy swap were very clear about the positive difference that this would make to their children's Christmas.

Participation fund Over the last 2 years, £82,000 has been distributed to schools from the Islands Cost of Living Crisis Fund. Each school now has a participation fund to be used flexibly by schools in a way that best meets the needs of their families. For example, supporting access to school trips through providing clothing, overnight essentials etc as well as reducing the actual cost of the trip, providing footwear, outdoor jackets, participation at extra-curricular clubs and activities as well as transport for these events where needed.

Inter- island Travel 2023-2024 £9,000 was used to ensure that all children from P6 to S6 living in the isles had free ferry vouchers for 8 return journeys. Children from Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay had vouchers for plane journeys. Young people were very positive in their response to this support and cited that the fund allowed them to undertake examples of the following: catching up with friends on the Mainland or on other islands, attending sporting events, participation at community events, eg County Show.

Free school Meals during school holidays With the help and support of the Island's Cost Crisis Emergency Fund (ICCEF), the scheme to provide direct cash payments in lieu of a free school meals for entitled children and young people during school holiday periods has been extend for a further year. The scheme is of direct benefit to around 300 (10%) children and young people and their families. 100% of parents report that this money is very helpful to extremely helpful and helps to take the worry away from the cost of lunches during the holidays.

Inclusion and Wellbeing: Key Performance Indicators

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | Final | Trend | Note |
|---|--------|------|-------|-------|---|
| Attendance | LGBF | 95% | 92% | ↔ | <p>Overall attendance in Orkney remains above the national average, with Orkney ranked 11th in relation to the other local authorities.</p> <p>In the primary sector it is stable (while the national trend is falling); in the secondary sector it falls slightly across the year, mirroring the national trend, but is above the national average.</p> <p>However, the number of children and young people with attendance of less than 70% has increased.</p> <p>More encouragingly, engagement with families remains high and absence rates recorded as 'reason unknown' are amongst the lowest in Scotland.</p> |
| Attendance for Care Experienced Children and Young People | Manual | 86% | 78% | ↓ | <p>Overall attendance for care experienced children and young people has declined. The drop since 2024 is nearly 2% in primary and almost 6% in secondary. This is concerning and needs to be a focus in moving ahead.</p> |
| Exclusion (per 1000 pupils) | LGBF | 6 | 15 | ↔ | <p>A revised exclusion policy is due to be introduced early in 25-26 Over time, the exclusion has risen. In part this is due to more accurate recording (especially of short-term exclusions)</p> |
| Exclusion Rate for Care Experienced Children and Young People | Manual | - | 8% | - | <p>Data for 2024/25 gives a figure of 6 exclusions for children and young people who have experienced care. These are all in secondary. This is 13% of the secondary children and young people who have experienced care. The 8% figure is related to the full cohort.</p> |
| Bullying Incidents (per 1000 pupils) | SEEMiS | 18.6 | 77.0 | ↑ | <p>The policy was updated in June 2024. This included taking account of changes in legislation including UNCRC. Work to support</p> |

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | Final | Trend | Note |
|---|---------|------|-------|-------|--|
| Child's Plan (% of those with an additional support need) | ScotGov | 38% | 43% | ↑ | <p>implementation continues and recording of incidents improves as this still appears variable across school, indicating a risk of underreporting</p> <p>34% of primary aged pupils and 59% of secondary aged pupils are recognised as having an additional support need. Over time, the apparent trend is for an increasing number of Child's Plans to be opened. This relates to the level of complexity and consequential requirement to have a multi-agency team supporting the child and family. Around 1 in 5 pupils currently have a Child's Plan</p> |
| Variable Timetables | Manual | 37 | 40 | ↔ | Generally variable timetables (often based on part-time attendance) are offered as a solution of last resort to promote a pathway to full inclusion and/or avoid exclusion. |
| Out of Orkney Placements | Manual | <5 | <5 | ↔ | The number of placements (for education and care) remains relatively low; additionally, a small number of young people are placed away from Orkney for care. |
| Rights Respecting Schools | Manual | 70% | 70% | ↔ | From April 2025, membership of the scheme is no longer directly funded by Scottish Government. Consideration to be given early 25-26 on maintaining a commitment to the specific scheme given the current commitment to UNCRC |
| LGBT Charter | Manual | 0 | 0 | ↔ | Systems and process review scheduled. Refresh monitoring and tracking progress |
| Promise Award | | 0 | 73% | ↑ | 73% of schools/nurseries have run sessions for staff. Feedback from surveys at the end of each session were positive in relation to the improved understanding of The Promise highlighted by staff. |

'Arrow' indicates change relative to previous year

'Colour' indicates change over time (trend)

Inclusion and Wellbeing: 2022-2025 Progress Overview

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Inclusion and Wellbeing | <p>Orkney's performance is not an 'outlier' when compared to other parts of Scotland, generalised improvement would reflect a better life experience for our children and young people was being achieved.</p> <p>While many of the children and young people in need of additional support receive appropriate interventions, the level of 'unmet need' (as reported by head teachers) has increased over the period. This means that the original ambition, that all children and young people receive appropriate interventions, has not yet been overtaken.</p> <p>Staged intervention guidance was issued and then has further revised. Ensuring that this now supports the allocation of additional resources remains a work in progress.</p> <p>Over the period 2022-2025 there have been a number of significant changes, these include: an increase in the number and complexity of children and young people identified as having additional support needs; and changes in practice, systems and culture (as well as staffing change) with respect to the various partner agencies and services that usually work together in collaboration. The combined impact has been to place significant pressure on the service, which in turn has led to delays in providing support and/or reduced availability of support. slow down progress. Consequently, continuing, and re-focusing, the work established in relation to inclusion and wellbeing remains a key priority for the planning period 2025-2028.</p> <p>Across all schools and settings, there is a greater awareness and appreciation of the rights of the child (UNCRC) and many positive examples of what this means in practice. Events such as the Chamber Debate and Youth Conference (organised by colleague in CLDE) serve to illustrate practice, however across and within individual schools there is greater and more consistent evidence of consistently positive practice. Embedding consistency for all as well as overall sustainability will need to feature in future plans.</p> |
|--------------------------------|---|

Learning and Achievement: Year 3 Progress Review

Theme 1: Curriculum Review

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|---|--|
| Planning for Senior Phase curriculum updates for 2025-26 based on 2023-24 Curriculum Review. | Senior Phase Review delayed from 23/24 and now rescheduled for 25/26 |
| Progress and Impact: This work has been postponed pending the outcome of the national Curriculum Improvement Cycle process (see section 2.4 of the 2025-2028 plan below). | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|---|--|
| Review of the S1-3 Broad General Education Curriculum, building on the outcomes of the 3 Islands Review. | Broad General Education review rescheduled (see above) for 25/26 |
| Progress and Impact: This work has been postponed pending the outcome of the national Curriculum Improvement Cycle process (see section 2.4 of the 2025-2028 plan below). | |

Theme 2: High Quality Learning Teaching and Assessment

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|---|
| Baseline survey evaluating learning and teaching with learners P4 and older, parents, teachers and classroom-based support staff to be carried out in August 2024 and repeated by the end of March 2025. | Baseline established in August 2024; improvement evident in March 2025. |
| Progress and Impact: The baseline survey was carried out in Aug/Sept 2024 but had a very low uptake. The deadline for completion was subsequently extended. The summary is as follows: Response return: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Teaching Staff – 78 Responses. • Secondary Pupil – 662 Responses. • Secondary Parent/ Carer – 96 Responses. • Primary Teaching Staff – 38 Responses. • Primary Pupil – 105 Responses. • Primary Parent/ Carer – 239 Responses. • Classroom Based Support Staff- 22 Responses. Positive messages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships are evident in primary and secondary – acknowledged by pupils, staff and parents/ carers. • Children enjoy their learning experiences. | |

- Children's rights are evident and understood.
- Learning is appropriately challenging.
- Teaching staff are creative in their teaching approaches.

Areas for further consideration were identified as follows:

- Assessment and moderation are most frequently mentioned as areas for development.
- Pupils were less sure about how their progress is assessed (primary and secondary).
- Parents/ carers were slightly less confident about how their children's progress is assessed (primary).
- Parent/ carer involvement in the school was rated lower (secondary).
- Staff don't feel they are given opportunities to use peer observations and feedback to improve practice.
- Support in class and schools for challenging behaviour and children with additional support needs.

Already the survey feedback has led to the following:

- Schools have indicated they are using this information for self- evaluation purposes.
- Schools have used this as a baseline to identify and address some issues with parents/ carers.
- An opportunity for schools to consider where more information is needed.
- Authority wide- moderation and assessment activity – separate events for primary HTs and secondary teachers.
- Increased opportunities for peer observations.
- Identify good practice and share.

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|---|
| School QA calendars in all schools include planned opportunities for peer observation using the school's lesson evaluation toolkit. | Improved approaches to learning and teaching as evidenced in March 2025 survey. |
| Progress and Impact: Following an audit of QA calendars in April 2025, most schools had peer classroom observations in them. Although this was included in most calendars, only 36% of schools managed to deliver on this fully with 55% partially delivering peer observation. Schools reported that best practice was shared, teacher's confidence grew, there was a greater awareness of strengths and areas for development and increased professional dialogue took place as a result of this activity. | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|---|---|
| Cross-sector trios of Head Teachers carry out peer moderation of HGIOS Quality Indicator 2.3 through school visits. | Feedback from Head Teachers indicates improved confidence in the quality of self-evaluation judgements for HGIOS Quality Indicator 2.3. |
| Progress and Impact: | |

During session 2024/25, moderation trios with HTs took place. Supplementary material to support these days was provided by the LA. Additional CPD budget was used for release of teaching HTs and for all who needed to travel to undertake the visits to and from isles schools.

This project was very positively evaluated by headteachers. The priority placed on this by the local authority and the CPD funding for release and travel was welcome.

Headteachers prioritised the days in the calendar to carry out the peer visits. They liked the capacity to make the process fit their school and that they had ownership of the self-evaluation activity. The documentation created to support the process was welcome. As a result of their peer visits, headteachers felt that they became more confident in the judgment being made against QI 2.3. The visits also provided headteachers with the opportunity to work closely with peers and to learn from things going on in different schools. This process supported schools to have greater clarity in their next steps in moving ahead on improving learning and teaching.

All groups feel that the moderation trios should continue next session. An aspect of the isles visits was the shorter day due to travel restrictions, and a suggestion was the possibility of overnight stays to allow for the longer day. Two of the groups felt the trios should continue with the same staff membership as it would help build relationships and the knowledge of each other's schools. The linked headteachers were concerned about their capacity to move forward when they had more than one school. There were some thoughts to continue the focus on learning, teaching and assessment but others wanted to focus on a different aspect of school improvement. It was also suggested that the trio work took away from the capacity to have other cluster meetings.

Proposed Action

Outcome

All schools to report a self-evaluation of 4 or above for QI 2.3, with improved confidence in the quality of the judgement by LA and Head Teachers.

All schools to report a self-evaluation of 4 or above for QI 2.3.

Progress and Impact:

By June 2025, 59% of schools reported that learning, teaching and assessment was good or better. A significant number of school inspections in the last three years has verified these evaluations. This target remains a priority in the next service plan.

The development of learning and teaching toolkits within schools was seen as a positive development and again the priority given to this by the local authority was seen as helpful. Schools were confident to make small changes to their learning and teaching toolkits where required. This is leading to more positive engagement with peer observation and increased learning walks in schools. This is at an early stage of development, however, and a clear impact is not yet directly seen in improving learning in classrooms.

Headteachers cited concerns relating to time to free up staff for peer observations and the use of the WTA to facilitate this. More sharing of practice between schools was considered useful eg. Sharing strengths and areas for development to see if there was any commonality. There was some thought about the role of middle leaders in the secondary schools and the development needed there to facilitate this more fully.

Proposed Action

Outcome

| | |
|---|--|
| Collate professional learning priorities from schools through the PRD process to ensure that support from the Quality Improvement Officer for Learning and Teaching is appropriately targeted. | The Quality Improvement Officer for Learning and Teaching responds to need with the provision of appropriate resources, for example via Northern Alliance Toolkit. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>There has been an increase in the professional development of staff through opportunities for reading groups and learning together sessions. This is leading to increased conversations around improving learning and teaching. This has been helped by having the clear local authority priority and expectations on all staff. In some schools, practitioner enquiry is beginning to have a positive impact on improving aspects of learning and teaching in the classrooms. PRD meetings have had a clearer focus on learning and teaching supported by the use of some materials provided by the local authority although there is still some feedback that would suggest the impact of the PRD meeting is still not as consistent yet as it could be.</p> <p>In moving forward there was a continuing emphasis on professional learning for staff in relation to meeting children's needs and the inclusion agenda. There was also feedback in relation to staff wanting to have access to what is regarded as best practice both within Orkney and from outwith, including support from Education Scotland and other national groups. This would include ongoing support for moderation of CfE levels and high-quality assessments.</p> | |

Theme 3: Scottish Attainment Challenge

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Continue to work towards meeting stretch aims in primary BGE and in attendance. | Stretch aims trajectories met. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>Primary schools continue to use the BGE tracking toolkit on a regular basis to continue to track and monitor the attainment and progress children are making in their learning. All classes have a class target to help schools evaluate their progress towards the stretch aims. Stretch aims are monitored in December and June every year. From June 2025 actual data the following statements apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1/4/7 literacy combined 82% - means that we met the lowermost point of the stretch aim trajectory • P1/4/7 numeracy combined 91% - means that we are in the mid-point of the stretch aim trajectory • primary attendance is currently 94.17% and with rounding, would meet the stretch aim | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Continue to work towards meeting stretch aims for BGE S3, including attendance, and ensure that these are a clear focus for secondary schools. | Stretch aims trajectories met. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>In S3 BGE attainment, all areas have improved since last session, and we have met one of the four stretch aims, as follows:</p> <p>S3 3rd level literacy 88% - a rise of 9 percentage points from 2024 and meeting the top end of the stretch aim trajectory.</p> <p>S3 4th level literacy 52% - a substantial rise of 25 percentage points from 2024, but below the annual stretch aim trajectory of 61-64%.</p> <p>S3 3rd level numeracy 91% - a rise of 1% from 2024, but 2-3 percentage points below the stretch aim trajectory of 93-94%</p> <p>S3 4th level numeracy 63% - a rise of 7 percentage points from 2024, but remaining below the stretch aim trajectory of 70-72%</p> <p>Secondary attendance published in the Education Scotland Local Authority Statistical Summary Report in February 2025 was 87.43%, compared to a national rate of 87.64%. This figure relates to attendance in 2023-24 and is just below the 23/24 stretch aim trajectory of 87.7 – 91%.</p> | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Create clear action plan for monitoring and tracking attainment in BGE S1-S3 during the course of the school year. | <p>Increased confidence in the robustness and reliability of BGE data in secondary schools by school senior leadership teams and LA officers.</p> <p>Improved attainment in BGE S3 third and fourth level.</p> |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>S3 has been a focus for work during 24/25 to improve attainment levels. Moderation sessions have provided some support for English staff across Orkney and reported attainment has increased.</p> <p>A BGE tracker has been developed for Junior High Schools to continue to track attainment building on from Primary. This is to be introduced in session 25/26.</p> <p>Monitoring and tracking of BGE attainment in S1-3 across all secondary schools will continue to be a priority in the next iteration of the service plan.</p> | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|--|--|
| Expand the primary BGE tracking toolkit with pilots in 2/3 schools to ensure children who are benefiting from PEF interventions are identified, tracked and monitored | Amended toolkit provides easier and more efficient tracking and monitoring of children's attainment where PEF is being used to support their learning. Evaluation and feedback from pilot schools. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>An additional column has been added into the toolkit which schools are completing. An extended toolkit was not required with the addition of this column. Schools are using data more effectively to target support and to know their equity and attainment gap.</p> <p>Schools now report and plan PEF from April to March in line with the financial year. Almost all schools submit robust plans with targeted actions. Greater impact is being evidenced across the reports. Schools need to continue to monitor interventions closely to ensure that accelerated progress occurs.</p> | |

Link to Council Delivery Plan:

| Development of Learning Provision and Pathways (C3) |
|---|
| Develop and promote sustainable learning provision and pathways, considering improvement based on local needs and skills gaps. Providing all age holistic, bespoke and person-centred support and opportunities to increase confidence, skills and knowledge to ensure individuals progress into positive destinations. UHI Orkney functions as a core part of this learning provision. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>Approximately 300 secondary school pupils have undertaken courses at UHI Orkney as part of their school timetable in the 2024/25 session. This enables young people to gain work-related skills and qualifications and experience the further education setting as a taster for potential future study. The percentage of Orkney school leavers in a positive destination was 94% for 2023/4, slightly below the national figure of 96%. A new SDS Participation Portal was opened in the latter part 2024/25, allowing officers to gain up-to-date information on young people's participation gathered from multiple services. This has the potential to allow more accurate targeting of support for those not engaged in education, employment or training and it'.</p> |
| Improve Education Standards (C4) |
| <p>Raise attainment and improve outcomes by ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, as well as the knowledge and skills necessary to shape their future as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.</p> <p>Achieve equity by ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.</p> |

Progress and Impact:

Schools have become more adept at identifying their equity attainment gap. Schools use a variety of data to do this. The data collected includes SIMD data, Free School Meals and Care Experienced Children and Young People. Schools also consider the 6 national poverty indicators. Schools within PEF plans create a clear rationale for interventions and target support for children within the equity gap, this can be both to seek those who should be offered the chance to exceed and to ensure that children meet the national benchmarks at the appropriate time. The QIO engages with all schools to support them in this process which results in planning being more impactful, and greater awareness within schools of the challenges facing children and their families within or at risk of the equity gap. The QIO has supported schools to increase their confidence of the professional judgement of a national level.

Learning and Achievement: Other Relevant Developments

Preparation for Inspection sessions:

During 2024/25, the Service Manager (Primary Education) and the Quality Improvement Officer (Attainment and Achievement) planned a series of 12 sessions for 8 HTs whose schools were most likely to be inspected given the time frame since their last inspection. These sessions ran from September 2024 until March 2025. These were very positively received and helped HTs to prepare for the self-evaluation and evidence required for a school inspection.

Learning and Achievement: Key Performance Indicators

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | Final | Trend | Note |
|---|--|------|-------|-------|--|
| Children meeting development milestones (Health Visitor 27 Month Check) | LGBF | 89% | 88% | ↔ | This data relates to the health visitor check done at 27 months. Post Covid, significant concerns remain about both children's development and wellbeing on entry to nursery, and this would match with national research which highlights the impact of lockdown on babies and very young children. For children leaving nursery in 2025, there has been a dip across all developmental milestones, in particular in wellbeing. These children would have been born and spent their early life during lockdown, so impact for them would have been significant. |
| Achievement of Care Experienced Children and Young People from P1-P7 | Manual | | | | |
| | R | 29% | 63% | ↑ | There is significant improvement in the attainment across all 4 organisers. |
| | W | 14% | 50% | ↑ | |
| | L&T | 43% | 67% | ↑ | This has narrowed the gap between children who have experienced care and their peers. However, a considerable gap persists. |
| | N | 17% | 50% | ↑ | |
| Achievement of Children and Young People entitled to Free School Meals from P1-P7 | Manual | | | | |
| | R | 54% | 68% | ↑ | There is a significant improvement across the 4 organisers. There still remains a gap between children who are eligible for FSM and their peers. |
| | W | 40% | 59% | ↑ | |
| | L&T | 62% | 74% | ↑ | |
| | N | 48% | 70% | ↑ | |
| Proportion of 16-19-year-olds Participating in education, employment, or training | APM - Skills Development Scotland (Aug 25) | 94% | 94% | ↔ | Orkney is consistently achieving above the national average in this measure. The 2024-25 rate of 94.4% is above the national rate of 93.3%. |
| P1/4/7 Reading | Manual | 80% | 87% | ↑ | Attainment continues to improve through the rigorous approaches to tracking and monitoring in the primary |
| P1/4/7 Writing | Manual | 74% | 83% | ↑ | |

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | Final | Trend | Note |
|--|---|------|-------|-------|--|
| P1/4/7 Talking and Listening | Manual | 84% | 92% | ↑ | schools. However, the small numbers can make a difference in attainment year on year. |
| P1/4/7 Literacy | LGBF | 68% | 81% | ↑ | Attainment now exceeds national average in all areas. |
| P1/4/7 Numeracy | LGBF | 75% | 87% | ↑ | Maintaining the high level of attainment is a priority. |
| National 5 Pass Rate | Attainment Report 23-24 | 80% | 78% | ↓ | For SQA attainment 2018-19 is used as base level, as courses and assessment methods were modified in 2019-20 and 2020-21 as covid mitigations. National 5 pass rates in Orkney in 2023-24 were slightly higher than the national rate, just as they were in the previous 2 years. Both National and Orkney rates continued the trend of a slight decrease on the previous year. |
| Higher Pass Rate | Attainment Report 23-24 | 80% | 75% | ↓ | The Orkney Higher pass rate is on a par with the national average, as it was the previous year. Both National and Orkney pass rates show a decrease on the previous year |
| Advanced Higher Pass Rate | Attainment Report 23-24 | 87% | 78% | ↑ | The Orkney Advanced Higher pass rate has risen slightly and is 2.2 percentage points above the national rate. Small cohorts at Advanced Higher make this a measure where individual young people can have a significant impact on the overall percentage. |
| 5 or more National 5 qualifications gained in S4 | Attainment Report 23-24 | 55% | 54% | ↓ | After a sustained upward trend and a particularly strong performance in 2023, Orkney attainment in this measure has dropped back to on par with the national average. |
| Leavers gaining 1 or more Level 5 qualifications | Attainment Report 23-24 | 93% | 90% | ↔ | Orkney is consistently 2-4 percentage points above the |

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | Final | Trend | Note |
|--|---|------|-------|-------|---|
| | | | | | national average in this measure |
| Leavers gaining 1 or more Level 6 qualifications | Attainment Report 23-24 | 64% | 61% | ↑ | Orkney is consistently slightly below the national average in this measure. However, the Orkney rate has risen by 4.45 percentage points compared to 2022- 23, moving towards our stretch aim of 68%. |

‘Arrow’ indicates change relative to previous year

‘Colour’ indicates change over time (trend)

Learning and Achievement: 2022-2025 Progress Overview

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Learning and Achievement | <p>From the beginning of the current stretch aim targets (Session 2023/24) in the primary sector, there have been significant improvements in reducing the attainment gap between children who are eligible for free school meals and their peers who are not, and again with children who have experienced care and their peers who haven't.</p> <p>In all of these data sets, the stretch aim trajectories have been exceeded.</p> <p>These measures, reflect a reduction in the attainment gap, but it is important to acknowledge that the data involves really small cohorts of children and as such the these could fluctuate greatly. Although gaps still exist, they have been narrowed significantly, and this is a really promising picture.</p> <p>Across a wide range of indicators, the data suggests progress is being made towards the overall ambition of achieving excellence and equity in education. Confidence in both the reliability and validity of data is particularly strong in the Primary Sector where we have seen attainment across all organisers improve because of a significant commitment by staff at all levels. A similar process (and support) is beginning for the early stages of secondary education (S1-S3 Broad General Education) and it is expected that this will in future articulate with the more formal and externally validated process associated with the Senior Phase and undertaking national examinations at S4, S5 and S6.</p> |
|---------------------------------|---|

Systems and Processes: Year 3 Progress Review:

| Proposed Action | Outcome | |
|--|---|-----|
| Implement a budget review and management plan to support the Council's medium term financial strategy, which involves balancing the budget, reducing costs and increasing income across all sectors of the service. | Satisfactory service delivery is achieved and budget management targets, as determined by Council, are met. | HOS |
| Progress and Impact: A line-by-line review of the budget was completed in preparation for budget setting (2025-2026). Against the challenge of maintaining teacher numbers (Scottish Government priority) and pressures due to the increasing number of children and young people recognised as having an additional support need, a number of potential savings were presented to elected members for consideration. 'Year 1' savings, in the main, related to capitalising on falling rolls/demand (leading to natural savings). Plans for future years are currently being considered. The target figure (of £9m accumulated over 3 years) remains in place, as does the nominal share for Education Leisure and Housing of £3.4m | | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome | |
|---|--|-----|
| Continue with DSM Implementation, embedding new systems and practices across the service. | Budget holders have access to clear and unambiguous information about budget construction and allocation. Budget processes are understood and completed on time. | HOS |
| Progress and Impact: A revised scheme has been completed but has not yet been adopted. The new scheme re-aligns budgets to iron out historic anomalies. The proposals align with the budget envelope (budget setting constraints) and highlight areas that should be prioritised in the event additional funding is made available. | | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome | |
|---|---|-----|
| Review staffing allocation policies for each aspect of the service. | Maximum effectiveness and efficiency (within the given statutory and budget parameters) of staffing allocation is achieved. | HOS |
| Progress and Impact: Work on this has been temporarily paused, pending the outcome of national and local discussions on reducing class contact time (for teachers), as this will have significant implications for staffing levels and current staffing structures across all sizes and type of school. | | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome | |
|---|---|-----|
| Continue to evolve and develop systems and process to support Self-evaluation and Quality Assurance within and of the local authority. | Self-evaluation activity systematically and accurately informs improvement activity and outcomes. | HOS |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>Work on building local authority systems and processes to support Self-evaluation and Quality Assurance is ongoing.</p> <p>A visit by HMIE early in the academic year provided useful (external) evaluation and feedback on the work of the local authority in relation to how the local authority supports schools to improve. The inspection process gathered evidence on the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting • self- evaluation and quality assurance • professional learning • universal and targeted support and challenge <p>In relation to each of the themes, inspectors noted the following:</p> <p>Implementing effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting</p> <p>The education service plan (2022-2025) is aligned to Orkney Islands Council's Strategic Plan and contributes to the overarching themes of 'Growing our economy, strengthening our communities, developing our infrastructure and transforming our council'.</p> <p>The local authority prioritises consultation at the early stages of improvement activities with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Supported by the attainment advisor, the central team provides a programme to schools to understand their data.</p> <p>The central team challenges robustly when data indicates that school performance has fallen below expected standards and use stretch aims to challenge headteachers constructively to improve outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>A helpful next step will be to share the overview of school improvement priorities with all schools to support them foster other areas of collaboration. Consideration could be given to focusing on points of transition, especially from P7 to S1, to help increase the pace of improvement.</p> <p>Self-evaluation and quality assurance</p> <p>A culture of continuous improvement underpins the work of education officers, headteachers and staff in schools. The local authority recognises high-quality learning and teaching as a key factor in improving children and young people's learning and achievement. It promotes the role of data as a key driver in staff understanding the need for progress and the methods of supporting this.</p> <p>Sector-based service managers and quality improvement officers review and provide feedback on school reports and plans; carry out quality improvement visits; analyse data and participate in monitoring and tracking discussions; and deliver professional learning to headteachers and wider staff teams.</p> <p>Head Teachers welcome increased opportunities to share practice with colleagues across the authority to accelerate school improvement.</p> | | |

Professional learning

The central team, headteachers and teachers are resilient and solution-focused in finding ways to promote professional learning. They recognise and are creative in finding ways to mitigate the considerable additional challenges of cost, connectivity, travel time and transport within Orkney.

There is a plan in place to collate professional learning priorities from schools through the professional review and development (PRD) process to ensure that the local authority professional learning offer responds to identified need. A number of networks are in place to support staff across the local authority. Staff are supported to engage in programmes delivered by National Organisations, including Education Scotland.

Local authority associate assessors are supporting schools to prepare for inspection.

New headteachers welcome the support they receive, in particular the bespoke one-to-one arrangements.

School leaders are very keen to feel empowered to support continuous improvement at local authority level and to have opportunities to lead on strategic priorities and co-create effective systems and processes.

Targeted professional learning based on 'understanding the standard' delivered alongside this approach would support the local authority ambition of improving standards in schools.

Targeted support for specific schools to improve the quality of education

The range of targeted support varies according to the needs of the individual school, as well as the nature of individual requests from headteachers. Targeted support includes regular headteacher and central officer meetings, new headteacher induction, analysis of data, and professional learning. Schools requiring intensive support are required to have an action plan with clear baseline measures.

Central officers

- discuss school improvement with headteachers at meetings (either face-to-face or online) throughout the year (these meetings focus on aspects of self-evaluation, learning, teaching and assessment and raising attainment)
- are aware of the importance of providing pastoral support as part of their universal offer to schools
- facilitate a range of universal networks for headteachers to attend to support school improvement (these include headteachers briefings, learning and development sessions and termly face-to-face meetings)
- provide a weekly electronic bulletin which signposts headteachers and school staff to local and national updates and offers of professional learning

Headteachers would like to work collaboratively with central officers to set the agenda of meetings.

Headteachers perceive the level of support and challenge provided by central officers as inconsistent. However, they are unaware of the criteria for more intensive support.

| Proposed Action | Outcome | |
|--|---|-----|
| Engage with 'communities of interest' as part of the ongoing process of evaluation and forward planning for the service. | Stake-holders report that they are listened to and involved in all aspects for the service. | HOS |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>A successful programme of meetings with parent Council Chairs has once again been completed. This included spending time on reflecting on the current service plan and looking at priorities for the next 3 years. In particular, feedback on the Vision, Values and Aims (now set out on page 3) was welcome and helped finalise what the focus going forward needs to be.</p> <p>The calendar of meetings with Senior Managers (heads of establishment) continues to be a vital arena for information exchange. Time is divided between development, business and feedback.</p> <p>The survey/questionnaire programme involving young people provided important feedback.</p> <p>There is scope to develop all three strands and extend consultation and engagement to a wider range of professional partners.</p> | | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|---|--|
| Should funding from Scottish Government be made available, implement a reduction of teachers' contact hours in line with national policy position. | Teacher contact hours aligned with national agreement. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>Discussion in relation to reducing class contact time continues. The Scottish Government position is that the investment to achieve this has already been made, and local authorities are being asked to implement a phased reduction as pupil numbers fall. The assumptions made are a matter for discussion between local authorities and Scottish Government. In particular, the metrics used to determine feasibility do not appear to take into consideration the resource intensive demands of providing an education service across an island community.</p> | |

| Proposed Action | Outcome |
|---|--|
| Create and adopt a Digital Learning Strategy for Orkney. | Digital Strategy responds to identified needs, articulates corporate strategy and development as well as informing service activity. |
| <p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>This remains a work in progress. Some positive work has been done to extend digital learning opportunities for some of those who find accessing the curriculum by attending school highly challenging. However, this is at an early stage and will benefit from sustained focus and investment (time and resources).</p> <p>Changes in licensing arrangements have been a cause for concern, leading to difficulties for both staff and students. A satisfactory (complete) solution is still being sought.</p> <p>As part of the wider context, a draft policy on the use of mobile phones/devices in schools is in the process of being created. It is anticipated that work on this will extend into the new academic year and evaluating the impact of the policy/guidelines will need to be taken post implementation.</p> | |

Link to Council Delivery Plan:

Childcare (C5)

Provide childcare in an affordable way in locations that are convenient by:

- Continuing to develop a new 50-place 0-5 nursery in Kirkwall.
- Supporting individuals to take up child-minding; supporting practising child-minders to develop practice as well as meet and maintain the National Standard; recruiting and supporting child-minders working in partnership with the local authority to provide statutory childcare (including qualifications).
- Establishing a 'grant and subsidy' approach for child-minders in hard to sustain locations (for example where numbers are very small making the business non-viable).

Progress and Impact:

The new nursery has been completed, and two tendering processes have been undertaken. There was no interest during the first round and the second round resulted in no firm offers to enter into an agreement to run the provision. The Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members will now determine the next steps as appropriate.

The Care Inspectorate (the regulatory body) have completed an initial visit and have been impressed with the overall facilities.

The Early Years Service and Community Learning and Development and Employability have collaborated with the Scottish Childminding Association to recruit and train 7 new childminders in Orkney. A publicity campaign targeted the islands and rural areas. 6 prospective childminders have signed up to start their training, with the majority of these being in Kirkwall.

7 childminders are in partnership to deliver funded early learning and childcare. They attend regular evening support and learning sessions run by the Early Years Service, these are recognised as good practice by the Care Inspectorate and feedback from both childminders and inspection indicates that the training has been effective in supporting practice development.

A number of partnership childminders have accessed Business Gateway funding and are due to start their SVQ qualification after the summer.

Systems and Processes: Other Relevant Developments

Quality Assurance Calendar

The current local authority calendar is well received by head teachers who feel that it is useful and helps keep them on track in relation to expectations and deadlines. It is used to support schools when developing their own in-school quality assurance calendars.

Head teachers asked if this can be given to schools earlier than the beginning of the new school year and this was sent out to schools at the end of term 4 of 2024/25.

Systems and Processes: Key Performance Indicators

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | End of Year 2 | Trend | Note |
|--|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|--|
| Complaints (stage 2, closed on time) | Manual | 33% | 95% | ↑ | Closed on time includes allowance made for permitted extension; at Stage 2 the majority of complaints are complex and require a significant time commitment from the investigating officer. |
| FOI Response (on time) | Manual | 83% | 66% | ↓ | During the current year, 487 FOI's received, an increase on the previous year. Of these 288 were responded to 'on time'. As well as an increase in volume, there has been an increase in complexity. Both factors, as well as overall workload across teams, have contributed the lower response rate. |
| Budget Variance (budget control) | Council Perf Mon | 16% | 14% | ↔ | There has been little change over the planning period. |
| Invoices Paid | Council Perf Mon | 82.1% | 91.1% | ↑ | The overall trend is improving, and the target of 90% has been met. |
| Staff Accidents (per 30 staff) | Council Perf Mon | 0.57 | 2.1 | ↔ | A change in how incidents are recorded has led to a significant increase with respect to this indicator. Previously incidents were recorded as 'significant' (and actioned as such), but were excluded from the previous accident reporting process |
| Sickness Absence (teaching staff) | LGBF | 8.2 | 9.1 | ↑ | The average number of working days per lost through sickness absence, (expressed as a percentage of the number of working days available) remains high with Orkney 'averaging' 26/32 (local authority rankings) |

| Measure (as noted in baseline plan) | Source | Base | End of Year 2 | Trend | Note |
|---|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|---|
| Long Term Absence Management | Council Perf Mon | 17.9% | 79.0% | ↑ | Although there has been a significant improvement, there are still a number of situations where the management intervention has not been recorded. |
| Vacancies (still vacant after 6 months) | Council Perf Mon | 1.2% | 10% | ↑ | There has been a rise in the number of persistent vacancies and the overall trend is increasing. |
| ERD/PRD | Council Perf Mon | 88.9% | 79%% | ↓ | The number of (entitled) staff who have received an ERD has fallen. There is a persistent challenge in relation to temporary, seasonal and part-time (low number of hours) staff. |
| Mandatory Training | Council Perf Mon | 33.8% | 79% | ↑ | While the overall trend is improving, the completion rate falls short of the 90% target. |
| ELC Settings rated good or better | LGBF | 95% | 90% | ↔ | The very small number of settings results in large % variation should a single setting drop below 'good or better'. |
| Satisfaction with local schools | LGBF | 84.7% | 82.5% | ↓ | Position relative to the other 31 local authorities is strong, average over 10 years is 2 nd |

'Arrow' indicates change relative to previous year

'Colour' indicates change over time (trend)

Systems and Processes: 2022-2025 Progress Overview

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Systems and Processes | <p>Across many of the indicators Orkney continues to perform well and the community continues to hold the service in high regard (see 'satisfaction with local schools' above). However, this position cannot be taken for granted (see 'complaints' above).</p> <p>Relatively high levels of sickness absence continue to place significant stress on both staff and systems. The cost of providing supply/cover staff is high, which in turn creates unrelenting pressure on budgets that are already stretched. At all levels within the service, colleagues work to support each other and strive to maintain a health promoting culture.</p> |
|------------------------------|---|

Looking Forward: Overview of Themes for 2025-2028

Context of fiscal challenge

| Overview of Themes for 2025-2028 | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----|---------|-----------|
| | | ELC | Primary | Secondary |
| Inclusion and Wellbeing | Inclusion | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Relationships, Attendance and Transitions | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Poverty and Disadvantage | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Learning and Achievement | Communication, Language and Literacy | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | High Quality Learning and Teaching | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Attainment, Moderation and Assessment | | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Curriculum Refresh | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Systems and Processes | Health, Safety and Safeguarding | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Data Intelligence | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Policy Refresh and Development | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Systemic Supervision | ✓ | | |
| | Quality Improvement | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Looking Forward: Overview of Actions 2025-2028

1 Inclusion and Wellbeing

| 1.1 Inclusion | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|------------------------|
| Outcome: 1.1.1 Children's needs are effective and robustly tracked and monitored to ensure that the outcomes for identified children and young people are appropriate and leading to improvement. | | Measures: 1.1.1 Attainment levels of identified children and young people eg Care Experienced Children and Young People, children in receipt of Free School Meals, young carers etc. | | |
| 1.1.2 ELC - Families with young children with autism will have access to support. | | 1.1.2 Parental feedback. | | |
| 1.2.3 Improved attendance levels for identified cohorts, reduced numbers of part-time timetables, reduction in exclusions. | | 1.1.3 Attendance levels, Numbers of pupils on part timetables, Rates of exclusions. | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 1.1.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all senior leaders are familiar with current child's plan process and guidance. Briefing for Heads of Establishment in. Co-ordinated Support Plan awareness briefing session in for Heads of Establishment. Working party to finalise updated OIC Staged intervention Guidance. To be shared with Heads of Establishment during Face-to-Face day. Review the collation of additional support of learning data for identified children and young people in the BGE toolkits and within SEEMiS. Pilot this with different sized schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderation of assessment of staged intervention levels and support needs. Secondary Support Resource implemented in Secondary and Junior High Schools. Professional learning programme in place for support staff. Increase use of Additional Support for Learning tabs in primary and Junior High Schools within the BGE toolkit. Secondary school create a system for tracking outcomes of identified cohorts. Continue to implement SFL Strategy. Educational Psychology and Support for Learning and Inclusion Development Plans aligned with SFL Strategy, ELH, Children's Service and OIC Plans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate early intervention levels/ a new national framework may be required to be implemented. SFL Strategy incorporated in ECH Plan. | HoS (E) SM (SFL and I) |

| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
|---------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| 1.1.1 cont | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for Learning Strategy to ECH Committee. (Nov 2025). Implement SFL Strategy. | | | |
| 1.1.2 | Early Support and Intervention ELC: using the additional Solihull resources, develop a Solihull parent programme group for parents of young children with autism. | ELC Evaluate Solihull parent group delivery and consider if additional resources will enhance the programme. | Establish delivery as part of early years offer. | SM (ELC) |
| 1.3 | <p>Inclusive Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Inclusive Schools - Inservice Day(s) Oct 2025 Suicide Prevention – SOS App delivered to school staff (Oct inservice) All schools to become familiar with UNCRC (Education Scotland self-evaluation toolkit) and ensure statutory requirements in place Begin review of roles and remits of Support for Learning and Inclusion team. Most schools and settings to achieve 'The Promise' award by July 2026. Ensure continued focus in schools and across the service on approaches to meet the needs of identified cohorts of children and young people who find the school environment and learning challenging. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are familiar with the Inclusion, wellbeing and equalities framework (Education Scotland). Work on creating transparent process to ensure SFLA provision is stabilised. Review of roles and remits of Support for Learning and Inclusion team complete. Exploration of Alternative Education Pathways started. All schools ensure statutory requirements embedded for UNCRC. All schools and settings to achieve 'The Promise' award by July 2027. Ensure continued focus in schools and across the service on approaches to meet the needs of identified cohorts of children and young people who find the school environment and learning challenging. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are familiar with the Inclusion, wellbeing and equalities framework (Education Scotland) and this is evident in schools. Alternative Education Pathways progressed. Ensure continued focus in schools and across the service on approaches to meet the needs of identified cohorts of children and young people who find the school environment and learning challenging. | SM (SFL and I) |

| 1.2 Relationships, Attendance and Transitions | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|------------------|
| Outcome: | | Measures: | | |
| 1.2.1 Overall attendance levels in Orkney reach at least 95% in Primary and 93% in Secondary. | | 1.2.1 Fortnightly attendance data. | | |
| 1.2.2 Effective curricular transitions from Primary to Secondary for all children and young people across all curriculum areas. | | 1.2.2 Feedback and records of meetings from both East and West Clusters. | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 1.2.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Operational Guidance for SEEMiS codes for schools. • Refresh OIC Attendance policy. • Create OIC Attendance Strategy. • Face to face day – Focus Attendance and input from Education Scotland. • Communication to wider Orkney Community. • Monitor trends in attendance regularly • Schools to create own actions to improve attendance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor trends in attendance • Embed updated OIC Attendance Policy. • If required, schools to have an action in their school improvement plan/ PEF plan. • Communication to wider Orkney Community. • Monitor trends in attendance regularly. • Schools to create own actions to improve attendance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review attendance levels and update actions accordingly. | All SM QIO AA |
| 1.2.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish the East and West Clusters to drive this improvement. • Audit of transition including documents from Primary to Secondary, what's working well and what can be improved. • Identify priorities for action over the year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East and West Clusters to review transition arrangements. • Continue to develop refine and develop approaches. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and continue as required. | SM P&S |

| 1.3 Poverty and Equity | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|------------------------|
| Outcome: | | Measures: | | |
| 1.3.1 Attainment and attendance gaps for identified cohorts of children and young people will be narrowed as defined by locally set stretch aims. | | 1.3.1 Schools tracking data. Regular local tracking and analysis of data. Annual review of national attainment data. Fortnightly/national attendance data. Stretch aim data and analysis. | | |
| 1.3.2 All schools will be poverty aware and provide practical support to children, young people and their families to ensure there are no barriers to education. | | 1.3.2 Uptake of FSM meals/Clothing grant SciPs/SQRs and PEF planning and reports. Participation Fund planning and report. Track school use of Cost of the School Day toolkits. Track attendance at professional learning/awareness raising sessions. | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 1.3.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QIO continues to focus on attainment and equity. Revise Raising Attainment Strategy and present to Education, Leisure and Housing Committee March 2026. SAC Lead, QIO, Service Manager (secondary and tertiary) and Attainment Advisor continue to analyse and support BGE and Senior Phase attainment and attendance. CECYP co-ordinator to monitor and track CECYP attainment and attendance. Seek funding for the continuance of the CECYP co-ordinator role. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the impact and consider future of QIO post (SAC funding is not guaranteed beyond March 2027) SAC Lead, QIO, Service Manager (secondary and tertiary) and Attainment Advisor continue to analyse and support BGE and Senior Phase attainment and attendance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAC Lead, QIO, Service Manager (secondary and tertiary) and Attainment Advisor continue to analyse and support BGE and Senior Phase attainment and attendance. | SAC Lead QIO AA |

| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
|-------|--|---|---|--------|
| 1.3.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline data of uptake of FSM and clothing grant. Analysis of data from 2024/2025 against 2023/2024 data. Publicise access to FSM and Clothing Grant over the year. QIO attendance at the Cost-of-Living Taskforce. QIO to attend national SAC events – both online and in-person. Lead sharing and Networking event PEF and Participation – “Taking Action on Child Poverty in Orkney” – September 2025. Survey of schools’ engagement with Cost of the Day Toolkit. 2026/2027 PEF plans to include professional learning linked to Poverty and Equity. Seek external funding and implement Participation Fund and free school meals during school holidays. Trial and evaluate Bright Start Breakfast Provision in 5 schools. Publicise 2-year-old provision through a comms campaign. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse uptake of FSM and clothing grant. Continue to publicise the FSM and Clothing Grant over the year. QIO attendance at the Cost-of-Living Taskforce. Develop equity planning framework for schools as a replacement of PEF plans. Schools to ensure they have poverty and equity professional learning within their plans for 27/28. School to continue to strengthen links with third sector and other agencies. Continue to seek additional funding to support families impacted by poverty. If funding is available, review Breakfast provision taking into account pilot findings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse uptake of FSM and clothing grant. Continue to publicise the FSM and Clothing Grant over the year. Continued attendance at the Cost-of-Living Taskforce. Equity planning continues. Schools to ensure they have poverty and equity professional learning within their planning. Continue to seek additional funding to support families impacted by poverty. | QIO AA |

2 Learning and Achievement

| 2.1 Communication, Language and Literacy | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---------------|
| Outcome: 2.1.1 Overall (P1-7) attainment in writing in primary schools will improve from 83% (June 2025) to 89% (June 2028) Year on year trajectories: 2025/26 – 83-85% 2026/27 – 86-88% 2027/28 – 89% | | Measures/KPI: 2.1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGE toolkits and schools tracking data. • Regular local tracking and analysis of data. • Annual review of national attainment data. | | |
| 2.1.2 Develop the early years profession's understanding and skills in relation to communication, language and literacy | | 2.1.2 Impact on practitioner understanding of communication, language and literacy development gathered through end of training evaluations Improved and more focused language and literacy peedie notes Increase in quality of planned experiences (group times) in settings | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 2.1.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create briefing and share key national messages from the national writing programme with primary HTs • Develop an Orkney approach to improving learning and teaching in writing using key elements of national writing programme for implementation in schools in 2026/27. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement writing approach with primary schools who have opted into programme and targeted schools based on attainment data in writing. Schools build this into improvement plans set aside time for professional learning for teaching staff. • Evaluate effectiveness of approaches and amend/adapt as required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement writing programme with different cohort of schools. | SM (P) QIO |
| 2.1.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver a 4 day early years language and literacy course to early years practitioners, focussing on the development of language and literacy, how to support children's development and how to extend and challenge our oldest children. • Refresh and update the language and literacy guidance book to reflect current practice and update theory and approaches. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and evaluate language and literacy course, making modifications to better support practice development. Re-deliver to a second cohort. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early years team evaluate practice impact in settings, including peedie notes (observations) and planned experiences. | |

| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 1 (26-27) | Action Year 1 (27-28) | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 2.1.2 cont | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the national communication and language work, work in partnership with allied services (Early years service, Speech Therapy, Communication Teacher, Health Visitors) to promote singing as a key aspect of language development. Specialised language input at the October Inservice Day from Speech and Language Therapy and the Communication Teacher. | | | |

| 2.2 High Quality Learning and Teaching | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|------|
| Outcome: All schools will report that Quality Indicator 2.3 (Learning, Teaching and Assessment) is Good by 2028 with 50% reporting very good. | | Measures/KPI: 2.2.1 / 2.2.2/ 2.2.3 HT trios observations Schools QA evidence CT Peer monitoring feedback HMIE inspection feedback | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 2.2.1 | Pace and Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit Learning Intentions and co-creation of Success Criteria. Revisit effective questioning. | Pace and Challenge Continue to develop use of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Intentions and co-creation of Success Criteria. Effective questioning. And add in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills. | Pace and Challenge Continue to develop use of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Intentions and co-creation of Success Criteria. Effective questioning. Higher order thinking skills. And add in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of a range of creative learning approaches. | |
| 2.2.2 | Validated Self-Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support HT Validated Self-evaluation. Amend trio groups. Provide structure and framework for visits. Create feedback template – forms | Validated Self-Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to amend HT trios. Continue to support validated self-evaluation. | Validated Self-Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to amend HT trios. Continue to support validated self-evaluation. | |
| 2.2.3 | Professional learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signpost resources to support schools with professional learning. | Professional learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional learning on higher order thinking skills. Signpost resources to support schools with professional learning. Highlight areas of good practice within Orkney. | Professional learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional learning on creative learning and teaching approaches. Signpost resources to support schools with professional learning. Highlight areas of good practice within Orkney. Create a practitioner showcase of high-quality learning and teaching. | |

| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|------|
| 2.2.3 cont | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Orkney approach to improving learning and teaching in a different curricular area from writing (as per 2.1.1). Attainment data will identify area of priority for implementation in schools in 2028-29. | |

| 2.3 Attainment, Moderation and Assessment | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Outcome: 2.3.1 To continue to raise or maintain attainment for all children and young people. 2.3.2 All schools report full confidence in reliability and consistency of BGE attainment levels in literacy and numeracy by 2028. | | Measures/KPI: 2.3.1/ 2.3.2 BGE tracking toolkits ACEL data Senior Phase data | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 2.31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELC. Audit tracking data from 25-6 and use this to target settings who would benefit from support to become more learning-focussed in relation to their understanding of progress and milestones, to ensure that tracking data is robust. Maintaining high levels of attainment through robust tracking and monitoring. Supporting teacher's professional judgement in identifying where children and young people have exceeded a level. Introduction of a BGE tracker in Junior High Schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review tracking in ELC to monitor effectiveness of intervention. Redeliver training as needed. Maintaining high levels of attainment through robust tracking and monitoring. Continuing to support teacher's professional judgement in identifying where children and young people have exceeded a level. Continue to support use of BGE tracker in Junior High Schools. Implementing fully Senior Secondary schools to create a system to track BGE data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review and set attainment priorities based on data. | SM Primary SM Secondary QIO AA |

| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
|---------------|--|--|--|------|
| 2.3.1 cont | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Senior Secondary schools to create a system to track BGE data. Analysis of the final stretch aims in June 2026. Support UHI Orkney to implement tracking and monitoring and post-qualification reviews for Senior Phase courses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> | |
| 2.3.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit schools' assessment calendars and working time agreements to ensure they include sufficient opportunities for in-school moderation of BGE attainment in literacy and numeracy. Officers to continue to link with other LAs in moderating learning and developing approaches. Provide training on analysis of data from standardised assessments Support schools to make more effective use of assessment feedback eg SOFAs/SNAs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional learning on moderation and approaches to assessment. Create opportunities for cross school moderation through in-service days Support schools to identify where learners are exceeding the national levels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional learning on moderation and approaches to assessment. Create further opportunities for cross school moderation through in-service days Continue to support schools to identify where learners are exceeding the national levels. | |

| 2. 4 Curriculum Refresh | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Outcome: | | Measures/KPI: | | |
| 2.4.1 To ensure that all schools plan and use the new curriculum framework for full implementation in session 2029/30 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools will have curriculum development within their school improvement plans annually from 2026/27. | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 2.4.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness of curriculum refresh – ongoing updates with Heads of Establishments. Staff involvement in National groups – feedback from staff during Heads of Establishment meetings. Nov/ May Face to face days with a focus on curriculum. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarise with the draft curriculum technical framework and changes to curriculum areas. Face to face days with a focus on curriculum. Inservice provision for teaching staff / practitioners School improvement plans identify actions for implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal adoption of changes and embedding. Face to face days with a focus on curriculum. Inservice provision for teaching staff / practitioners. School improvement plans identify further actions for implementation. | SM ELCC SM Primary SM Secondary QIO AA |

3 Systems and Processes

| 3.1 Health Safety and Safeguarding | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|------------------------|
| Outcome: 3.1.1 Nurseries and Schools have robust health, safety and safeguarding measure in place in order to protect the welfare and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care | | Measures/KPI: All schools and nurseries achieve compliance with respect to the relevant inspection framework | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 3.1.1 | All staff undergo refreshed Child Protection Training | All staff undergo refreshed Child Protection Training | All staff undergo refreshed Child Protection Training | HoS SM Resources |
| | All nurseries and schools visit and review emergency procedures including (where applicable) evacuation, invacuation and lock-down | All nurseries and schools complete annual audit of Health, Safety and Safeguarding, introducing action steps as appropriate | All nurseries and schools complete annual audit of Health, Safety and Safeguarding, introducing action steps as appropriate | |
| | All nurseries and schools revisit and update emergency planning protocols Local authority officers review outcome of nursery and school audits and introduce action steps as appropriate | | | |
| | All staff (cohort 1) undertake PREVENT Awareness Training | All staff (cohort 2) undertake PREVENT Awareness Training | All staff (cohort 3) undertake PREVENT Awareness Training | |
| | Adverse Event Prevention, Early intervention and Reporting process is updated to achieve consistency and compliance with Councils Health and Safety policies | | | |
| | Staff complete Mandatory Training as appropriate | Staff complete Mandatory Training as appropriate | Staff complete Mandatory Training as appropriate | |

| 3.2 Data Intelligence | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--------------|
| Outcome: 3.2.1 To ensure that robust systems and processes are established to gather, review and evaluate data. Ensure that the data is used to inform service self-evaluation and actions as part of the on-going practice of officers. | | Measures/KPI: Population of range of data sets from different sources as identified in the KPIs within this service plan. | | |
| 3.2.2 Develop a more robust but different digital solution to tracking and monitoring attainment in BGE | | New system in place Reduced officer time spent repairing complex spreadsheets Effective system in place – feedback from schools | | |
| 3.2.3 Outcome for OIC to have a digital strategy. | | Policy and Strategy. | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 3.2.1 | <p>Revisit KPIs and ensure that the data being gathered meets identified targeted areas with officers clearly identified in relation to the collation and sharing of this data.</p> <p>Revisit Service Manager meeting structure and ensure that data forms a key part of the regular meetings for discussion and action by officers.</p> <p>Service Managers and Head Teachers become aware of the Islands Data Index through planned meeting with the 3 islands group leads in term 3.</p> | <p>Continue to revisit KPIs and ensure that the data being gathered meets identified targeted areas with officers clearly identified in relation to the collation and sharing of this data.</p> <p>Continue to review SM structure to ensure it delivers continued focus for appropriate improvement and action.</p> <p>HTs arrange 3 collegiate sessions with colleagues in other islands groups with a similar profile to share developments.</p> | Ongoing review of data sources and impact. | All |
| 3.2.2 | <p>Explore options away from spreadsheet with colleagues from the improvement service</p> <p>Review and trial some options with schools, getting feedback on development</p> | <p>New tracking system in place in primary schools</p> <p>Ongoing evaluation of new system</p> <p>Make any necessary changes</p> <p>Develop similar approach for secondary S1-3 BGE</p> | <p>Full implementation of new system in primary.</p> <p>New tracking system in place in S1-3 BGE</p> <p>Ongoing evaluation of new S1-3 system</p> <p>Make any necessary changes for implementation in 2028/29</p> | SM (P and S) |

| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
|-------|--|--|---|---|
| 3.2.3 | Audit current digital structures with a view to creating a digital strategy. | Develop digital strategy including pilot strategies. | Evaluate pilot and begin to implement strategy. | HoS (E) HoS (P&BS) HoS (P&AM) |

| 3.3 Policy Refresh and Development | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|------|
| Outcome: 3.3.1 Ensure that there are robust policies in place within a regular programme of review and refresh. | | Measures/KPI: 3.3.1 Log of policies | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 3.3.1 | <p>Portal for agreed OIC policies to be established for access to public and quick links for staff. (July 2026)</p> <p>Ensure all staff are familiar with the portal and have access.</p> <p>Policies to be reviewed, involvement of Service Managers and Heads of Establishment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour • Included, Engaged and Involved; Promoting Inclusion and Reducing Exclusions • Attendance • Mobile Phones in Schools • Raising Attainment Strategy <p>Ensure suite of guidance documents are accessible to all staff.</p> <p>Identification of next policy and guidance documents required along with those that require review and establish a calendar of policy review and refresh.</p> | <p>Learning Teaching and Assessment policy to be reviewed and updated</p> <p>Ongoing review and refresh of policies and guidance documents.</p> <p>Ensure that communication strategies with all policies is in place and applied within all educational establishments.</p> | <p>Ongoing review and refresh of policies and guidance documents.</p> <p>Ensure that communication strategies with all policies is in place and applied within all educational establishments.</p> | All |

| 3.4 Systemic Supervision | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|----------|
| Outcome: 3.4.1 Implement systemic supervision in nursery settings and some primary settings (Supervision is a requirement of the Care Inspectorate) | | Measures/KPI: 3.4.1 Staff participation in regular supervision (individual or group) in nursery settings | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 3.4.1 | Input and training to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a cohort of ELC managers and a cohort of head teachers Establish understanding of systemic supervision, and approaches to supervision. Develop the practice of systemic group supervision approaches in the early years team | Evaluate effectiveness of roll out and adjust delivery. Extend roll out to cohort 3 | Extend roll out to cohort 4 | SM (ELC) |

| 3.5 Quality Improvement | | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Outcome: 3.5.1 Local authority quality framework will underpin all self-evaluation activity. | | Measures/KPI: 3.5.1 Quality Assurance Calendar Programme of activities | | |
| 3.5.2 All ELC establishments will implement a new ELC Quality Improvement Framework. All schools will be aware and improvement any changes in the HMIE Self Evaluation framework. | | 3.5.2. Evidence within Improvement plans and Standard and Quality reports. | | |
| | Action Year 1 (25-26) | Action Year 2 (26-27) | Action Year 3 (27-28) | Lead |
| 3.5.1 | <p>Refresh annual quality assurance calendar in light of Heads of Establishment feedback (Aug 2025)</p> <p>Diarised Service Manager meetings to support self-evaluation and intelligence gathering.</p> <p>Continuing professional development offer to Heads of Establishment – School Improvement through Self-evaluation. (Sep 25 – May 26)</p> <p>Explore further use of the Northern Alliance self-evaluation toolkit to support schools in self-evaluation</p> <p>Continue to develop self-evaluation with national quad families with Service Managers.</p> | <p>Continuing professional development offer to Heads of Establishment – School Improvement through Self-evaluation.</p> <p>Use of the Northern Alliance self-evaluation toolkit to support schools in self-evaluation</p> <p>Continue to develop self-evaluation with national quad families with Service Managers.</p> | | <p>HoS</p> <p>SMs</p> <p>QIO AA</p> |
| 3.5.2 | <p>Become familiar and embed new ELC Quality Improvement Framework.</p> <p>Engage with HMIE Schools re new framework.</p> | <p>Implement fully ELC framework.</p> <p>Engage with HMIE and ensure schools aware/become familiar with any new self evaluation framework.</p> | | <p>All</p> |

Appendix 1: Risk Register

Risk Title: Financial Pressures.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 5 | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20 | Target Risk Score. | 16. |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|
| <p>Level of funding for the service is insufficient to maintain a minimum safe standard of provision.</p> <p>Inflation and pay settlements, combined with a standstill budget and/or budget reduction further reduces the capacity to maintain a safe standard of provision.</p> <p>Impact of Council's strategic financial plan exacerbates the vulnerability.</p> | Reduced resource base | <p>Lower quality of service as assessed by inspectors and regulators.</p> <p>Reduction in resilience of the service.</p> <p>Reduction in service offer.</p> <p>Disinvestment in professional learning offer for staff teams.</p> <p>Service failure with respect to progress, achievement and attainment of learners.</p> <p>Reputational harm.</p> <p>Loss of community asset with associated negative economic impact.</p> <p>Increase in complaints and/or levels of parent/carers dissatisfaction.</p> <p>Increase in difficulty with recruitment and retention.</p> | <p>Ensure 'fair' distribution of available funding to mitigate differential impacts across the service.</p> <p>Increase budget management and scrutiny to identify both significant and marginal efficiencies.</p> <p>Manage ad-hoc grants to minimise unplanned commitments 'in kind'.</p> <p>Manage vacancies (and other opportunities) to optimise in-year savings.</p> <p>Explore and exploit opportunities for sharing costs and/or community funding.</p> |

Risk Title: Recruitment Challenges.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|----|
| Likelihood. | 5. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20. | Target Risk Score. | 9. |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Recruitment and retention failures result in un-filled posts.</p> <p>Vacancies remain unfilled for an extended period.</p> <p>Limited access to appropriately qualified workforce hampers recruitment, including the availability of supply and temporary staff.</p> <p>Turnover rate rises to unsupportable levels.</p> | <p>Posts remain unfilled, supply and cover staff unavailable.</p> | <p>Reduction in service offer, including not offering undersubscribed courses.</p> <p>Inability to meet the Safe Staffing Standard.</p> <p>Capacity to deliver specific curriculum subjects compromised.</p> <p>Service failure with respect to progress, achievement, and attainment of learners.</p> <p>Lower quality of service as assessed by inspectors and regulators.</p> <p>Increase in workload and pressure on existing teams.</p> <p>Reduction in staff morale.</p> <p>Increase in staff sickness absence levels.</p> <p>Unmanageable pressure on supply/cover staff budget.</p> <p>Increase in the recruitment challenge.</p> | <p>Support access routes (initial training, career change programmes)</p> <p>Provide support to unqualified staff to gain relevant qualifications.</p> <p>Support 'grow your own' approaches to developing managers and for workforce planning.</p> <p>Use recruitment processes to ensure applicants are aware of opportunities and (if unsuccessful) are open to continue to seek employment with the Council.</p> <p>Where possible, use recruitment processes to give access to multiple forms of employment eg job families.</p> <p>Continue to use appropriate alternatives including the use of agency staff.</p> |

Risk Title: Unmet Additional Support Needs.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 5 | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20. | Target Risk Score. | 16. |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Demand for service is outwith capacity to deliver.</p> <p>Impact of available additional support is limited as it is shared across too many needs.</p> | <p>Increased demand for additional support combined with an increase in the indicators of unmet need.</p> | <p>Appropriate additional support (approaches to learning and teaching, support from personnel, and provision of resources) to meet the needs of learners is not available.</p> <p>Service fails to meet statutory duties.</p> <p>Inability to meet the Safe Staffing Standard.</p> <p>Level of dissatisfaction increases.</p> <p>Number of complaints increases; increased possibility formal resolution at Tribunal is required</p> <p>Resources diverted to manage complaints and if necessary, legal challenge, which exacerbates the vulnerability.</p> <p>Increase in difficulty with recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Reduction in staff morale.</p> <p>Increase in staff sickness absence levels.</p> | <p>Improve and increase efficient and effective use of available resources.</p> <p>Improve and increase staff confidence and capability.</p> <p>Explore and exploit opportunities for collaborative work within and across service and agencies to deliver preventative and early intervention service models.</p> <p>Explore and exploit budget and funding options to increase sufficiency and capacity.</p> <p>Align with Additional Support for Learning review and Staged Intervention outcomes to refresh and create robust Additional Support Needs systems and process within national guidance.</p> <p>Engage, develop professional practice, and upskill staff based on the revised systems and structures.</p> <p>Review data and recording to ensure alignment with reporting and develop the Orkney Inclusive school's programme.</p> <p>Invest in learning estate to deliver the Inclusive Schools Programme.</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|----------------|----------|---------------|---|
| | | | Provide clear guidance and information for service users on revised systems and allocation of need. |

Risk Title: 04 – Education IT Systems Capability.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 4. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 16. | Target Risk Score. | 12. |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>IT systems insufficiently developed to meet contemporary needs within the education and learning service.</p> <p>Manual systems required to be developed or maintained, resulting in unnecessary/inappropriate use of resources.</p> | <p>Education management information systems (including SEEMiS) fail to support the Service appropriately.</p> | <p>Inability to achieve an acceptable level of efficiency (as might be achievable in organisations with more appropriate IT systems).</p> <p>Needs of children/young people, staff, parents/carers are not efficiently met.</p> <p>Service ability to provide external bodies with the information they require is impaired.</p> <p>Manual/alternative approaches are costly (diverting resources and time away for core activity) and potentially less 'safe'.</p> | <p>Establish a systems review and forward plan.</p> <p>With colleagues across the Council, explore the possibility of taking a project development approach to improvement.</p> |

Risk Title: 05 – Expansion of Childcare Provision/Provision of Non-statutory Provision.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|---|-------------|-------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|
| Likelihood. | 4 | Impact. | 3 | RAG. | Amber | Current Risk Score. | 12 | Target Risk Score. | 10 |
|--------------------|---|----------------|---|-------------|-------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|--|--|--|
| Leadership capacity. | Failure to recruit high quality candidates. | Lack of leadership in settings. | Support managers through the leadership pathway and create opportunities for aspiring leaders to develop leadership capacity within the workforce. |
| Insufficient number of high quality and / or qualified practitioners. | Failure to recruit high quality candidates. | Vacant posts and repeated recruitment. Impact on quality and outcomes for children. Failure to meet National Standard. | Support practitioners to gain BA in Childhood Practice. Implementation of head teacher training to support development of pedagogical leadership capacity. Work with the Orkney College UHI and the Scottish Government ELC Improvement team to plan alternative pathways. Work with Orkney College UHI to review the availability and quality of courses on offer. |
| Insufficient budget to meet emerging demands of Scottish Government. | New legislation/policy insufficiently funded for the local context (e.g. discretionary deferrals, nursery milk and snack). | Budget overspend. | Lobby Scottish Government so that they take account of the unique island challenges relating to new policies. Ensure Orkney attendance at national meetings / forums to ensure the remote and rural voice is heard. |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | | Ensure Elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team are well briefed prior to national meetings. |
| Financial model for 0-3 service becomes unviable. | Inability to appoint adequate numbers of practitioners to ensure maximum ratio and maximum income. | Greater than acceptable losses. Service failure in workplaces due to lack of childcare available. | Review and revise parental service contract with consideration for advance payments. Carefully monitor occupancy, staff ratios and fee payment to ensure the setting is running as efficiently as possible. |

Appendix 2: Glossary

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Annual Trajectory | Annual Trajectory | A measure of incremental change with respect to longer term targets set within the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) programme. |
| BGE | Broad General Education | The phase of learning which lasts from when a child begins early learning and childcare through to the end of S3 in secondary school. |
| CES | Career Education Standards | The Career Education Standard recognises the journeys that children and young people make as they progress from age 3-18. It focuses on preparing children and young people (3-18) for the world of work. |
| CI | Care Inspectorate | The national regulator for care services in Scotland, this includes Early learning and Childcare and School Care Accommodation. |
| CBT | Cognitive Behaviour Therapy | Cognitive behavioural therapy is a type of talking therapy. It teaches coping skills for dealing with different problems. It focuses on how thoughts, beliefs and attitudes affect feelings and actions. |
| CECYP | Care Experienced Children and Young People | Anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after. |
| Child's Plan | Child's Plan | A personalised plan developed when those working with the child or young person and family identify that a child or young person needs a range of extra support planned, delivered and co-ordinated. |
| CIQF | Care Inspectorate Quality Framework | Used by the Care Inspectorate to provide independent assurance about the quality of care and support. The framework also supports services to self-evaluate their own performance. |
| CLD | Community Learning and Development | CLD is a field of professional practice that enables people to identify their own individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities. |
| CLDE | Community Learning, Development and Employability | CLDE is the team within the Education Leisure and Housing Directorate that support CLD (see above) as well as employability (person-centred support for people who want help to find work and stay in work). |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| CSP | Coordinated Support Plan | An action plan used for some pupils who need significant additional support with their education; a CSP sets broad and long-term goals for a pupil. |
| DSM | Devolved School Management | The local authorities' financial processes for funding schools, including how financial decisions are delegated to schools, and the accountability and responsibility for financial decisions. |
| Education Scotland | Education Scotland | Education Scotland is the national body for supporting quality and improvement of learning and teaching in Scottish education. |
| ELC | Early Learning and Childcare | The (nursery and childminder) provision available to all three- and four-year-olds as well as eligible two-year-olds. |
| ERD | Employee Review and Development | The Employee Review and Development approach has been updated and replaced by the Good Conversations Process. This provides for ongoing opportunities to reflect on role, practice and learning through regular conversations supported by an annual review meeting. |
| FME | Free School Meal Entitlement | All children in primary 1 to 5, attending school, can get free school meals during term-time. For children in P6 and older, entitlement is linked to the benefits the family receive. |
| GTCS | General Teaching Council for Scotland | The teaching profession's independent registration and regulation body. |
| HGIOS | How Good is Our School | The national framework that underpins effective self-evaluation in schools. How Good is Our School is also used by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education to evaluate schools. |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator | A quantifiable measure of performance over time for a specific objective. KPIs can provide targets, milestones to gauge progress, and insights that support better decision making. |
| LEIP | Learning Estate Investment Programme | The Scottish Government's programme to see more schools that are low emission, digitally enabled and better connected to their local communities. |
| LA | Local Authority | The (local) provider of public services, including education, social care, waste management, libraries and planning. Funded by the Scottish Government, there are 32 local authorities (Councils) in Scotland. The local authority in Orkney is also the Harbour Authority. |
| LGBT LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender | The LGBT Charter is a straightforward programme that enables organisations to proactively include LGBTQ+ people in every aspect of their work. |

| | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning and more | |
| OHAC | Orkney Health and Care | Orkney Health and Care is a partnership between Orkney Islands Council and NHS Orkney. |
| PEEP | PEEP | The name adopted by the Peeple (charity) for their programmes. |
| PEF | Pupil Equity Fund | Additional funding allocated by the Scottish Government directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. |
| PRD | Professional Review and Development | Professional Review and Development (PRD) is an essential part of Professional Update (PU) and professional learning. PRD provides teachers with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their practice and personal learning through professional learning conversations supported by an annual review meeting. |
| The Promise | The Promise | The national commitment to supporting care experienced children and young people. |
| PSE | Personal and Social Education | With a focus on the curriculum for personal and social education in schools this may also include pastoral care and guidance, as well as school counselling services. |
| QAMSO | Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer | Locally based staff participating in wider area and national programmes to support quality assurance and moderation. |
| QIO | Quality Improvement Officer | A role in the Scottish education system. QIOs are responsible for supporting school improvement, developing strategies to improve performance, monitoring progress, and helping to ensure that national and local educational priorities are being met in schools. |
| QIM | Quality Improvement Manager | A Quality Improvement Manager is responsible for ensuring and improving the quality of education services within a local authority, locally, this role is designated as a Service Manager. |
| SAC | Scottish Attainment Challenge | A systematic approach to achieve equity in educational outcomes, with a particular focus on significantly reducing the poverty-related attainment gap. |
| SALT | Speech and Language Therapy | Treatment, support and care for children who have difficulties with communication, or with eating, drinking and swallowing. |
| SEEMiS | SEEMiS | The nationally used information management system for schools. |
| SEF | Strategic Equity Fund | Funding shared by all 32 local authorities to invest in approaches to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (see above). |

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| SERTS | Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support | An evidence-based framework designed to support children with social-emotional development. It provides a structured approach to understanding a child's strengths and needs in key areas, using collaboration between families and professionals to set goals and implement support strategies that foster social motivation and emotional regulation. |
| Senior Phase | Senior Phase | The senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence lasts from S4 to S6 (from around ages 15 to 18). It follows a young person's broad general education. |
| SfLA | Support for Learning Assistant | Key group of staff deployed across schools to work alongside teachers and support children and young people with additional support needs. |
| SIMD | Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation | The measure looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. |
| SQA | Scottish Qualifications Authority | The national accreditation and awarding body for Scotland. |
| Stretch Aim | Stretch Aim | An ambitious and challenging target that exceeds current abilities and resources. |
| SWIP | Service Wide Improvement Planning | SWIP describes the meeting of education managers (service managers, nursery managers and head teachers) that takes place each term to review overall progress and development stemming from the service improvement plan. |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNCRC consists of 54 articles that set out children's rights and how governments should work together to make them available to all children. |
| QA | Quality Assurance | Quality assurance involves the systematic review of educational provision to maintain and improve its quality, equity and efficiency. |
| QI | Quality Indicator | Used by early learning and childcare settings, schools, Local Authorities and HM inspectors to consider what is going well and what needs to be improved. |
| SAC | Scottish Attainment Challenge | The Scottish Attainment Challenge is about achieving equity in educational outcomes, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. |



Orkney Islands Council
Education, Communities and
Housing

Promoting Positive
Relationships, Learning
and Behaviour Policy

Version Control

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Introduction

National frameworks supporting education and children's services are consistent in their promotion of positive relationships being central to the wellbeing of learners, the creation of inclusive practices and the embedding of effective learning environments linked to higher achievement.

National guidance from Education Scotland requires all local authorities and all schools to have a relationships and behaviour policy in place to inform practice in educational settings. This policy has been developed to provide a consistent approach across Orkney's learning communities. The information in the policy will support schools and early years settings to develop their own policies and implement an empathic, nurturing, relational approach. Orkney's policy seeks to emphasise the following as pivotal to embedding relational practice

- The values we have are reflected in the relationships we have, are demonstrated in our interactions with others and influence the way we consider and behave towards each other. Adults in a learning community play an important role in modelling positive, respectful relationships for learners.
- A school's culture, ethos and values are fundamental to promoting positive relationships and behaviour and in creating an environment for effective learning and teaching.
- Early intervention and prevention are key elements in ensuring we get it right for all children and young people within a culture that prioritises positive relationships, wellbeing, positive behaviour and planned preventative approaches.
- To ensure the necessary values, culture and practices are fully embedded there needs to be a shared understanding of wellbeing, inclusion, equality and equity, underpinned by children's rights as defined in the UNCRC, across all those who belong to the learning community.

Rationale

Changes in Scottish Education

The Scottish approach to behaviour in schools has evolved significantly from the punitive discipline policies of the past to a focus on building relationships to promote positive behaviour.

Previously a behaviourist approach was adopted which centred around managing behaviour through rewards, sanctions and punishment, rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad. This approach is evidenced as limited because it takes no account of the complexities of individual human experiences, needs and perceptions. In addition, behaviourist approaches can discriminate against some children and young people with additional support needs and/or those who have experienced trauma and adversity.

Our current thinking in education and across children's services has been more widely shaped by an understanding of child psychology, an ecological view of child development, and systems theories of motivation and learning

We now have a greater awareness of:

- the impact of the behaviour of adults on that of children and young people.
- the impact of early development and experiences on children and young people, including that of trauma and adversity.
- the impact of poverty.
- neurodiversity and individual difference.

From the research that exists, we know that positive relationships and behaviour are at the core of effective learning and teaching and the development of the wellbeing of the whole child.

Improving Learning Outcomes

Discussion of positive relationships often focusses on behaviour, but there is evidence that warm and supportive relationships with teachers can improve children's and young people's academic outcomes, especially for those who struggle with learning (Eisenhower, Baker & Blacher, 2007). More recent Scottish based research indicates that schools, where attainment is higher than expected for their catchment area, demonstrate positive relationships throughout the school community.

Nurturing, establishing and maintaining positive relationships is a necessary part of efforts to raise attainment and neglecting this aspect of school life can be a key cause for limited returns from other educational interventions and reforms, no matter how well evidenced or costly. Strong, reciprocal relationships, with high expectations and clear and consistent boundaries, matter most in terms of pupils' achievements and self-belief.

Increasing Emotional Wellbeing

There is also strong evidence that positive relationships foster emotional wellbeing and good mental health. A recently published longitudinal study of over 8000 students in 84 UK Secondary schools evidenced that

"Better student-rated school climate, at the student and school level was associated with lower risk of depression, fewer social-emotional-behavioural difficulties and higher wellbeing [in young people]"Hinze, et.al, (2023)

This new research demonstrates that positive relationships as an integral part of developing school climate are essential to not only promote wellbeing but also protect against the onset of mental health problems developing in young people.

Positive relationships are therefore essential for young people's mental health at school and are integral to any [whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing](#).

Relationships are the Responsibility of All

[The General Teaching Council Scotland Professional Standards](#) were refreshed and revised in 2021 and include a section called 'Being a teacher in Scotland' which highlights the professional values of:

- social justice - Building and fostering positive relationships in the learning community which are respectful of individuals.
- trust and respect and integrity - Understanding health and wellbeing and the importance of positive and purposeful relationships to provide and ensure a safe and secure environment for all learners and colleagues within a caring and compassionate ethos.

The Curriculum for Excellence views health and wellbeing as the responsibility of all. Teaching and learning are expected to develop 4 key capacities; successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These capacities at their core involve children and young people acquiring and utilising positive relationships.

Steps have been made towards developing an empathic, nurturing culture and ethos across Orkney's schools, and early years settings. This policy will further support progress and consistency in providing a whole establishment, whole systems approach to relationship-based learning by describing the practical application of:

- inclusive, rights-based approaches.
- concepts of empathy.
- relational practice.
- theory of motivational school 'climates' which balance high expectations and structure on one hand, and warmth and support on the other - "authoritative" climate.

Guiding Principles

Wellbeing

It is essential that the whole school community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and the dignity and worth of every individual. This promotes a culture and ethos of positive relationships.

Children's Rights

Promoting positive relationships and behaviour is underpinned by a rights-based approach. Getting it Right for Every Child and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires every practitioner to familiarise themselves with and in their day-to-day practice take account of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which has been incorporated into Scots Law (2024). UNCRC highlights the importance of respecting the rights of all learners and their entitlement to be included in decisions regarding their learning experiences and to have all aspects of the wellbeing developed and supported.

Inclusion

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Inclusion happens when educational settings create environments that meet the diverse needs of all learners, through personalised learning and support that takes account of individual needs, choices, and circumstances. Understanding, respecting and embracing difference across our schools and in our communities helps create a more socially just society for everyone.

An inclusive and positive ethos which is embedded across the whole school community enables positive relationships to thrive. Inclusion entails children and young people being present, participating, achieving, and being supported. Inclusion is a right and entitlement within the Curriculum for Excellence and the presumption of mainstream.

Equality and Equity

Education settings that promote equality treat individuals fairly, value and celebrate diversity and challenge all forms of discrimination. Equity in education ensures that each child and young person is given the right support, at the right time, in the right place to achieve their full potential.

National Policy Context

The legislative landscape emphasizes the importance of wellbeing and relationships in shaping positive outcomes for children and young people. This is evident in national reviews requiring educational establishments and local authorities to review their current practice, policies and guidance around relationships and behaviour, for example:

- The Independent Care Review (Feb 2020).
- The ASfL Implementation Review (June 2020).

The importance placed on relationships and behaviour is founded on appreciation that approaches need to be developed from an understanding of children's needs and children's rights as documented in for example:

- Education Scotland Act (2016).
- Getting it Right for Every Child (Scottish Government 2022).
- Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law (January 2024).

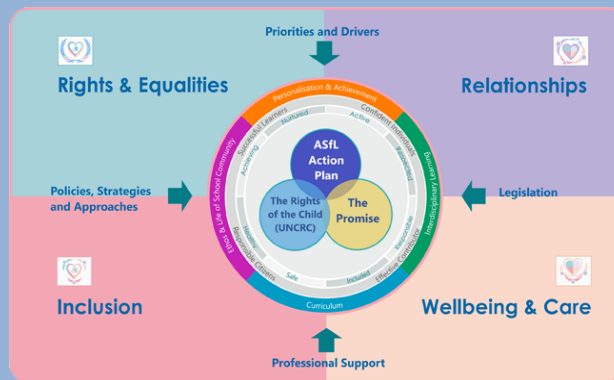
Some common principles are interwoven across Scottish Education legislation and guidance. For example: Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour (Scottish Government 2018) [Developing-Positive-Whole-School-Ethos-Culture-Relationships-Learning-Behaviour](#) and more recently guidance on promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings (October 2023) [Promoting-Positive-Relationships-and-Behaviour-in-Educational-Settings](#) states that:

- all local authorities should have a relationships and behaviour policy in place to inform practice in educational settings.
- All schools should have a relationships and behaviour policy.
- All schools have a programme for providing professional learning to support the implementation of the policy.

The full landscape of guidance and recommendations is at the national level relating to relationships and behaviour is complex, but the diagram below illustrates the main themes which have informed Orkney's policy. (The full list of references the policy has drawn from is listed in **Appendix 1**).

Children's rights and entitlements are fundamental to Scotland's approach to social justice and social inclusion.

Inclusion happens when the learning environment supports everyone. Individual needs are met through appropriate pedagogy, curriculum and personalised support.



Positive Relationships are underpinned by a culture and ethos where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

Wellbeing is fostered through caring supportive and purposeful environments where the understanding and skills for good mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing are taught.

Applying Legislation and Principles to Practice

What are Positive Relationships

This is an intuitive concept that covers the many ways different individuals and groups relate to each other. As such, a single definition is not easy to provide, but general features of positive relationships are listed below and at their core is **empathy** “connecting to the emotions that underpin (another person’s) experience” Dr Brene Brown:

- Communicating respect and positive regard for others.
- Taking others’ perspectives into account as valid and meaningful.
- Adapting to individual needs as they present themselves.
- Engaging in positive and attuned interactions.
- Accepting conflict and disagreement as inevitable and acting to resolve this consensually.
- Being aware of, valuing and responding to the other’s emotional state.
- Awareness of one’s own needs in interaction and how these may be positively or negatively impacting on the relationship.
- Understanding the unique balance of support and challenge that every individual needs to grow and develop – both children and adults.

Education Scotland Informed Level Training in Relationship Based approaches Informs us that positive relationships are the basis of relational approaches and practitioners who are committed to relational approaches will generally:

- show unconditional positive regard to learners (accepting and supporting them exactly as they are without evaluating or judging them).
- understand and respond to behaviour in a respectful, child friendly and holistic way, considering the individual in the context of their family, community and culture.
- proactively develop responses to support learners’ wellbeing and learners who may be at risk of disengaging or of being excluded.
- actively listen, with purpose, to children and young people.
- focus on inclusion, wellbeing, and addressing barriers to learning rather than punitive processes.
- help children and young people to be aware of and understand the impact of their actions and behaviours.
- It should be noted that positive relationships do not imply total harmony or everyone being happy all the time. They are seen in how we respond and help in times of greatest difficulty as well as when things are going well.

Relational Approaches Key Concepts

Nurture

Nurturing practices are rooted in attachment theory. At the core of nurturing approaches are the creation of feelings of safety and trust in the context of secure relationships. A relationship with at least one caring adult can be the main factor in improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, including those who have experienced adversity (Gambone, Klem, & Connell 2002). Nurturing practices aim to provide children and young people with attachment figures with whom they develop safe and secure relationships. With these in place, children and young people can achieve and maintain effective cognitive functioning and successfully engage in learning.

A nurturing approach values everyone across the whole school community. Positive and attuned relationships are central to a nurturing approach. They form the foundation for effective teaching and learning, and the development of wellbeing. Children and young people's life experiences are taken into consideration as well as their strengths and interests.

Nurturing Approaches can also be used as a targeted intervention, but they are particularly effective when used as a whole establishment approach which creates a nurturing and inclusive community.

A Nurturing Approach is based on 6 Nurturing Principles:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally.
- The environment offers a safe base.
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
- Language is a vital means of communication.
- All behaviour is communication.
- Transitions are important in children and young people's lives.
- Engagement in learning can take place.

Nurture has a growing evidence base with over sixty-two academic studies carried out over the past twenty years (The Nurture Group Network, 2015).

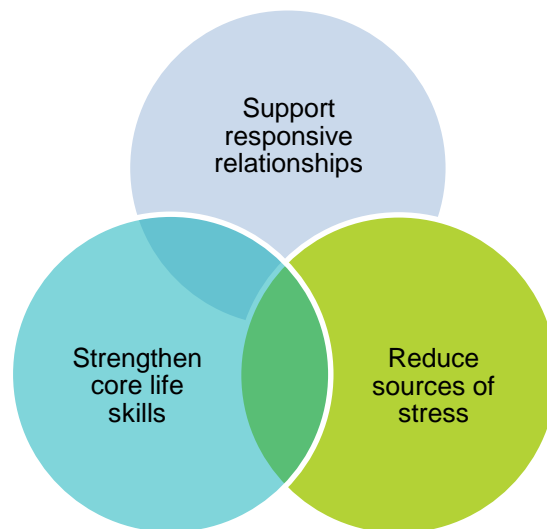
Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma informed practice recognises the prevalence of trauma, including childhood trauma, and takes account of its impact on emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. Keeping the possibility of trauma, and the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of children and adults who may have experienced trauma, in mind when planning approaches is the first step towards trauma informed practice.

Understanding how stress can affect an individual is important. Knowing this will make us less likely to fuel other people's stress levels. Trauma informed practice means paying attention to how we engage with other people, as well as to what we

do, thinking about what may have happened to someone, rather than judging what is wrong with them.

We should not underestimate the capacity of positive interactions, even routine interactions, to be therapeutic and validating. Positive experiences of relationships are central to healing trauma, as illustrated below by the Centre for the Developing Child, Harvard University's illustration of the key elements to recovering from trauma and developing future resilience.



Understanding Behaviour as a Window into Emotions

Behaviour is the visible part. If we see distressed or distressing behaviour, we need to be curious about the underlying emotions and Needs. Think of the iceberg image



Looking beneath the surface to perceive emotions and hidden needs enables us to implement the following actions.

- See behaviour as communicating a mismatch between a child/young person's current needs and the environment or situation.
- Use a "mind-minded" stance to interpret that communication in terms of feelings, skill levels, or developmental state. It can be useful to use the Getting it Right Wellbeing Indicators to consider how, and whether, a child/young person may be communicating a gap in their need for perceived safety, activity, nurture, responsibility and respect, achievement or inclusion.
- Respond in partnership with the child or young person, to adapt the situation or environment both to reduce the need for the present behaviour and the likelihood of a re-occurrence.

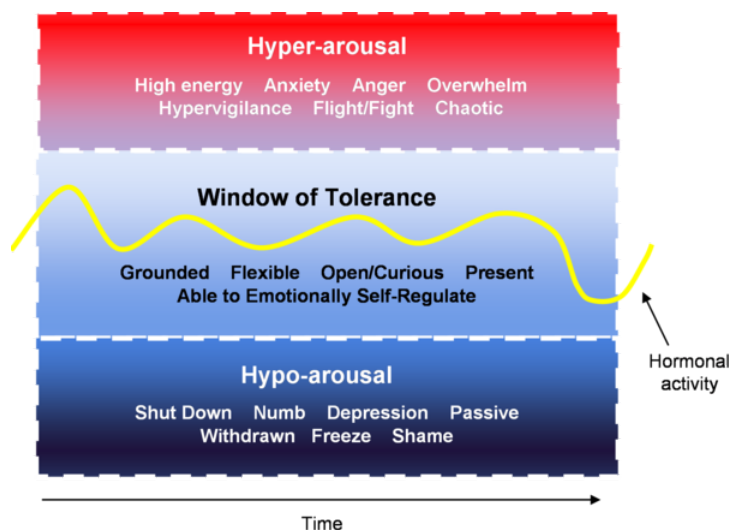
Learners who repeatedly "break the rules" because they have no alternative strategies to have their needs met can quickly find themselves in a negative cycle of punitive measures. Some of our more vulnerable learners, such as those who are neurodivergent, or who have experienced adversity or trauma can therefore be disproportionately and negatively affected by punitive approaches.

It is therefore important to these young people that we are be able to implement the actions described above. Understanding the Neuro-sequential model and the Window of Tolerance enables us to achieve these actions in order to help children to regulate their emotional states and engage in learning.

Neuro-sequential Model – draws on a neurodevelopmentally-informed, biologically respectful perspective on human development and functioning to help educators understand behaviour and performance. Dr Bruce Perry's model tells us we need to intervene in a sequence starting with regulating the child and soothing the child's stress response. This is followed by relating and responding to the child through an attuned relationship. Only within the context of a child being regulated and connected should we begin to reason and explore with them their behaviour or responses, using their thinking brains



Window of Tolerance – developed by Dan Siegel, see illustration below, can help us understand the impact of our emotional states and our flight or fight response on our behaviour and actions. Children who have suffered trauma and adversity have a narrow window of tolerance meaning they are more likely to be operating within the fight or flight response or shut down response. PACE, a way of thinking, communicating and responding developed by Dan Hughes (see **Appendix 4**) can help keep a child within their window of tolerance.

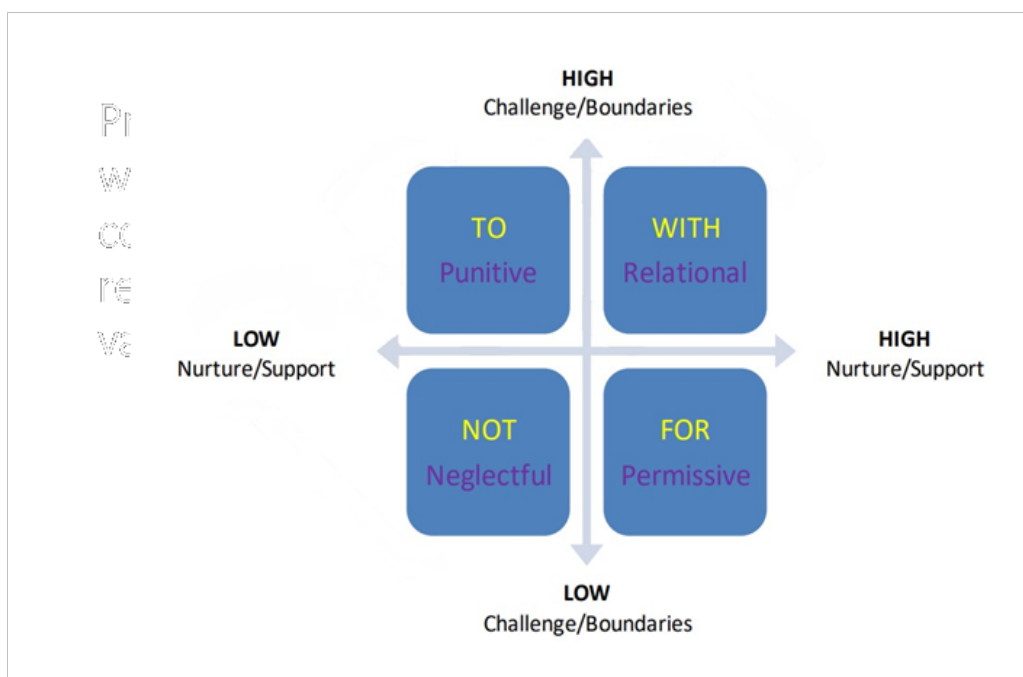


Importance of School Climate

Authoritative Climates

Changing how we respond to behaviour does not mean having no expectations, routines or structures. In order to help children and young people and staff feel safe, the environment needs to be high in both nurture and support and in structure and expectations. This is described as an authoritative style of discipline and has been shown to be effective in supporting positive outcomes. Predictable routines, expectations and responses to behaviour are part of this approach and should be modelled appropriately. Natural and logical rewards and consequences that follow certain behaviours are seen as being more impactful and should be made explicit, without the need to enforce punishments that have the potential to shame and alienate children and young people

Below is an illustration of the model, currently promoted by Education Scotland, referred to as the **Social Capital Window** (Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel). The model enables teachers to reflect on classroom climate and the influence of values, expectations and levels of support. This model is similar to the model of classroom climate promoted in **Emotion Coaching**. Both models support an authoritative as opposed to an authoritarian classroom and whole school climate.



Research into an authoritative school climate indicates that a balance between high expectations and structure on one hand and warmth and support on the other encourages engagement in learning, improves attainment and leads to less bullying in educational settings. Ideally school establishments should be in the restorative, top right window most of the time, providing high levels of nurture and support with high expectations and boundaries.

School climates which foster a sense of belonging

There is now a wealth of research on the importance of connectedness in schools and on the specific qualities of in-school relationships that promote effective education (Roffey 2012) *“when learners feel that they are part of their learning community, they are more likely to engage in positive ways in learning and in the life of the community.”* [adapted from The Power of Relationships in Schools | Psychology Today].

It is important that school climates are inclusive and foster a sense of belonging for all, in which all learners feel welcomed and connected.

“Belonging is about saying we belong together, we’re all the same, there’s a thread that connects us all and yet at the same time it’s saying I see you for your unique individual qualities and I don’t just value and respect that, I love that and will nurture that” Brene Brown.

Restorative Approaches

Being restorative can be proactive (relationship building) or responsive (relationship repairing) and can be used at every level from everyday informal interactions to more formal restorative meetings. (See **Appendix 4**) Restorative approaches articulate with, and compliment all other relational approaches, and influence the emotional atmosphere in a learning community. A restorative approach recognises that people are the experts of their own solutions and if implemented effectively will promote accountability and maximise personal responsibility. A restorative approach provides a framework of values, thinking and language that is helpful when something needs to be repaired or restored. In different contexts this could be:

- effective communication.
- relationships or friendships.
- empathy and understanding for another person’s perspective.
- trust and respect (this could mean a sense of security, self-confidence, self-respect, or dignity).
- understanding the impact of our own behaviour on others.
- repairing or replacing damaged materials or resources.

Orkney’s Relational Approaches

Our Approach

The term relational approach refers to a vast range of ‘ways of being and behaving’. Unsurprisingly relationships form the basis of all relational approaches.

Relational practices are central and at the heart of the tools, resources and approaches used to inform culture and ethos and promote positive relationships and behaviour in Orkney’s Schools.

The diagram below illustrates how Orkney's relational practices draw from the key concepts described in the last section to ensure approaches and interventions have an evidence base rooted in the **interconnections** between empathy and compassion, nurture, building self-regulation and resilience and strengths based, trauma sensitive, neuro-affirming approaches

(see **Appendix 4** for descriptors of key approaches and interventions within the diagram below)

Orkney's Relational Approaches



The Practical Application of Policy: A Systems Approach

Whole School or Setting Level

The journey towards system change involves everyone having a shared understanding of why change is required, what needs to change, and how this will be achieved. Collective change requires a strategic approach that is multifaceted and persistent over a long period of time.

Adopting relational approaches at a whole school/setting level takes time: time for staff to develop a shared understanding of the underpinning principles, time to learn, practice and refine the skills and strategies to support the approach, time to become confident and consistent in their use.

Key features of a whole systems relationship approach are outlined below:

- It is created in partnership with the wider school community with clear expectations about everyone's role within this.
- It is clearly documented in a policy.
- It requires consistency of practice to support the development of positive relationships.
- Approaches are agreed upon and implemented consistently across the whole school.

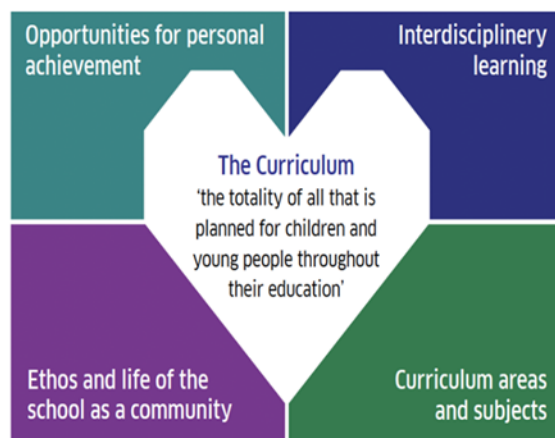
Staff behaviour is crucial in promoting positive relationships and behaviour:

- Staff model positive relationships and behaviour in their daily practice.
- Staff are flexible and responsive to children and young people's needs.
- Staff are reflective about how their behaviour can influence children's responses.

Classroom Level

Working with children who have a high level of need is the responsibility of all adults in school/early years setting.

Practices that support the development of a nurturing classroom:



- Curriculum
 - Relationship-based approaches are threaded through all areas of the curriculum and as part of the wider school system.
 - Formal and informal interactions during the school day nurture positive relationships and behaviour.
- Pedagogy
 - Relationship building is promoted and supported in the classroom.
 - Universal support is provided via a high-quality learning environment, underpinned by positive, nurturing, and respectful relationships between staff and young people.
 - Quality teaching is vital in order to support children to regulate, develop pro-social skills and take responsibility for their actions.
- Pupil Support
 - Adults in the classroom have a range of relational approaches to draw on in order to manage needs.
 - Support for Learning Assistants have received Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training – see Appendix 4, and are used effectively
 - Management of low-level disruption through relational approaches and good quality inclusive teaching, leads to a calm and supportive environment where all children are able to learn.
- Parent/Carer Engagement and Involvement
 - Parents/carers are actively encouraged to participate in life of school/early years setting.
 - Open and effective communication between staff and parents/carers.
- Other Supports, for example:
 - Assemblies.
 - Parent Councils.
 - Family-Community Supports.
 - Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)- see Appendix 4

Staged Intervention

Staged assessment and intervention processes are well embedded across all schools in the Orkney in line with all Local Authorities in Scotland. These processes ensure that children get the right support at the right time in the right place. The majority of children and young people's additional needs will be best met through universal approaches with some differentiated support provided alongside their classmates; however, a minority might require a more targeted approach.

Targeted approaches

Through ongoing assessment and intervention, it will be identified that some children and young people will need support that is additional to, or different from, the support provided for their peers. These children may need specific targeted support to develop their ability to regulate and engage in the social behaviours that build positive relationships and cohesive communities. Children may need to be taught specific skills for example, emotional regulation, turn taking, understanding of social expectations, and acceptance of social boundaries.

Working with parents, children / young people and partner services through the Getting It Right Child planning process can help identify and find solutions to difficulties before situations escalate. Comprehensive assessment informed by information gathered using the [national practice model](#) and robust planning are particularly important. This may include pupil behaviour support plans and risk assessments.

Effective collaborative working should facilitate appropriate and proportionate sharing of information about a child's situation and new factors in their lives which have the potential to trigger behaviour change or escalation. The Getting It Right Child Planning process should result in a clear shared understanding of appropriate strategies and supports and provide a mechanism for reviewing and evaluating them over time.

Ensuring Positive Relationships underpin effective Classroom Practice

Relationships and Effective Teaching and Learning

An inclusive learning environment is the starting point for positive relationships and behaviour. When we work together to effectively identify and support underlying needs and provide learning experiences that are individualised and appropriately differentiated, positive behaviour is promoted.

Relational teaching is essentially another way of describing personalisation and differentiation, both of which are known to be effective ways to improve learning for all. *“It goes further, however, by taking into account the pupil’s internal worlds as well as assessment outcomes. This is required at two distinct levels – emotions and learning, and cognition and knowledge”* Promoting Positive Relationships Framework and Guidance 2021 Highland Council.

Emotions and Learning

- Understanding that learning can be a stressful experience and adjusting accordingly, differentiating and checking the use of language and vocabulary continually.
 - Seeing motivational issues as a communication about confidence or relevance.
 - Taking into account wider issues in a pupil’s life and adapting levels of demand.
 - Setting subject content within the context of the 4 Capacities and choosing approaches that build confidence and resilience.

Cognition and knowledge

- Finding out and taking into account each pupil’s understanding and vocabulary level and knowledge of a topic.
- Adjusting pace and delivery so that all pupils can be meaningfully engaged and make progress
- Choosing programs and methods that support differentiation according to need.
- Being aware of the potential to overload the pupil’s capacities and adjusting ahead of difficulties.
- Spending time teaching pupils meta-cognitive skills, such as managing their learning, etc.

Relationships and Effective Behaviour Management

Instead of zero tolerance, let us try tolerance and compassion. Instead of no excuses, let us try to understand the context and show empathy. But let us be clear we never compromise on our expectations, rigour and standards (Whitaker, The Kindness Principle, 2021).

Positive relationships are key to both preventing inappropriate behaviour from pupils to addressing it when it arises (O'Connor, Dearing & Collins, 2011). Positive relationships do not mean an absence of conflict or difficulty, nor do they mean that behaviour is not addressed in our schools. Relationship based practices are often mis-perceived as the 'soft option' that allows disrespectful or irresponsible behaviour to go unchecked. If implemented properly however, they involve equal measures of challenge and support and create boundaries based on shared expectations or values which are proactive, preventative and positive.

Taking a relational approach to promoting positive behaviour involves:

- creating a school culture and ethos where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure.
- the establishment of **shared values** across the learning community upon which behaviour is discussed, modelled and used as the basis of support and intervention.
- having **clear, shared expectations** for behaviour that are communicated thoroughly and woven into the everyday life of the school.
- taking **individual needs** and capacity into consideration when responding to poor or harmful behaviour instead of a more traditional one size fits all fixed punitive responses.
- a focus on **empathetic responsiveness** and promote teaching and learning of social and emotional skills with a focus on self-regulation and resilience and promoting independence as a learner.
- **Relational consistency** across the school setting; where children and young people experience the adults as consistently modelling and values such as kindness, compassion and care.

Responding when behaviour “falls below expectations”

There are times for a complexity of reasons when a child's or young person does not respond to the relational approaches and positive strategies in the learning environment and their distressed behaviour continues or escalates. The policy for each setting should be clear about the principles of how situations in which behaviour falls below expectations will be resolved rather than focusing on fixed responses (sanctions).

When consequences need to be applied, they should be logical, related to the situation, have a focus on learning, and should take into consideration the needs and capacity of those involved. This will mean responses may vary for different individuals because their needs are different, for example a younger child or a child with additional support needs may not have the skills, understanding or ability to behave as an older or more able child might. The approach, however, remains consistent – focusing on repairing the harm caused, preventing it happening again, and returning to and refocusing on learning as quickly as possible.

In practical terms when adults need to apply consequences the aim is for them to be:

- **Related** to the behaviour.
- **Respectful** in the way they are communicated and enforced.
- **Reasonable**, proportionate, and developmentally appropriate.

(Appendix 2 outlines Operational Guidelines for schools in promoting effective teaching and learning and behaviour management)

In June 2025 the Scottish government published “**Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment, Guidance**” [Fostering-Positive-Inclusive-Safe-School-Environment-Guidance](#).

The document outlines the use of **consequences** in schools

Key points from this publication are

- “Setting boundaries for children and young people, and ensuring they understand them, is fundamental to healthy child development. They provide structure and security, helping children and young people to navigate social interactions and build essential skills for life,”
- “While consequences are often thought of as the actions or interventions taken in response to behaviour that falls below expectations, they can also be a response that reinforces positive behaviour and the meeting or exceeding of shared expectations.”
- Consequences “can also help maintain a safe, supportive and happier learning environment for all. Conversely, inconsistent or punitive approaches can lead to disengagement, exacerbating inequalities, and can negatively impact wellbeing.”
- “Constructive, logical, predictable and developmentally appropriate responses and interventions can help children to feel safe, to understand the impact of their actions, and to learn how to respond differently. The goal is therefore not just to uphold values and expectations, but to promote responsibility, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills.”

In the spirit of this recent Guidance **consequences** are to be seen as **supports**. It is emphasised that it is important to identify underlying needs contributing to maladaptive behaviour and create potential risk mitigations in order to:

- promote a child’s or young person’s wellbeing – including their social skills, executive function and emotional regulation
- ensure support is in place for children and young people which fosters long-term change and keeps themselves and others safe

Implementation of Policy

Implementing this policy effectively in Orkney will require:

- Initial awareness raising of authority policy.
- A review of current policy and practice, at authority and establishment level, including readiness within current systems.
- Identification of ongoing professional learning need.
- Identification of improvement and self-evaluation activity.
- Implementation and review.

Education Scotland highlight **self-evaluation** as a method to achieve these aims.

Self-Evaluation

Establishments need to be prepared to carry out extensive self-evaluation of established systems to determine their suitability within a relational approach, as outlined in this policy.

The practice of self-evaluation is well established throughout education settings, supported by existing frameworks:

- How Good is Our School? 4 (HGIOS 4) (Education Scotland, 2015)
- How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC) (Education Scotland, 2016)

Both HGIOS 4 and HGIOELC emphasise the importance of positive relationships as features of highly effective practice in learning, across different quality indicators, for example:

- The learning environment is built on positive nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high quality outcomes (QI 2.3).
- Children tell us that they have been able to build up positive relationships with consistent adults who they trust enough to talk to when they need help (QI 2.1).
- Relationships across the school community are positive and supportive, founded on a climate of mutual respect within a strong sense of community, shared values, and high expectations (QI 3.1).

Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach: A Framework to Support Self-Evaluation (Education Scotland, 2016) provides self-evaluation measures guided by the nurture principles. Tools included within this document support the implementation of relationship-based approaches at the whole school and systems level.

These self-evaluation frameworks will enable schools to align their systems to the relationship-based approaches outlined in this policy.

It is hoped that schools will find the information in this document useful when developing their own policy and practice to promote positive relationships and behaviour.

Appendix 3 gives guidance on constructing A Relationships and Behaviour Policy for schools. Further information and resources to support implementation of a school policy and ensure effectiveness of relational approaches can be found in **Appendix 1** (References).

Appendix 1

References

Legislation

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, (amended 2016)

Education (Scotland) Act 2016

[Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/10/contents)

UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/10/contents)

Scottish Government Policy and Guidance

Scottish Government (2018) Developing a Positive whole-school ethos and culture: Relationships, Learning and Behaviour

[Developing a positive whole-school ethos and culture – Relationships, Learning and Behaviour \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/developing-a-positive-whole-school-ethos-and-culture-relationships-learning-and-behaviour)

Scottish Government (2022) *Getting it Right for Every Child*

[Getting it right for every child: Policy Statement - 2022](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/getting-it-right-for-every-child-policy-statement-2022)

Scottish Government (February 2020) *The Independent Care Review (The Promise)*

[Independent Care Review – The root and branch review of Scotland's care system.](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/independent-care-review-the-root-and-branch-review-of-scotland-s-care-system)

Scottish Government (June 2020) *Support for Learning all our Children and All their potential*

[Support for Learning: All our Children and all their Potential \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/support-for-learning-all-our-children-and-all-their-potential)

Education Scotland Guidance

Education Scotland (2015) *How Good is our School?*

[How good is our school? \(4th edition\) \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/Topics/quality-improvement/how-good-is-our-school)

Education Scotland (2015) *How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?*

[How good is our early learning and childcare? \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/Topics/quality-improvement/how-good-is-our-early-learning-and-childcare)

Education Scotland (2017) *Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach*

[Applying nurture as a whole school approach | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

Education Scotland (2017) *Using implementation science to support the implementation of interventions in real world contexts*

[Using implementation science to support the implementation of interventions in real world contexts | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

Education Scotland (October 2023) *Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Educational Settings*

[Promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings | Improving relationships and behaviour | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

Fostering a Positive, Inclusive and Safe School Environment guidance".
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fostering-positive-inclusive-safe-school-environment-guidance/>

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-Based Approach to Physical Intervention In Schools](#)

Other References and Resources

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/risk-assessment-guidance-violent-aggressive-dangerous-behaviour-local-authorities-educational-settings>

[Included, Engaged, Involved 2 \(2017\).](#)

[Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting \(2019\)](#)

Independent Care Review – The Promise <https://www.carereview.scot/>

[CIRCLE resource to support Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working \(Secondary\) | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-additional-support-learning-implementation/>

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/>

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/national-improvement-framework/>

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/nurture-and-trauma-informed-approaches-a-summary-of-supports-and-resources/>

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/the-compassionate-and-connected-classroom/>
(also links to Compassionate Connected Communities)

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/restorative-approaches-to-support-positive-relationships-and-behaviour/>

[Promoting Positive Relationships – Highland Council Psychological Service](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Utjs2UuCxGc> The Kindness Principal Dave Whittaker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1CzUO9yEtc>

Appendix 2

Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour

Operational Guidance for Schools

National Policy Guidance:

[Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour](#)

[Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance](#)

[Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions](#)

This guidance has been developed to promote consistent application of our Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Guidance.

The strategies and interventions listed here are not exhaustive but are a small selection of things that can be pre-planned and practiced with different learners and different classes.

It is expected that schools will seek to establish the most appropriate operational guidance for their setting and that this will form part of and align clearly with their own Relationships and Behaviour Policy. This document can be used to guide and facilitate this process.

Planned Approaches to promote learner engagement and positive behaviour

These approaches should be part of regular planning, preparation, and practice. Managing the learning environment is the most effective and non-intrusive universal way to promote engagement in learning and positive behaviour.

Use of CIRCLE or a similar framework for assessing the needs of a whole class will help to plan effective universal support.

Approaches include:

- Expectations are co-created with learners, they are visible, and are regularly referred to.
- Classrooms routines are clear and well established.
- Classroom learning spaces are tidy and free from clutter and displays are organised and do not cause overstimulation.
- Resources are easily accessible and labelled.
- Learning is well planned as part of a series of connected lessons.
- Learning Intentions/Success Criteria are ready to be displayed, revisited, and used to summarise learning.

- Lessons are effectively differentiated
- A range of activities and resources are used to engage all learners
- Resources are organised and accessible to learners
- Seating arrangements and plans are organised to ensure the most effective learning environment possible depending on the needs of the learners and the learning activities
- All transitions of activity, people/grouping, and/or seating/location are supported. For example, entrance and exit from class are consistent and calm - learners are welcomed at the door and calmly leave class after a positive exit activity or plenary.

Classroom strategies to promote learner engagement and positive behaviour

These strategies are not intended to be sequential as what works most effectively will be determined by the needs of different classes and individual learners. However, it should be noted that some strategies are less disruptive to others and have a lower risk of non-compliance than others. For example, distracting a learner away from an undesirable behaviour, such as persistent talking, carries little risk of non-compliance and isn't distracting for the rest of the class. Asking a learner to move seats however may be disruptive to others and carries the risk of refusal to comply.

Low risk and least intrusive strategies should always be tried first. The decision to use a particular strategy should always be determined by how well you know the learner and their individual needs. The composition and needs of the class may also influence the strategies used.

Approaches include:

- Connect before you correct - quietly asking the pupil if everything is ok – be aware of the audience and the impact it could have on the learner.
- Use proximity - this can act as reassurance for the learner (you've 'noticed' them) and also act as a prompt back to task.
- Use non-verbal communication effectively (a smile, eye contact, visual prompts towards the clock or towards their work/the board etc.)
- Distraction and re-direction (away from 'behaviour' and towards the 'learning task') Appropriate use of humour – when used well it can disarm and de-escalate.
- Verbal prompt – 'what should you be doing?'
- Provide hurdle help with a task if necessary with the learning task to get them back on track.
- Quiet private warning.
- Time and space – it may be necessary, to give the learner time to regulate their emotions. This may also mean you need to physically move away from them as well or allow them to move to a quieter location in the class for a period of time.

- Create an opportunity to speak to the learner, listen to them, and potentially remind them of class expectations (if possible, give them time to respond/change their behaviour).
- Remind the learner of the positive consequences of maintaining class/school expectations.
- Remind the learner of times/activities that they've done well.
- Calmly remind learners that harmful behaviour will not be ignored as this is not kind or respectful to the learner or to others.
- Calmly moving the learner to another seat.
- Have a restorative conversation (if possible at the time or later) with the learner(s).
- Always respect a learners dignity (this may be difficult if they are being disrespectful however remember we must always model the behaviour we want to see). For example, lateness is addressed privately in a way that minimises disruption (no public questioning which may lead to the learner feeling ashamed).
- Seek assistance from (specific to each setting).
- Record a concern.
- Apply a consequence.

Caveats

Always use caution when talking about negative consequences to ensure these are not received as threats. While a consequence should usually be applied as close to the time of the behaviour as possible, this needs to be carefully judged and it may be that the child or adult require time to come down from the heightened emotion of the incident before a consequence is considered. Never leave a learner unsupervised if they are very distressed. If possible and necessary, ask someone else to seek assistance for you.

Formal Interventions to recognise positive and address negative behaviour

Consequences follow on naturally from behaviour. Consequences can be positive or negative.

Recognition of Effort, Innovation, and Positive Behaviour

Positive feedback specifically related to behaviour is an example of a natural consequence that supports the development of intrinsic motivation, which means we carry out a behaviour for our own satisfaction, rather than for a consequence or perceived reward.

There is also a place for more tangible rewards. Merits can be awarded for many reasons, including demonstrating our school values through being helpful, being polite, working hard, completing homework, completing work to a high standard, consistent and improved effort. There is no limit to the number of merits that can be issued to a class.

Reporting concerns and consequences

Concerns may include lack of engagement in learning, wellbeing issues, behaviour that does not meet class expectations, and failing to follow instructions. Concerns should be recorded in order to prompt and inform future support for learners. At times it may be necessary to inform parents/carers of our concerns and work with them to coordinate support for their child.

Although the responses to concerns may differ depending on the different needs of those involved the approach taken by all staff should be consistent and should always seek to maintain the relationship with the pupil and prevent shame or loss of dignity.

Learners should feel that:

- we care about them.
- we are concerned about them, their learning, and their behaviour.
- we want them in class/school so that we know they are safe, and they have the best opportunity to achieve.
- we are also concerned about the impact of their behaviour on their class and how this might impact on their relationship with others in the class.

Consequences – sequential application of a hierarchy of responses

The principle of ‘connection before correction’ should always be prioritised however when the interventions listed above have not been effective then a more formal approach to consequences is required. Consequences should always be applied within a relational approach which allows positive and trusting relationships with the learner to be maintained.

The intention behind applying a consequence should always be to help a learner understand the impact their behaviour has on their own and others learning. Consequences therefore should be linked to the behaviour and therefore natural and logical. The learner should know the reason for the consequence and should potentially be involved in deciding what the consequence is.

Consequences related to undesirable behaviour should be used as learning opportunities; learning a better way to behave that will benefit themselves and others.

Some examples of natural consequences may include:

- being asked to finish uncompleted classwork during a social time or as homework (though if this is happening regularly staff need to examine why and what else can be done).
- creating a mess may mean that a learner needs to use their social time to clean up
- refusal to comply with a consequence may mean that a parent/carer is contacted and asked to support the learner to understand the reason behind the

consequence and the importance of meeting the school expectations agreed by everyone – all of which can be directly related to positive consequences for the learner

Learners should also know that if the concerning behaviour continues further consequences may be applied.

Before moving through the sequence of consequences the learner should be given time to reflect and the opportunity to stop the unwanted behaviour and make more positive choices.

Any attempt by the learner to reach the desired behaviour should also be acknowledged and praised even if it is not yet fully realised.

Staff and pupils benefit when the hierarchy of application of consequences is followed consistently across the school. More significant consequences (level 4-5) should be recorded as concerns.

For example:

Level 1: Directive statement and an opportunity to reflect - a formal behaviour check delivered verbally with a focus on re-directing the learner back to class tasks.

Level 2: Relocate the young person within the class to minimise disruption to other learners and give the learner involved the opportunity to get back on task.

Level 3: Isolated conversation between the learner and the teacher – this may have to be outside of the classroom if the conversation cannot be isolated within the class. It may be useful to ask what support the learner thinks they need in order to re-engage with learning. However, the seriousness of persistent behaviour that disrupts learning should be made clear and that compliance with instructions is now needed to avoid further consequences.

Level 4: Referral to a PTC Faculty Lead (or equivalent in primary settings) – if available the notified manager, or an appropriate nominated person, may intervene and use their judgement to resolve the situation.

Level 5: Referral to a senior leader (SLT, year group lead)
Instances where a young person exhibits behaviour that is extreme and cannot be isolated or contained close to their learning location should be referred directly to SLT.

Extreme behaviour may include verbally or physically violent, dangerous or intimidating behaviour.

Please note referrals of this nature may require a more complex and considered response. This may take time. Referrers need to trust that senior leaders will respond to the situation appropriately, based on the needs of everyone involved, and will feedback to the referrer at the earliest opportunity. Please remember that timescales for this may vary depending on circumstances/context.

Formal interventions at Level 4-5

- Good neighbour in another class or period of time with a different teacher or class
- Formal Restorative discussion*
- Use of interval or lunch to complete class tasks/learning
- Referrals to an appropriate PT/SLT for immediate or follow up support
- Behaviour check-ins or monitoring by PT
- Follow up may include parent/carers communication or meeting to seek and plan support
- Planned targeted support (please note it may be necessary to exclude the learner while this support is arranged)
- Exclusion ** - all are formally recorded, are a last option, and are for the shortest period of time.

* The readiness of the learner to participate in a restorative conversation is key therefore the conversation may need to take place at interval, lunch, or at another agreed time. The conversation may be between a member of staff and the learner (s), it may be supported by another member of staff, or it could be between the referred to PT/SLT and the learner. In some situations, time and opportunity may prevent the member of staff involved in the situation being part of the restorative conversation. This situation is not ideal. If this does happen then the member of staff should be informed as soon as possible of the outcome of the conversation. It may also be necessary to arrange a follow up conversation at a later stage to repair the relationships between the member of staff and the learner.

Restorative Practice is a recommended way to resolve conflict between pupils and manage pupil behaviour than traditional methods such as punitive discipline, rewards and consequences. However, staff should be mindful that reasonable adjustments may have to be made if choosing to use this method with children and young people who have communication difficulties such as autism or cognitive complex needs.

This is because restorative practice is only successful if the pupil can fully understand the dialogue and reflect on the incident with analysis. For example, autistic learners may not be able to imagine and consider the perspectives and emotional responses of others and may not be able to generate ideas for resolution. So, for some autistic learners, Restorative Approaches being used for conflict resolution, may not be appropriate. As always as with any approach it should be appropriately planned to meet individual needs.

** Exclusions are never used as punishment but as time for risks to be assessed, relationships to be restored, and appropriate supports for everyone involved to be put in place.

Monitoring of Concerns and Consequences

Regular monitoring of reported concerns and consequences will allow for early intervention and support. Interventions may be planned at multiple levels concurrently to provide a learner with wraparound support. Use of the least intrusive universal supports will be used all of the time with targeted supports used as required and for as long as required. For example, universal supports may be planned in advance with class teachers such as visual timetables and written task instruction cards for learners with attention difficulties and poor working memory which regularly leads to off task and disruptive behaviour. Alongside this a learner may be asked to attend regular check-ins with their pastoral support lead to closely monitor their progress and address any ongoing issues quickly before they escalate.

Summary

We are invested in supporting the best possible relationship-based practice. We cannot do this without the support of staff, partners, parents, and pupils.

Any operational guidance should always be administered in line with the values, expectations, and agreements contained within the Schools Relationships and Behaviour Policy which has been developed by the learning community collective and apply to everyone.

Appendix 3

Constructing a Relationships and Behaviour Policy

How policy is developed and constructed by everyone in the learning community will determine its impact and value.

It should be created and implemented alongside learners, parents/carers and staff. Implementation and evaluation of the policy will be a collaborative process which takes time and effort, the development or refresh of any policy should be factored in to any school improvement plan and in to parental/professional learning programmes.

Some key points:

- The policy is for the entire learning community and should be accessible to everyone.
- It should be easy to read and remember.
- It should be easy to refer to in everyday discussions with learners, parents and carers.
- It should be re-producible in a poster type format.

The policy should contain:

Purpose of the policy and the underpinning values. Expectations should apply to everyone all of the time and visibly consistent, for more information on visible consistencies see the work of Paul Dix. Expectations should be created and agreed by everyone in a learning community. Expectations should be clearly aligned with principles for example 'we walk in the corridors to keep ourselves safe'.

1. Introduction
2. Expectations – what they are, why meeting them benefits us and principles behind the consequences.
3. List the relational approaches that are embedded in practice.
4. Policy and practice – how the policy supports and is supported by other policies, structures and processes.
5. Any appendices required.

Suggested sections

1) Introduction

This is where the purpose of the policy and the schools values should be made explicit. There should be a clear link between values and behaviour. Principles behind the policy should be outlined and include:

- The explicit link between values, relationships and behaviour. Values are the principles that drive our thinking and behaviour. They influence our actions and attitudes and guide us through life in all that we do.
- Universal values such as kindness, respect and responsibility should be made explicit, taught and fostered through all aspects of school life.
- Values apply to everyone in the learning community and staff have a responsibility to model and demonstrate these values, using them as a basis for teaching and learning, relationship development.
- The policy is for everyone and all types of relationships; learner-learner, learner-staff, staff-staff, staff-parent.
- The role of positive relationships in enabling learners to access and engage with the curriculum and the development of the 4 capacities of the curriculum of excellence.

2) Expectations and Consequences

Expectations should apply all of the time to everyone. They should therefore be created and agreed to by everyone (learners/carers and staff). Expectations should be generic and as closely linked to values as possible, for example we keep ourselves safe or we respect each other. Then exemplification can be used for different situations, for example we walk in the corridors to keep ourselves safe or we leave the toilets clean because we respect each other. Always refer back to the initial expectation. The aim is that ultimately learners can generalise what, for example keeping ourselves safe or respecting each other means in difficult scenarios without adult explanations.

Expectations should be simple and cover all settings within the school, they can be added to in certain settings where more explicit expectations e.g in craft and design are necessary. Remember they should be easily recalled and referred to.

Make explicit the positive benefits of meeting expectations and don't assume that learners or parents will know what these are. Have them displayed, discuss them, regularly referring to them, explaining how they help and praising learners when they meet them.

Benefits of value based expectations include:

- Feeling safe and protected.
- Creating a good learning environment.
- Knowing and demonstrating how to relate and show respect for one another.
- Valuing the qualities and attributes that contribute to good relationships.
- Understanding our emotions and how our behaviour affects others.
- Being able to disagree without getting into conflict.
- Being able to use relational approaches to resolve problems and repair relationships.

- Be careful not to qualify expectations with things that some learners won't be able to do. Some children and young people will require help and support to meet the expectation. Offer the child help and seek to understand why. Be careful qualifying expectations with the 'first time rule'. Some children will not meet the expectation on the first time and we risk setting children up to fail by setting this.

Determining Consequences: key principles for responding to behaviour that fall below expectations

A schools behaviour policy should recognise that at times we all fall below the expectation we have of each other. The policy should make explicit the principles about how these situations will be resolved rather than detail explicit sanctions. One size fits all sanctions or responses do not allow for the individual needs of learners in differing circumstances. Principles should provide the foundation or value base upon which consequences will be determined. Consequences should always be delivered whilst maintaining a relational approach and upholding core values such as kindness, understanding and compassion. Staff are encouraged to think about the relationship and connection first before addressing the behaviour.

When consequences need to be applied they should be logical, related to the situation, have a focus on learning and should take into consideration the needs and capacity of those involved. This will mean response may vary for different individuals because their needs are different.

The approach however remains consistent focusing on:

- Responding, not reacting.
- Relationship first, behaviour second.
- Repairing the harm.
- Preventing it happening again.
- Returning to learning as quickly as possible.

Consequences can include repairing the harm caused, restoring damaged relationships, talking through what happened and how it can be prevented in the future. Consequences should be discussed with and understood by learners and parents where necessary.

Further consequences maybe necessary depending on the needs of everyone involved. They should always be proportionate.

3) Policy and Practice

The policy should include a brief overview of how it supports and is supported by other school policies, structures and systems such as teaching and learning, promoting attendance, anti-bullying etc.

There should be an application at the level of the whole school or setting and an acknowledgement that it will take time and effort to achieve from and by everyone in the system.

Consistency across the school is key as is staff behaviour, they should:

- Model positive relationships and behaviour in their daily practice
- Be flexible and responsive to children's needs
- Be reflective about how their behaviour can influence the behaviour of others.

Staff will need time, training, support and practice to develop knowledge and understanding and to refine the skills and strategies to become confident and consistent in their use.

1.1. Self-Evaluation

HGIOS 4 emphasises the importance of positive relationships as features of highly effective practice in learning, across different quality indicators, for example:

- *The learning environment is built on positive nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high quality outcomes (QI 2.3)*
- *Children tell us that they have been able to build up positive relationships with consistent adults who they trust enough to talk to when they need help (QI 2.1)*
- *Relationships across the school community are positive and supportive, founded on a climate of mutual respect within a strong sense of community, shared values, and high expectations (QI 3.1)*

Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach: A Framework to Support Self-Evaluation (Education Scotland, 2016) provides self-evaluation measures guided by the nurture principles. Tools included within this document support the implementation of relationship-based approaches at the whole school and systems level.

These self-evaluation frameworks will enable schools to align their systems to the relationship-based approaches outlined in this policy.

Appendix 4

Descriptors of Relational Approaches/Interventions

PACE.

PACE is grounded in attachment theory and neuroscience. It was developed by Dan Hughes more than 20 years ago as a central part of attachment-focused family therapy, with the aim of supporting adults to build safe, trusting and meaningful relationships with children and young people who have experienced trauma. It is based on the way that caregivers interact with very young infants. It describes a way of relating to others or 'a way of being'. It pays attention to how we deliver messages to children and young people through our communication. The principles offer a useful framework from which we can develop attunement and strengthen our relationships with the children and young people we work with. PACE stands for **Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy**.

Using PACE helps adults to slow down their reactions, stay calm and tune into what the child is experiencing in the moment. It supports us to gain a better understanding of what the child is feeling. In tricky moments it allows us to stay emotionally regulated and guide the child through their heightened emotions, thoughts and behaviours. In turn, PACE helps children and young people to feel more connected to, and understood by, important adults in their life and ultimately, to slow down their own responses.

1. **Playfulness:** Encouraging a playful and engaging interaction with the child.
2. **Acceptance:** Demonstrating unconditional acceptance and empathy.
3. **Curiosity:** Showing genuine interest in the child's experiences and emotions.
4. **Empathy:** Providing emotional support and understanding.

The PACE way of being, emphasises the power of connection and empathy. If implemented as a whole school approach, can play a pivotal role in educational settings. By fostering safe relationships and understanding, educators can create an environment conducive to healing and growth – both academically and emotionally.

Nurture.

Nurture is an ethos with its origins in John Bowlby's influential attachment theory. This theory was applied in Colwyn Trevarthen's research on the interactions which promote bonding between babies and their caregivers, to give a family of approaches which promote positive, trusting relationships in education and care environments. The Nurture ethos is at the base approaches such as **Nurturing Approaches, Roots of Empathy**, and **Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP)**.

Nurturing Approaches (Marjorie Boxall).

This family of approaches had its origins in the development of Nurture Groups in education and childcare settings in East London in the late 1960s. The concept of Nurture has more recently been embraced by the Scottish Government as an

overarching whole-school philosophy, moving away from the idea that the Nurture should exist in a discrete part of a setting for the benefit of a select few children.

The Nurture principles

Marjorie Boxall put forward six 'Nurture Principles' - key concepts that shape our understanding of child development through the lens of attachment. These principles, in Boxall's work, were used as an anchor and reference to underpin the creation and ethos of Nurture Groups.

NP1 Learning is understood developmentally.

NP2 The setting offers a safe base.

NP3 Nurture is important for the development of wellbeing and self-esteem.

NP4 Language is a vital means of communication.

NP5 All behaviour is communication.

NP6 Transitions are important in the lives of children and young people.

Whole school nurture

In 2017, the Scottish Government launched guidance to help establishments embrace and develop 'Nurture as a Whole-School Approach'. Whilst the main goal is to promote and develop Nurture as a universal approach in Scotland's education and childcare establishments, it is also an important cornerstone of more focused trauma-informed practice. In addition, the Nurturing Approach is key to responding to the increasing levels of anxiety present in Scotland's schools, particularly since the Covid 19 pandemic and the associated school closures from 2020. Education Scotland's self-evaluation framework <https://education.gov.scot/resources/applying-nurture-as-a-whole-school-approach-a-framework-to-support-self-evaluation/> acts as a powerful guide, and a highly practical audit tool, for schools and Early Years settings to use as they develop their nurturing ethos and practices.

The Compassionate and Connected Communities.

- A targeted professional learning resource based on evidence-based practice which complements nurturing approaches and contributes to staff understanding and practice around trauma and adverse early experiences.
- Participants are also encouraged to undertake further self-directed reading between sessions and key references and links are provided to support this.
- The resource can use a model of practitioner enquiry to enhance reflective practice and practitioners can engage in collaborative action research between sessions to further develop their knowledge and skills in supporting children/young people who have experienced trauma and adversity.

The Connected and Compassionate Classroom.

This is a free curriculum designed by Education Scotland for universal delivery by the class teacher to an Upper Primary yeargroup. The programme, consisting of 20 sessions, should be delivered in its entirety across the span of a single academic year. Through participating in the programme, children will develop greater empathy for each other, increased appreciation of Children's Rights, recognition of individual experiences and relationships, and an appreciation of the connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. The course concludes with 4 sessions that teach children to strengthen their connectedness with each other and develop their resilience together. Schools considering delivery of the Connected and Compassionate Classroom should plan well in advance so as to get maximum benefit from the programme for all participants. It will be important to engage parents/carers as well as the pupils themselves. The teacher will require sufficient preparation time to understand the whole programme, as well as time to plan each lesson ahead of time. <https://education.gov.scot/resources/compassionate-and-connected-classroom/>

Emotion Coaching.

Emotion coaching, based on the work of American psychotherapist John Gottman, is an approach that teaches emotional self-regulation through experiences of co-regulation with skilled and trusted adults. Rather than being explicitly taught a set of skills, the child learns to manage the way they respond to strong emotions through their real-life experiences, mediated by adults who have completed training in Emotion Coaching. To find out more, visit the Emotion Coaching UK website: <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/> Orkney's Educational Psychology Service is accredited to offer Emotion Coaching training to staff working in Education and Childcare establishments throughout Orkney.

Zones of Regulation®

Created by American Paediatric Occupational Therapist Leah Kuypers, The Zones of Regulation® is a curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control. The concept is deceptively simple, making it easy to hold in mind even when experiencing a degree of emotional dysregulation. The programme teaches children to assess the intensity of their emotions 'in the moment', and to decide whether they are currently in the 'Green Zone' (comfortable intensity of emotion), the 'Yellow Zone' (experiencing a slightly uncomfortable intensity of emotion), the 'Red Zone' (overwhelmed with intense emotion), or the 'Blue Zone' (subdued/numb/tired/ill). Children go on to learn how to identify their own personal triggers, and are supported to develop their own personal toolkits of strategies that help them to consciously self-regulate and shift their emotional state.

Solution Orientated Approaches (Steve De Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg, Bill O'Hanlon).

Solution orientated approaches have their origins in therapeutic approaches such as brief solution-focused therapy and have been found to have much wider applications in the way people work together. The approaches centre on key principles which help focus our minds on solutions, positive futures and strengths. This empowering approach helps to avoid the easy trap of becoming embroiled in negative thinking patterns which can impede progress and hamper the prospect of positive change.

"It seems clear that one cannot solve the problem with the same thinking that created the problem" (Berg and De Shazer, 1993).

A Solution Oriented approach helps people identify what they want to achieve, understand what is in their capacity and explores what they can do to move towards this.

Solution Oriented approaches have a number of applications within settings to help encourage positive relationships, tackle difficulties in a productive way, and promote an inclusive ethos.

Restorative Practice.

Restorative approaches aim to improve behaviour and relationships in schools by moving away from a blame and retribution model of dealing with unacceptable behaviour towards one which is based on social responsibility and self-awareness. These approaches have their origins in North American Indian and Maori cultures. The concepts were taken forward as 'Restorative Justice' in Canada, New Zealand and Australia in the 1970's. The philosophy has been developed for the shaping of school ethos and conflict resolution in many forms, including the Scottish Government approach of 'Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour'.

Being restorative can be proactive (relationship building) or responsive (relationship repairing) and can be used at every level from everyday informal interactions to more formal restorative meetings. Restorative approaches articulate with, and compliment all other relational approaches, and influence the emotional atmosphere in a learning community.

A restorative approach provides a framework of values, thinking and language that is helpful when something needs to be repaired or restored.

Synergy.

What is Synergy?

Designed to help us "keep our heads" and act constructively in time of high stress. A way of thinking, being and doing to keep us centred, optimistic and open to ideas. A way of communicating with listening at its core.

Three strands – One Whole

1. Think Calmly

- Acknowledge the stress levels.
- Reduce the tension in stressful situations.
- Harness your logical thinking and help others to do the same.

2. Listen Actively

- Learn to use OARS.
- Open Questions.
- Affirmation.
- Reflective Learning.
- Summarising.

3. Build on the Strengths.

- Solution orientated thinking.
- Focus on any areas of existing strength.
- Generate hope for the future – and build on it.
- Empower people to make changes, to “walk tall not small”.

Pivotal.

The Pivotal approach to behaviour management starts with the behaviour of adults. Staff are expected to maintain a consistent, calm approach to behaviour at all times, with the emphasis on depersonalising behaviour interventions.

Pivotal behaviour management strategy is based on five pillars:

- Consistent, calm adult behaviour
- First attention to best conduct
- Relentless routines
- Scripted interventions
- Restorative follow up

Mary Astell Academy has 3 school rules on which our behaviour policy stands:

1. Be ready and willing to learn
2. Be Safe
3. Be Respectful

Staff give ‘**first attention to best conduct**’ praising compliance to indirectly tackle off task behaviour. Direct interventions are done calmly and in a non-confrontational

way, giving children **‘thinking time’** to respond with requests. **Relentless routines** provides pupils and staff with a solid framework on which they can rely on repeatedly. **Scripted interventions** allow all staff to deliver the same guidance and advice in a calm, non-judgemental way.

Restorative conversations are used to engage in powerful dialogue with children. The focus is on what rules were broken, who was affected by their behaviour, and what can be done differently in future. These conversations are taken very seriously and are very effective in helping children take responsibility for their actions.

Particular emphasis is placed on recognising (rather than rewarding) positive behaviour, e.g. praise post cards, phone calls and text messages home.

Each term, one particular aspect of behaviour may be focussed on by staff, e.g. respect for fellow pupils and staff. All staff use scripting and the five pillars to help modify behaviours.

Circle

The CIRCLE resources were developed through a collaboration between Queen Margaret University, NHS Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council.

The information in these resources represent the reflective practice of hundreds of teachers as well as feedback from learners and parents/carers. It also reflects relevant research and policy guidance.

[CIRCLE: Ideas in practice - primary \(PDF\)](#)

[CIRCLE: Ideas in practice - secondary \(PDF\)](#)

The CIRCLE Framework is a way of organising and supporting input using a staged system of support, beginning with setting up an inclusive classroom. Checklists and planning tools are included to support discussion and can be used to document strategies used and record professional learning. It includes the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale, and the CIRCLE Participation Scale developed with practitioners to support identification of changes required and the measurement of progress.

NAIT and Autism Level Up

<https://www.autismlevelup.com/#home>
<https://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/home/about-the-autism-toolbox/>



Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

VIG involves reflecting on the use of the 'attunement principles' (see Table below) within interactions, and the effect that this has, in turn, on communicative effectiveness and their relationships. This is of great value for professionals wishing to build mutually rewarding, positive relationships with pupils, clients, or even colleagues.

Table: Principles of Attuned Interactions and Guidance

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Being Attentive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking interested with friendly posture. • Giving time and space for others. • Wondering about what they are doing, thinking or feeling. • Enjoying watching them. |
| Encouraging Initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting. • Listening actively. • Showing emotional warmth through intonation. • Naming positively what you see, think or feel. • Using friendly and/or playful intonation as appropriate. • Saying what you are doing. • Looking for initiatives. |
| Receiving Initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing you have heard, noticed their initiative. • Receiving with body language. • Being friendly and/or playful as appropriate. • Returning eye-contact, smiling, nodding in response. • Receiving what they are saying or doing with words. • Repeating/using their words or phrases. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Developing Attuned Interactions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving and then responding. • Checking they are understanding you. • Waiting attentively for your turn. • Having fun. • Giving a second (and further) turn on same topic. • Giving and taking short turns. • Contributing to interaction/activity equally. • Co-operating – helping each other. |
| Guiding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolding. • Extending, building on their response. • Judging the amount of support required and adjusting. • Giving information when needed. • Providing help when needed. • Offering choices that they can understand. • Making suggestions that they can follow. |
| Deepening Discussion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting goal-setting. • Sharing viewpoints. • Collaborative discussion and problem-solving. • Naming difference of opinion. • Investigating the intentions behind words. • Naming contradictions/conflicts (real or potential). • Reaching new shared understandings. • Managing conflict (back to being attentive and receive initiatives aiming to restore attuned interactions). |

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

An Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) is a trained school-based professional who supports the emotional well-being of pupils. They are trained by educational psychologists and provide individualized and group interventions to help children and young people develop social, emotional, and mental health skills.

Key aspects of the ELSA role:

- Training:

ELSAs undergo a specific training program, often led by educational psychologists, to learn about emotional literacy, social-emotional development, and intervention techniques.

- Supervision:

ELSAs receive ongoing supervision from educational psychologists to ensure they are practicing within their scope and to support their professional development.

- Individualized and Group Support:

ELSAs work with children and young people either individually or in small groups, tailoring their support to the specific needs of each student.

- Focus on Emotional Literacy:

ELSAs help students develop their ability to understand, manage, and regulate their emotions, as well as their ability to connect with others emotionally.

- Building Capacity in Schools:

ELSA training aims to build the capacity of schools to support the social, emotional, and mental health needs of their pupils using their own resources.

- Scope of Practice:

ELSAs work within their scope of practice, which is defined by their training and supervision. They should discuss any concerns beyond their scope with their educational psychologist.

- Emphasis on Support, Not Fixing:

ELSAs focus on supporting students to identify their own strategies and solutions to emotional challenges, rather than "fixing" their problems.

- Collaboration with School Staff:

ELSAs work collaboratively with teachers, other school staff, and, where possible, with the students themselves to develop clear goals and support plans.

Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB)

Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB) is a relational, person-centred intervention that focuses on fostering positive behaviour in settings like social care, education, and homelessness services by employing proactive, adaptable strategies that prioritise understanding and supporting individuals, especially those with complex needs, in a trauma-informed and inclusive manner. PPB emphasises empowering individuals, reducing restrictive practices, and promoting growth and independence. The OIC PPB Policy aligns and is informed by Scottish Government's "Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3" guidance, emphasizing a rights-based, nurturing approach to behaviour management.

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-Based Approach to Physical Intervention In Schools](#)

Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB) training is a course designed to equip staff with a structured framework to follow when working with individuals who may exhibit distressed behaviours that put themselves at risk or challenge peers, the

environment, or staff. The philosophy of PPB should be adhered to at all times to ensure consistent, effective, and ethical practice.

Although staff may encounter situations where individuals pose a potential risk, it is their responsibility to minimise such risks through the application of theoretical knowledge. Physical interventions should be considered only as a last resort.

To support staff in reducing risk, the following documents has been developed for use within the services of Orkney Islands Council:

Behavioural Profile

The Behavioural Profile provides summary guidance to staff, emphasizing key aspects of an individual's care plan to identify and mitigate potential risks. Ideally, individuals who display behaviours that may pose a risk should be involved in completing this form. If necessary, staff or a representative may complete the form on their behalf, ensuring the individual's input to the extent of their ability.

It is crucial that this document is completed collaboratively, involving the individual that it refers to (where possible and if not by the individuals advocate), parents, caregivers, and other relevant parties in the individual's care. The Behavioural Profile must be stored confidentially and reviewed regularly, with the frequency determined by the setting manager or a designated person.

Risk Assessment

All potential risks must be documented using the PPB Support Plan (High Risk Behaviours & who is at Risk). This process should involve the individual or their representative, and a team approach is essential. High Risk Behaviours must be updated as needed to reflect changes in circumstances or behaviours.

The Assessment should identify strategies for staff to support individuals during episodes of distressed behaviour. It should outline clear approaches for staff to follow, including any agreed physical interventions, which should only be considered as a last resort.

Post Physical Intervention

If a physical intervention has been used the **PPB Crisis incident form** must be completed by the staff involved and setting manager. This will include a record of the incident including interventions, Record of **FINDAS** (Find a Strategy) support interview, record of staff debrief and record of authorities reported to. This will ensure PPB best practice procedures are followed, documented and shared with individual, parents / Carers, staff, setting management, Service Manager, Care Inspectorate, and PPB Governance Grp.



Orkney Islands Council Education, Communities and Housing

Included, Engaged and Involved

**Promoting Inclusion and Reducing Exclusions
– Guidance for Schools and ELC Settings**

Version Control

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SECTION 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Scottish Government guidance, [Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/preventing-and-managing-school-exclusions) (2017), focuses on prevention and early intervention to reduce exclusions, responding to individual need in line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

Getting it Right principles emphasise that support should be appropriate, timely and proportionate in order that every learner's entitlement to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which Curriculum for Excellence can provide is achieved, wherever they learn.

The 2017 guidance emphasises the need for learning establishments to place a greater importance on inclusion through effective learning and teaching; promoting positive relationships and behaviour; and employment of preventative and de-escalation approaches which reduce the need to consider exclusion.

The importance of a relational approach is highlighted in the current legislative landscape, increasingly emphasising the centrality of wellbeing and relationships in shaping positive outcomes for children and young people.

This Guidance on **Promoting Inclusion and Reducing Exclusion** is influenced by the linked Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy and should be read in conjunction with it to ensure an understanding of how investing in relationships and attuning to learning needs supports all learners, particularly those children and young people who have experienced trauma, have social, emotional behavioural needs or learning differences. These are the children who are at risk of exclusion if their needs are not met, and their emotional states not understood.

Orkney's Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy emphasises that the ethos and values within schools are fundamental to, and permeate, every aspect of school life and are the basis of effective relationships-based approaches which value everyone's contribution and enable all to feel a sense of belonging. These are essential elements to enable all children and young people to be included, engaged and involved in their education.

Staged Intervention provides a framework for evaluating needs and additional support requirements when children or young people begin to show increasing stress, emotional dysregulation and distressed behaviour.

1.2 Guiding Principles

The guidelines below are rooted in a philosophical framework which recognises that:

- The foundation for all learning establishments is an ethos of universal nurture, early intervention and support against a background which promotes positive relationships, learning and behaviour.
- Everyone in a learning establishment should feel they are in a safe and nurturing environment.
- All children and young people have a right to education; and education authorities have a duty to provide this education.
- All children and young people have the right to have their views heard.
- All children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning.
- All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential.
- Exclusion should be the last resort with the aim of improving outcomes for the child/young person.
- Where exclusion is used, it should be as a proportionate response, where there is no appropriate alternative and the wellbeing of the child or young person should be the key consideration.
- Exclusion must be for as short a period as possible, from as little as 0.5 days.
- The time during and after the exclusion period should be used constructively to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place for all.
- School exclusions must also operate within the duties imposed by anti-discrimination, human rights and other relevant legislation (Section 7: Equality Act 2010).

1.3 The Impact of Exclusion on Children and Young People

Included and Engaged Part 2 describes the potential negative impact of exclusion. Key points are highlighted below:

- Exclusion can increase children and young people's already high levels of shame and fear. (Taransaud, 2011).
- The additional impermanency that exclusion can bring to children and young people, i.e. the loss and rupture of the relationships that the children and young people have formed in schools, can often exacerbate the negative consequences that earlier traumas have had on their lives. (Perry, 2011).
- School connectedness and relationships are seen as vital in leading to a number of positive outcomes for children and young people. (Learner and Kruger 1997; Commodari 2013; and Bergen and Bergen 2008). School exclusion is likely to have a negative impact on such relationships.
- Excluding young people from the stable routines of school and leaving them in a chaotic home background or risky neighbourhood can worsen behaviour. (Barnardo's, 2010).

SECTION 2 – General Approaches and Practice that Foster Inclusion

2.1 Positive Whole School Culture and Ethos

A school's culture, ethos and values are fundamental in promoting nurturing relationships and positive behaviour. An inclusive, nurturing ethos where everyone's contribution is valued and encouraged should be promoted. Schools with a positive ethos nurture development, promote learner participation, encourage achievement, celebrate success and have high expectations of every child and young person.

Where pupils enjoy a positive and purposeful learning experience which meets their individual needs, treats them with respect and promotes their active involvement in decision-making, challenging behaviour which often leads to exclusion can be significantly reduced. All schools should seek to develop best practice in promoting positive relationships in explicit and carefully structured ways as described in the **Promoting Positive Relationships Learning and Behaviour Policy**.

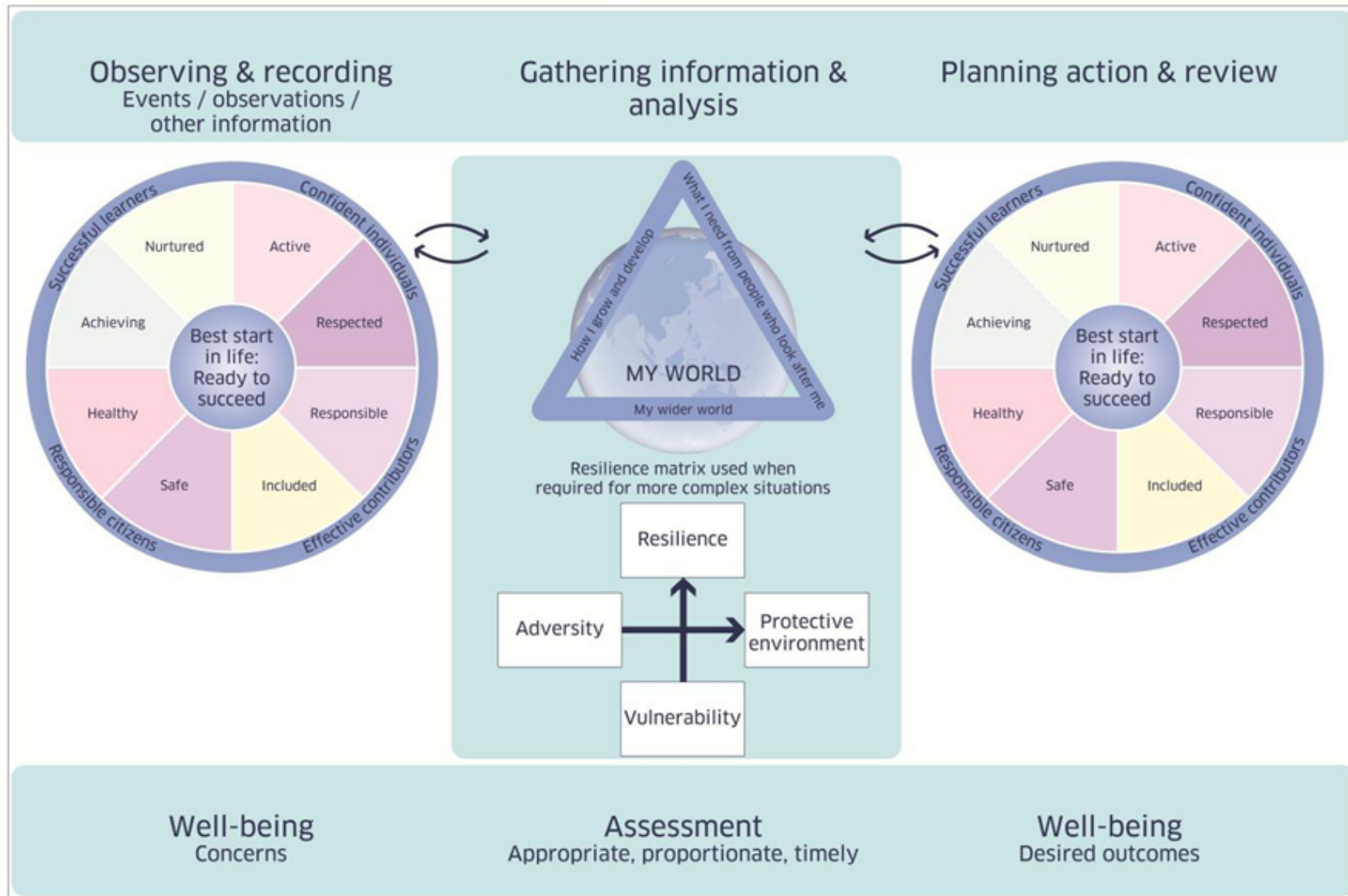
A vital component of a positive school ethos is an actively inclusive approach. A key characteristic of schools which have been successful in minimising exclusion is the explicit aim of meeting the needs of **all** pupils who are part of their school community, whatever their learning levels and requirements or social, emotional, behavioural needs. This aim can be reflected in a wide range of aspects of the operation of the school, as recommended in [Circle-Resource-to-support-inclusive-learning-and-collaborative-working-primary-and-secondary](#) including:

- the development of effective systems of support for individual pupils, integrated with well-designed systems for promoting positive relationships.
- a commitment to providing an appropriately differentiated curriculum for all pupils, which ensures they are motivated, achieve success and are appropriately challenged.
- the organisation of learning to ensure that all pupils are both challenged and supported.
- recognition that taking account of different learning styles can make teaching more accessible and motivating for pupils.

2.2 Staged Intervention

Staged Intervention procedures should be used to identify and meet the needs of all children who require support. The aim is to identify and meet needs at the earliest opportunity to promote, support or safeguard wellbeing and improve outcomes. All stages of intervention require robust assessments using relevant aspects of the National Practice Model [Getting-Right-Child-GIRFEC-Practice-Guidance-1](#). The assessment tools should be used in a proportionate manner and, where appropriate, with multi-agency partners, in order to plan effectively to meet identified needs.

National practice model



Early Intervention is crucial in reducing the need for exclusion. **Pupils and parent(s) should be involved at an early stage** and schools should take care to develop positive, constructive relationships with the parent(s), despite the difficult circumstances which might prevail, in order to provide the best chance of mutual support in resolving the issues.

Where appropriate, schools should contact Education support staff e.g., Educational Psychology, The Support for Learning and Inclusion Team (SFLIT) and/or other support services to request early-stage involvement, perhaps initially on a consultative and advisory basis, leading to more direct support or intervention if necessary:

- ensuring that, at an early stage, schools and other agencies share information about pupils in difficulty, and consider what steps need to be taken to support those pupils and their families.
- co-ordinating a full range of appropriate assessments involving teachers and professionals from other agencies and integrating these within a child's plan to provide a picture of the whole child.
- jointly planning, undertaking and reviewing programmes of intervention to address underlying difficulties identified.

When situations are escalating, those involved in the planning process around the child or young person need to work collaboratively to consider how best to adjust the learning environment or provide additional interventions to help regulate emotions and behaviours leading to consideration of exclusion. Identifying and addressing any root cause factors is important and best achieved through a **Solution-Oriented focus** (see **Appendix 7**)

The partners in the team around the child and young person should consider the following questions which broadly align to the Getting it Right planning questions [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot](http://gov.scot/Getting-it-right-for-every-child-GIRFEC)

- What is the trigger for the behaviours
 - a breakdown in behaviour or in relationships in school or elsewhere?
 - changes in other areas of the child/young person's life?
 - if their plan is comprehensive enough and consistently delivered?
- How the views of the child or young person have been sought and acted upon?
- Whether parents are sufficiently engaged, and their views sought and acted on?
- Whether the learner requires additional support in school or a different approach. If so, who can best provide this?

Continuing Involvement of Partners to the Child 's or Young Person's Plan

In situations of increasing concern/difficulty, schools should harness a multi-disciplinary approach, working in partnership with statutory partners, community partners and/ or other third sector organisations as appropriate. Multi-disciplinary approaches facilitate a holistic view of the child or young person, and how their holistic needs can be best met.

Partnership working can also help in designing and implementing a flexible and relevant learning pathway. Those at risk of multiple exclusions are often in need of a clear multi-agency focus on their learning progression. In situations where the child or young person is care experienced, the lead professional will be key to sharing information and supporting interventions.

Alternative learning environments

A child or young person's needs may require a flexible approach to how and where ongoing learning takes place. In this situation the responsibility for ensuring that this learning is appropriate, relevant, and progressive continues to rest with the school. This includes when the child/young person is learning through a shared placement approach out with the school, such as a community or home-based approach supported by SFLIT with planned learning opportunities in school. Ongoing planning should enable the child or young person access to education with their peers as much as possible, through applying what works well in the alternative context to both settings

It is essential that all professionals work in a cohesive, holistic and purposeful manner, **with the aim of restoring the child or young person to mainstream education where this is a realistic target.**

Note: Sending a child home without parental consent and not recording this as an exclusion (often referred to as a 'cooling off' period), is **unlawful** and may leave the local authority open to legal challenge by either the parent or young person.

2.3 Pro-active planning, de-escalation and risk assessment

All education authorities have a duty of care to all children and young people. All children can experience challenging situations, and some will require additional support pertaining to their social, emotional and behavioural development. Behaviour is a 'window' through which we can perceive emotions and hidden needs. It can be seen as a form of unconscious communication which needs to be noticed and understood.

Staff knowledge and detailed assessment of a child or young person should be used to predict and plan for the type of situations which may cause distressed or challenging behaviours. Some children may require Positive Behaviour Plans and Individual Risk Assessments. Emphasis should be upon proactive, preventative planning in order to promote and model positive behaviours, and thereafter upon effective **de-escalation strategies (see Appendix 7).**

Particular attention should be paid to the needs of all pupils as they go through **key transition stages**, such as attending a school or other educational establishment for the first time, including the transition from primary to secondary school.

Appropriate teachers, and in some cases support staff, should have access to **relevant information** about pupils which may assist with learning and teaching. Education authorities must have regard to their duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the rights of young people to confidentiality must be respected. However, within the framework of relevant legislation, school policies should make provision for classroom teachers, as trusted professionals, to have access to appropriate information on the personal circumstances of a pupil where this is likely to have an impact on that pupil's personal and social development, and hence on their learning. Disclosure to teachers should be in accordance with agreed procedures and teachers so informed must then have due respect to the confidential nature of the information.

All relevant staff should be offered professional learning opportunities to learn about de-escalation techniques and to understand the different types of challenging behaviour. De-escalation techniques should always be applied within a relational approach as described in Orkney's **Promoting Positive Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Policy**.

Staff should also be provided with opportunities to reflect on the potential emotional impact on children, young people and staff during any incidents of challenging and distressed behaviour and engage in discussions about how this can be supported in a school context using restorative approaches [Restorative approaches | Social and emotional factors | Specific support needs | Additional support | Parentzone Scotland | Education Scotland](#) . See Also **Appendix 7**

Occasionally de-escalation may involve physical intervention and/or seclusion- which is also seen as physical intervention. These interventions should also only be used as a last resort to ensure the safety of a child or young person, or others and safe practice for applying these techniques are described in **Appendix 8**. Maintaining a relational approach within these measures is vital.

SECTION 3 - The Use of Exclusion and Consideration of Individual Circumstances in the Exclusion Process

In Scotland, the power exists to exclude children and young people from school where it is considered –

“that in all the circumstances, to allow the child or young person to continue attendance at school would be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or to the educational wellbeing of the learners there” or

“are of the opinion that the parent of the pupil refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the pupil to comply, with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school”.

Exclusion is therefore acknowledged within wider policies on relationships and behaviour in schools and local authorities, where it has traditionally been seen as both the ultimate sanction and a deterrent to serious indiscipline, in the context of the wellbeing of the whole school community.

The power to exclude rests with local authorities under regulation 4 of the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 as amended. In addition, section 14(3) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a duty on local authorities to make alternative education provision when a learner is excluded. In Orkney, the power to exclude is generally devolved to senior management within a school (ref see 4.5). The local authority remains responsible for the education of **all** children and young people. This responsibility remains with the school in which the pupil is enrolled (ref see 3.8)

Exclusion is usually a short-term measure with the vast majority of exclusions (90%) for less than one week and the average length of exclusion 3 days.

Exclusion can be an acceptable action, but it should only be used **as a last resort or in certain clearly prescribed circumstances**. Where exclusion is used it should be as a proportionate response where there is no appropriate alternative.

The school must act in accordance with Orkney Islands Council policies and procedures as well as operating within relevant legislation. The school should acknowledge the importance of using a staged approach and addressing problems early, through promoting positive relationships and positive behaviour management strategies, through preventative early intervention approaches, early intervention involving parents/carers, and where appropriate requesting assistance from partner agencies.

It is recommended that schools monitor and analyse the use of exclusion data and other statistics as part of their regular processes of self-evaluation and review, to inform their practice and appropriate interventions.

Schools need to have regard to the continuing educational needs of pupils who have been excluded, in collaboration with other services and agencies e.g. Support for Learning and Inclusion Team, Educational Psychology, Action for Children etc. The Local Authority remain responsible for the education of all pupils and therefore the school will have a responsibility to provide curricular support where appropriate, even when excluded. Where an alternative educational package requires to be provided, even for a short period of time, teaching resource may require to be transferred from the school to support the pupil's continuing education.

3.1 Special Circumstances

Before excluding a pupil, schools should take account of individual circumstances in every case. There are, in addition, certain groups of pupils whose circumstances must have special consideration:

i) Pupils with Additional Support Needs

The circumstances in which learners with Additional Support Needs may be excluded are the same as for other learners. However, additional considerations apply where the learner has Additional Support Needs. Local authorities remain under an obligation to make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by the excluded learner, whether that support is expressed in a document such as a Co-ordinated Support Plan or in a Child's Plan. The support may include, for example, allied health professional support or educational psychology. The exclusion does not affect the local authority's duty to provide these services whether on school premises or an alternative venue. Therefore, such provision should continue notwithstanding the exclusion. Consultation with any other service providers in order to maintain provision to an excluded learner should be undertaken by the Named Person/Lead Professional.

In reaching a decision to exclude, local authorities have to consider whether they could comply with section 4 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 ("the 2004 Act") which requires the authority to make "adequate and efficient" provision as long as it does not result in unreasonable public expenditure. There will therefore be a need to consider the particular facts and circumstances of each case.

It is important to take a multi-disciplinary approach to the consideration of the need for exclusion with regard to children with Additional Support Needs. Where possible, this should involve discussion about difficulties at school, involving the parents/carers and where appropriate the young person, in addition to other professionals, **well in advance** of exclusion being considered as an option. In particular, under section 10 of the 2004 Act, an authority is required to carry out statutory review procedures to change the nominated school, or any other details, on a Co-ordinated Support Plan. The school should therefore seek to balance the case for exclusion with the need to take all reasonable steps to ensure appropriate provision is made for the pupil's additional needs. This additional consideration would not prevent exclusion where this is deemed absolutely necessary, however.

Accordingly, it should be normal practice to involve appropriate support services including the relevant educational psychologist. Where other professionals, e.g. social workers, family support workers, CAMHS, have a significant role in providing education, care and support for the child, **their views should be sought when a decision to exclude is being considered, and when planning educational provision during the period of exclusion.**

For pupils where an assessment process is taking place towards the possible opening of a Co-ordinated Support Plan the above procedures should also be applied.

Any decision to exclude **MUST** take account and be in line with the authority's equalities duty, its duties under the ASL legislation and where one exists, it's duty to provide the services stipulated within the Co-ordinated Support Plan.

Children and young people with a disability or additional support needs are considered to have a protected characteristic under Equality legislation. This means that decisions about exclusion can be challenged not only through the Education Appeal Committee, but also through the Additional Support Needs Tribunal, a judicial body independent of the Council.

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equalityact2010-technicalguidance-schoolsinScotland-2015_0.pdf

ii) **Looked After Children**

The Education (Additional Support for Learning Act) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended 2009, states that all Looked After Children will be deemed to have additional support needs unless assessed otherwise. To exclude a Looked After Child requires very serious consideration. Nevertheless, research indicates that looked after children are significantly more likely to be excluded from school.

Effective and timeous collaboration between services is therefore central to good practice with pupils who are looked after by the local authority. Where possible, this should involve appropriate inter-agency discussion regarding difficulties at school **well in advance** of exclusion being considered as an option.

It is also important to check SEEMiS for any child protection related alert. This may require alternative provision if the decision to exclude is taken so that there is ongoing monitoring of the welfare of the child and young person, as well as provision made for their education needs as described in the Child and Young Person's Plan.

Those children who are looked after and accommodated in residential or foster care will have particular care needs that require to be taken into account if there is the possibility of exclusion. In all cases, prior to possible exclusion, the Designated School Manager should involve the child's or young person's Lead Professional in discussion and consideration of the implications of exclusion on the home or care placement to ensure appropriate arrangements can be made. **An Education Manager must be contacted to approve an exclusion of a looked after child.**

The child or young person should be actively involved and participate in all stages of the process

“The Promise”, “The Plan 21-24” recommends that *“The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from education will end”*. Orkney aspires to fulfilling this recommendation

iii) Pupils on the Child Protection Register

Consultation with the Lead Professional prior to a decision about exclusion is essential for any pupils on the Child Protection Register to ensure appropriate arrangements can be made.

iv) Pupils living in Papdale Halls of Residence

It should be noted that although children living in Papdale Halls of Residence are not looked after, there are specific issues which require to be considered if exclusion is being considered for such a pupil. It is essential, in such circumstances, that an appropriate discussion takes place with the Residence Manager and the parents/carers of the pupil. If the behaviour of a pupil means they are to be excluded from Papdale Halls of Residence, they are not automatically excluded from school. Alternative arrangements will be made in consultation with the school & parents, to support continued attendance at school.

In certain exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for a pupil to be excluded from school due to behaviour within the setting of the Halls of Residence. This would apply as a last resort and where the said behaviour could reasonably be described as giving rise to a situation where allowing the pupil to continue their attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there. In such cases the Headteacher will be required to work closely with the Residence Manager. Invariably it will be the Residence Manager who will first alert the Headteacher and Service Manager, Support for Learning and Inclusion, to issues of this kind, to discuss possible supports, alternative strategies or interventions from external agencies where appropriate.

v) Children and young people who are living in areas of socioeconomic deprivation

National statistics highlight that children and young people living in areas of socioeconomic deprivation are still overrepresented in the numbers of children and young people who are excluded from school. Children and young people who are living in areas of deprivation are more likely to have experienced a wide range of adverse living circumstances which impact on their wellbeing. Schools need to take account of how this may be impacting on children and young people’s behaviour and be aware that exclusion can be an additional stress factor. Schools need to consider that an exclusion may also have an immediate detrimental impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. This might include their missing out on free school meals and being prevented from accessing the security and continuity of the school environment.

vi) Children and young people who are excluded on multiple occasions

Where multiple exclusions of a child or young person have taken place, it should highlight to the school that the support provision being used/in place is not working. In these instances, schools should seek additional support in line with the authority's staged Intervention Policy and Promoting Positive Relationships Learning and Behaviour Policy

SECTION 4 - Operational Management of Exclusion Procedures

4.1 Regulations

Exclusion is the most serious consequence that can be imposed on a pupil and must be a last resort. Where exclusion is used, it should be a proportionate response where there is no appropriate alternative. The school must be able to demonstrate that support and modifications are in place to meet changing needs to avoid exclusion of a child or young person. There should be clear evidence of the monitoring and evaluation of this support, over time.

Exclusions will generally fall into one of two categories:

- sudden, unexpected, serious incidents.
- on-going difficulties over an extended period where other supports have not improved the behaviour exhibited by the child or young person.

When considered necessary, exclusions must be for as short a period as possible with the aim of improving outcomes for the child or young person and their wellbeing should be a key consideration. The school must be able to demonstrate that support and modifications are in place to meet changing needs to avoid exclusion of a child or young person. There should be clear evidence of the monitoring and evaluation of this support, over time. It should be a proportionate response where there is no alternative. Prior to an exclusion the views of the child or young person and parent/carers must be considered. The time during and after the exclusion period should be used constructively to resolve the situation and ensure positive and appropriate support is in place for all.

The grounds for exclusion and the procedures to be followed are contained in the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 (as amended 1982). Regulation 4 states that an Education Authority shall not exclude a child or young person from school unless the Headteacher of educational establishments:

"are of the opinion that the parent of the pupil refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the pupil to comply, with the rules, regulations, or disciplinary requirements of the school" or;

"considers that in all the circumstances to allow the pupil to continue attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there."

The following guidance outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of an exclusion and provides a series of actions to aid decision making of Headteachers or other Senior Leadership Team members, if they have been delegated this responsibility by their Headteacher. In situations where responsibility to manage a situation is delegated, the Headteacher will retain overall accountability.

In all instances the following scenarios are considered forms of exclusion and should be recorded as such:

- where parents are requested by their child's school not to present their child at school. or
- where parents are requested by their child's school to take their child home from school for all or part of the day.

Note: Sending a child home without parental consent and not recording this as an exclusion (often referred to as a 'cooling off' period), is **unlawful** and may leave the local authority open to legal challenge by either the parent or young person.

4.2 Before taking the decision to exclude

Before taking the decision to exclude in relation to any incident the following questions should be carefully considered:

- Is the child or young person safe if excluded?
- Does the child or young person have Additional Support Needs; do they have a disability: are they care experienced; are they on the Child Protection Register?
- Is exclusion the last resort or is there other additional support for the child or young person that could still be tried?
- Are there other partners that could provide additional interventions for the child or young person to reduce the need for exclusion?
- Were agreed support arrangements, contingencies and protocols followed fully?
- Does the frequency and seriousness necessitate exclusion?
- How have other children and young people and staff been affected and how could this be resolved?
- Would the exclusion increase risk of behaviours escalating and create a longer-term impact for the child or young person, and their wider circumstances?

When a child or young person's behaviour starts to escalate to the extent that the Headteacher is considering exclusion, schools should use the checklists in **Appendix 1a & b and Appendix 2** to support decision making of senior leaders considering any exclusion. The checklist in **Appendix 2** is for specific circumstances e.g., care experienced, disabled or additional support needs.

Appendix 1a & b - Key considerations before decision to exclude is taken.

Appendix 2 - Key considerations once the decision to exclude has been made.

Each child and young person and situation must be looked at individually. It is important to identify what the purpose of the exclusion is and what positive outcomes for the child or young person can be achieved by excluding them from education.

This might include:

- Time to review the risk assessment and planning in place
- To undertake further assessment to identify any additional needs or support
- To provide time for the young person to be supported to recognise the harmful behaviours that led to the situation and, with their involvement, where possible, create a plan to overcome them

Failure to comply with the grounds set out above may render the Authority open to legal challenge by the parent/s, or the pupil (where the pupil is a young person or is a child with legal capacity in terms of the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991) or to action by Scottish Ministers under section 70 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended.

4.3 Authority to exclude

An exclusion should not exceed 5 days (one calendar week) without discussion with an Education Manager.

| Length of Exclusion | Authority to exclude |
|---|--|
| 1 - 5 days (resolved within 5 days or earlier) | Headteacher, Depute |
| 6 -10 days (resolved within 10 days or earlier) | Headteacher, Depute in discussion with Head of Education |
| 11 + days | Headteacher with agreement of Head of Education |

Where a school seeks to exclude a pupil for more than 10 days it is necessary for the Headteacher to get agreement on this from a Senior Education Manager especially if alternative arrangements are required for continuing educational provision. Any change in educational placement and/ or off roll will require a review of the Child's Plan and agreement of the Head of Service. **Exclusions of more than 11+ days should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity and the needs kept under review so that there can be no 'drift' in their situation.**

No pupil will be removed permanently from the school role without the agreement of the Head of Service.

4.4 Notification

On the day upon which a decision to exclude a child or young person is taken, intimate in writing or orally (where intimations are oral they must be confirmed in writing) to the child's parent or if the learner is a young person, the young person (defined in section 135(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 ("the 1980 Act") as "a person over school age who has not attained the age of 18 years"):

- The decision to exclude.
- The date, time and place where the headteacher, other teacher at the school or officer of the Education Service, will be available to discuss the decision to exclude. This meeting must be within seven calendar days following the day of the decision to exclude.

The school must, notify the parent/carer or young person in writing (by post or handed to the parent or young person directly):

- (a) the reason(s) the pupil was excluded.
- (b) the right to refer the decision to exclude the pupil to an appeal committee under section 28H of the 1980 Act and the right to appeal this committee's decision to the sheriff and how appeals can be initiated.
- (c) any other information which the education authority considers appropriate.

The date the decision to exclude is taken is counted as the first day of exclusion. Both the start date and end date are inclusive. It should be ensured that exclusion does not continue through school holidays.

Template letters included at **Appendix 4** must be used explaining the position to the parent(s)/carers and young person which includes a reference to the right of appeal. The pro forma letter set out in Appendix 4 should be sent to any pupil over the age of 12 and any pupil under 12 who is deemed capable of understanding the contents of the letter, as they may have a separate right of appeal and have a right to give their views. The letters must include information on the right of the appeal.

A child or young person should be actively involved and participate in all stages of the process. A core principle of the UNCRC is a commitment to ensuring that children and young people have the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them. The UNCRC defines participation as "ongoing processes, which include information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes"

It is good practice for schools to contact parents prior to the pupil being required to leave school premises. In all cases, the school should check that appropriate arrangements for the care of the child or young person are being made before they are sent from school premises.

4.5 Education Provision During the period of Exclusion

Schools require education provision for excluded learners without undue delay. There is no legislative definition of 'undue delay'. However, the objective is to ensure the child or young person continues to receive an education while excluded. It is reasonable to expect alternative education provision to be in place after 3 days.

Appropriate learning activities must be provided along with details of a named contact in school who can provide guidance. This could be provided in the form of an e-mail address/telephone number of a school contact who can address any concerns relating to the course work.

There is also a responsibility on learners and their parents/carers to make sure the provision arranged is completed during any period of exclusion

Any existing involvement in non-school based learning should continue. These include college placements, therapeutic support, input from SEAL etc. It may be necessary to provide such support in an environment out with the school building during the period of exclusion.

Where special arrangements for alternative education for the learner are being made, other than at school, as far as possible, the quality, quantity and range of education which was previously available to the excluded learner in school, prior to their exclusion should be provided. The need for any such special arrangements should arise only in exceptional cases and only as an interim measure prior to the learner receiving full-time education, ideally within a school setting.

4.6 Dealing with Serious Offences

In a small number of cases pupil behaviour may require an immediate response by the Headteacher. It could include:

- (a) physical, verbal, racist or sexual threats to staff and / or fellow pupils
- (b) an unprovoked physical assault on staff and / or pupils
- (c) incidents which put the health and safety of staff and pupils at serious risk
- (d) drugs related incidents
- (e) use of weapons

Where a criminal offence has been alleged, Headteachers should contact a senior Education Manager

4.7 Recording an Exclusion

In any circumstance where a decision to exclude has been taken by the Head Teacher or nominated Depute Head Teacher, it must be clear and transparent in terms of recording the investigation of the incident, the decisions taken and procedures followed, that the exclusion can be fully justified. The decision to exclude may be held up to public scrutiny, and in some instances in a court of law.

Copies of the Exclusion letter, as per pro-forma (see **Appendix 4**), should be sent to the Head of Education. The exclusion should also be recorded in SEEMiS on the day of the exclusion. Appendix 5 contains the relevant SEEMiS codes

Where the pupil is Looked After Away From Home the letter should be sent to the foster carers or Manager of the Children's Centre in which he/she is accommodated, with a copy to the Lead Professional, who will inform appropriate parties e.g. the birth parent(s), the Children's Reporter etc.

Head Teachers should be fully aware that should an exclusion be appealed through any legal process they will be required to justify their actions and decisions and demonstrate that not only were procedures followed, but that their actions could not be seen as being in breach of any pertinent [legislation](#). There is an expectation that appropriate paperwork will be produced at any subsequent appeals.

4.8 Resolutions and Ways Forward Following Exclusion

Prior to a child or young person returning to school, appropriate approaches and strategies should be developed to prepare the child or young person, parent(s), staff and peers to enable them to return to school in a positive way.

There should be re-evaluation of planning for the child or young person, including interventions used so far to meet identified needs, and a further refinement of plans for support. In circumstances where a child or young person does not have any identified additional support needs, the exclusion should trigger consideration of whether an assessment is needed to identify any factors underpinning distressed behaviours.

The strategies to support the child or young person on their return from exclusion should be discussed with the child or young person and their parent(s) at a meeting to resolve the exclusion. This will include consideration of:

- whether the exclusion is indicative of a breakdown in behaviour or in relationships.
- whether the child or young person requires additional support or a different approach.
- how the views of the child and young person have been sought and acted upon and how to sustain their positive engagement.

Identified supports leading on from a risk assessment, should also be discussed and put into place, where appropriate.

It is not, however, a legal requirement to have a pre-return meeting, seek guarantees or contracts of behaviour with parents or young people before a return to school. However, meeting together to plan in partnership with parents is regarded as good practice. A template for managing a return to school meeting is found in **Appendix 5**.

Re-admission should take into consideration preparing and meeting the needs of staff and other children and young people affected by the behaviour/incident which led to the exclusion and their need for follow-up support. It is good practice to hold a restorative or solution-oriented meeting(s) with staff and the children and young

people involved to help repair and restore relationships and trust as part of the return to school. On-going support and monitoring should be provided by appropriate staff, to ensure that children's or young persons, wellbeing needs are being met, including those of the young person who has experienced exclusion.

In order to support the child or young person appropriately and enhance the transition back to school, it may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to implement a package of support that could be achieved using a flexible or part time timetable with an agreed timescale as to when this will end. Any such arrangements should be for a short, agreed period with the aims and conditions around this recorded in any support plan. Such arrangements should not extend for more than 4 weeks. This should also be recorded in SEEMiS with a new code which has now been created for children and young people who are returning to school on a part-time basis following a period of exclusion. The new code introduced is:

| Description | Code Short Code | Short Code |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Part Time Timetable (Exclusion related) | PTX | Y |

When using this code, the time out with school will be classed as 'authorised absence'

All partners including parents and the child or young person should be involved in the development of this temporary, short-term arrangement. The child's plan should reflect the steps taken by the school to provide the child or young person with their statutory entitlement of hours, ensuring that their learning needs are met.

Following the child or young person's return to school after exclusion, support provision and planning mechanisms should continue to be regularly reviewed.

Appendix 3 is a checklist of actions to be taken to support return to school following exclusion

SECTION 5 - Appeals Procedures

When a Head Teacher decides to exclude, the parents and the child or young person must be informed of their right to appeal against the exclusion and that if they wish to do so they should submit this in writing to the Head of Service, who in turn submits this to the Corporate Governance Service.

Where an appeal has been made against exclusion, this will not affect the return date to school. The child or young person will return to school on the date set out in the exclusion letter.

The Headteacher will be informed by the Authority if a parent or young person does decide to appeal a decision to exclude. An Education Appeal Committee should be held within 28 days of receipt of the reference. With the consent of both parties this timescale may be extended if necessary. At least ten working days before the date fixed for the Education Appeal Committee hearing, the Head of Corporate Governance must receive copies of all relevant Information including, correspondence from the exclusion, reports, and minutes of any relevant meetings. The Headteacher has responsibility to provide all the relevant information to the relevant Service Manager. In addition, at least the day before the hearing, the Head of Corporate Governance should be advised as to whether the child or young person has been readmitted to school and if so, when.

There is no specific time limit for lodging such an appeal. In these circumstances, the Headteacher will be required to be a witness for the Education Authority at any appeal to the Appeals Committee and then as a witness for the Council in any further appeal (by the young person or parent) to the Sheriff Court. At this time, the Solicitor involved would also advise those concerned as to the procedures involved at the appeal, whether before the committee or Sheriff.

The Equality Act 2010 also provides the right to make a claim (appeal) to the ASN Tribunal in respect of an exclusion where it is considered that there is discrimination in respect of a child or young person's disability. Claims may be made by the parent or the child (where the child has the capacity to make the claim). The Headteacher, and potentially other school staff, may be required to be a witness(s) for the Council in a Tribunal Hearing. The ASN Tribunal is a legal process and makes its decision after carefully considering all the evidence and arguments presented. [Additional Support Needs | First-tier Tribunal for Scotland \(Health and Education Chamber\)](#)

5.1 Who has the right to appeal?

- Parent only, where the child or young person is under 12 years.
- Parent and/or child or young person, where the child or young person is over 12 but under school leaving age.
- Young person only, where he/she is over school leaving age.
- Parent of the young person, where the young person is not capable of appealing on own behalf due to learning disabilities.

REFERENCES

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions, 2017](#)

Standards in Scottish Schools etc Act (2000), Scottish Government
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/contents>

Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act (2004) and as amended (2009), Scottish Government <https://education.gov.scot/resources/education-additional-support-for-learning-scotland-act-2004/>

[The Schools General \(Scotland\) Regulations 1975, 1982, Amendment \(No 2\);](#)

[Age of Legal Capacity \(Scotland\) Act 1991; Equality Act 2010;](#)

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act \(2014\)](#)

[Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\) strategy \(2008\).](#)

[Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#)

<https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/full-uncrc/>

Scottish Government (February 2020) *The Independent Care Review (The Promise)*[Independent Care Review – The root and branch review of Scotland's care system. https://thepromise.scot/](#)

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-Based Approach to Physical Intervention In Schools](#)

Fostering a Positive, Inclusive and Safe School Environment guidance
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fostering-positive-inclusive-safe-school-environment-guidance/>

Guidance on risk assessments for violent, aggressive and dangerous behaviour <https://www.gov.scot/publications/risk-assessment-guidance-violent-aggressive-dangerous-behaviour-local-authorities-educational-settings/>

APPENDICES

The following checklists from **Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 – Preventing and Managing Exclusions** are intended as a useful tool to support schools and local authorities prior to, during and after exclusion and should be adapted to fit local context. These checklists should be used together in order to ensure support is provided at the appropriate time to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people.

Appendix 1a - Prior to exclusion checklist

(to be used alongside Appendix 1b checklist where appropriate)

| Key consideration questions | Consideration given | Comment |
|--|---------------------|---------|
| Has the child or young person been excluded before? What was impact of this? | | |
| Have the following been engaged to help prevent exclusion? Child or young person. Parents/carers. Key education staff. Other professionals (eg Social work, Educational Psychologist). | | |
| Has there been clear assessment of the child or young person and their needs? | | |
| Have additional support/interventions been provided for the child or young person? | | |
| Have alternative arrangements been made for the child or young person prior to the exclusion? eg. curriculum alternatives, temporary placement in base, use of virtual learning. | | |
| How can the staged intervention process and school partnerships be utilised to further support this child or young person? | | |
| Has the incident that precipitated the consideration of exclusion been reviewed with all staff who were present to explore fully what happened? | | |

| Key consideration questions | Consideration given | Comment |
|--|----------------------------|----------------|
| Has another professional from within the school who is not directly involved, been consulted on the situation in order to provide a different perspective? | | |
| Has the child or young person been consulted on their views of the situation? | | |
| Has Pupil Support/Guidance/Key worker, or if available, has the lead professional been consulted on how to move forward? | | |
| Has the possible impact of exclusion on the child or young person been considered in light of individual circumstances? | | |
| Does the child or young person's recent presentation constitute a wellbeing concern? | | |
| What might the impact of an exclusion be on a child or young person's wider circumstances? | | |
| What impact might an exclusion have on the planning processes? | | |
| Has a risk assessment been completed for the child or young person where appropriate? | | |
| What are the hoped for outcomes of an exclusion? Are there other alternatives that might achieve this? | | |
| Has there been consideration given to length of exclusion to ensure it is proportionate and in best interests of child/young person? | | |
| Does the exclusion comply with the regulation 4 of the 1975 Act? | | |

| Key consideration questions | Consideration given | Comment |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| Have the rights of the child or young person been considered, with regard to articles of UNCRC? | | |
| Have all other options been considered before deciding on exclusion as a necessary step? | | |

Appendix 1b – Individual Circumstances

Individual Circumstances - (to be used alongside Appendix 1a checklist where appropriate)

| Individual Circumstance | Additional consideration | Consideration given | Comments |
|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Looked After child | Social worker/Lead professional consulted prior to decision | | |
| | Education Manager or lead professional (where one exists) consulted on plan regarding particular issues | | |
| | Appropriate arrangements made with regard to support/care and wellbeing at home | | |
| | Decision made as to whether exclusion to go ahead | | |
| Child on Child Protection Register/child protection concerns previously raised | Child Protection Development Officer and Social Worker/Lead Professional consulted | | |
| | SEEMiS checked for child protection message | | |
| | Education Authority consulted about appropriate provision | | |
| | Appropriate arrangements for return into school considered | | |
| Child with Additional Support Needs | Other professionals involved with child consulted on continuation of any additional input | | |
| | Confirmation sought that child or young person is not being excluded for reasons associated with disability | | |

| Individual Circumstance | Additional consideration | Consideration given | Comments |
|---|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| | Ensure that child or young person is not being excluded for reasons associated with a protected characteristic | | |
| | Account is taken of impact of exclusion on child or young person's learning and support provision | | |
| | Consideration is given to review of any Child's Plan or Coordinated Support Plan | | |
| | Transition planning is taken into account with regard to return to school | | |
| Children from an area of socio/economic deprivation | Consideration should be given to the impact on child's wellbeing, e.g. free school meals | | |

Appendix 2 – Decision to exclude Checklist

Decision to exclude has been made (this checklist should be used after completion of Appendix 1a (and 1b where appropriate))

| Action to be taken | Action Taken | Comment |
|--|--------------|---------|
| Child or young person is informed he/she is to be excluded. | | |
| Immediately inform parents/carers verbally. | | |
| Looked after children and children or young people on Child Protection Register/child protection concerns – communication with all potential carers as well as any person who may have parental rights and responsibilities. | | |
| Looked after children and children or young people on Child Protection Register/child protection concerns – decision communicated to lead professional, Social Worker, Key Worker, Foster Carer, Educational Psychologists and area education manager. | | |
| Make arrangements for child or young person to be sent or taken home. Child or young person not to leave school until safety, health and wellbeing assured and appropriate arrangements are in place. | | |
| If parents/carers cannot be contacted child or young person must be supervised at school until suitable arrangements can be made. | | |
| If verbal contact made, follow up by written confirmation of exclusion on same day exclusion takes place. Include reason for exclusion and information on Right of Appeal. | | |
| Inform of date, time and place where Headteacher or official of authority is available to discuss the exclusion. | | |
| If child or young person is of legal capacity inform them in writing of exclusion and right of appeal | | |
| Record of exclusion filled out – incident report form | | |

| Action to be taken | Action Taken | Comment |
|--|--------------|---------|
| Ensure exclusion is recorded accurately on SEEMiS | | |
| All documents relating to exclusion to be retained in Pupil's Progress Record | | |
| Appropriate educational provision to be provided and monitored, e.g. course work, access to library, online learning | | |
| Arrangements for the child or young person to access any existing support made (outwith school if necessary) | | |
| A contact person should be allocated for parent/carer and child or young person to liaise with re. educational provision | | |
| Parent/carer should be informed of their responsibility to ensure child or young person is provided with appropriate education throughout the period of exclusion. | | |
| Parent/carer should be provided with information on support to assist them or advocate on behalf of child or young person. | | |
| Notify Education Manager. | | |
| If exclusion is lengthy or multiple, refer to Education Manager for support in decision making. | | |
| If parent/carer and/or child or young person exercise their right of appeal, meet with parent/carer and child or /young person and /or Young Person's Advocate to discuss. | | |
| Referral to Scottish Children's Reporter if appropriate. | | |

Appendix 3 – Checklist to support return to school after exclusion

| Action to be taken | Action Taken | Comment |
|--|--------------|---------|
| School meet or discuss with parent/carer and child or young person – re-admission to school not dependent on this taking place | | |
| Appropriate planning takes place to ensure support if provided | | |
| Risk assessment completed where appropriate | | |
| Needs of staff and other children and/or young people taken into account – solution orientated/restorative meeting held if appropriate | | |
| Flexible package of support agreed and implemented where appropriate. | | |
| Any changes to timetable for limited period recorded on SEEMiS | | |
| Staged intervention process continued and adapted in light of exclusion | | |
| Consideration given to discussion at multi-agency forum | | |
| Pupil Support/Guidance/Key Worker or lead professional (where one exists) updated | | |
| Monitoring and review arrangements put in place to ensure continued support | | |

Appendix 4 - Letters of Exclusion

For children under 12 years of age **(Letter A)**

Letters of Exclusion should be addressed to the parents/carers and should be provided on the day of exclusion.

For children/Young People 12 years or older but under school leaving age **(Letter A)**

Letters of Exclusion should be addressed to the parents/carers and copied to the child/young person and should be provided on the day of exclusion.

For Young People over statutory school leaving age **(Letter B)**

Letters of Exclusion should be addressed to the young person and should be provided on the day of exclusion. There is no legal requirement to contact parents. However, if the young person agrees, then parents should be copied. For young persons with ASN or considered vulnerable the parents should be contacted.

Letter A

Our ref

Date

Name of Addressee

Address

Continuation Line

Continuation Line

Orkney

Dear **insert name(s)**

EXCLUSION: (insert PUPIL'S NAME (DOB), CLASS)

I regret to advise you that **(insert name)** has been excluded from attendance at **insert school name** school, from **(insert start date and end date)** both dates inclusive.

The grounds for exclusion are set out in Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975. Regulation 4 and 4A stipulate two grounds for exclusion. In this instance, the following ground applies:

(delete as appropriate)

A

we are of the opinion that the parent of the child or young person refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the child or young person to comply, with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school.

B

we consider that, in all the circumstances, to allow the pupil to continue his/her attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the order and discipline in the school or the educational wellbeing of the pupils there.

The decision to exclude has been taken for the following reasons:-

- *insert reason(s) details relating to the circumstances leading to exclusion, including reference to other actions taken previously in managing the behaviour of this particular pupil*

Please be advised that (insert name) must not attend school or be within the school grounds, and will not take part in any school activities, until the end of the exclusion. Appropriate learning will be made available for (insert name) to complete at home. Should you need to discuss this further, please contact (insert named contact) on (insert email or phone number).

As you will appreciate this is a very serious matter. I would like to meet with you and (insert name) on (insert date, time and place) for the return to school. If this is not convenient, please contact me as soon as possible to schedule an alternative appointment.

I advise you that, in terms of Section 28H of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, Section 41, there is a right of appeal, which can be exercised by the parent/carers or the pupil, against the decision to exclude. If you wish to appeal against the decision to exclude, you should write to the Area Education Manager at:

(insert Name of Appropriate Education Manager and address. Include e-mail address for submitting appeal).

A copy of this letter will be held in your child's progress record. This letter comprises the only reference to the exclusion which will be retained within the progress record.

Decisions on any appeal, including the decision of an Appeal Committee not to annul the exclusion will be included in your child's progress record. If the decision to exclude is annulled, no reference to exclusion in your pupil record will be disclosed.

Yours sincerely,

(insert signature)

Headteacher

cc. Education Manager,

To be included as part of exclusion letter

Information for Pupils, Parents and Carers - Exclusion Appeal

What Leads to an Exclusion?

There are only 2 circumstances in law where a pupil can be excluded are. These are:

- “where the parent of a pupil refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the pupil to comply, with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school”; or
- “where a pupil’s continued attendance at the school is likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline at the school or the educational well-being of the pupils”

Notification Process

The school will always inform the parents of the length of exclusion and the reasons for the exclusion in writing. In these letters you will be asked to come into school to discuss the exclusion. It is extremely important that you attend such meetings, or telephone to make other arrangements. Parents and teachers are partners in this respect, and parents play a vital role in helping their children with problems at school. Regardless of such invitations parents are always very welcome to approach the schools directly to discuss issues which are important to themselves and their children. Please feel free to do so should there be anything you want to talk over.

Appeals Process

Parents, or pupils over 12 years of age, (and younger if the pupil is deemed mature enough to understand the decision to exclude), have a right to appeal against the decision to exclude. You can do this:

- At the time the child is excluded from school.
- After the meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the exclusion.
- After a meeting with the Service Manager to discuss the exclusion.

There is no legal deadline for appealing an exclusion, but it is usually best to submit the appeal as soon as possible to try and resolve the situation quickly.

If you appeal, this will lead to an Appeals Committee Hearing.

A decision to appeal will have no effect on the length of the exclusion or on any conditions attached to the pupil's return.

Who can I discuss this with?

You can discuss an exclusion further with the Headteacher. You can also contact the appropriate Education Manager whose contact details are on the exclusion letter.

Letter B

Our ref
 Date
 Name of Addressee
 Address
 Continuation Line
 Continuation Line
 Orkney

Dear **insert name**

EXCLUSION: (insert YPs NAME (DOB), CLASS)

I regret to advise you that you have been excluded from attendance at **insert school name** school, from **(insert start date and end date)** both dates inclusive.

The grounds for exclusion are set out in Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975. Regulation 4 and 4A stipulate two grounds for exclusion. In this instance, the following ground applies:

(delete as appropriate)

A

we are of the opinion that the parent of the child or young person refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the child or young person to comply, with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school.

B

we consider that, in all the circumstances, to allow the pupil to continue his/her attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the order and discipline in the school or the educational wellbeing of the pupils there.

The decision to exclude has been taken for the following reasons:-

- **insert reason(s) details relating to the circumstances leading to exclusion, including reference to other actions taken previously in managing the behaviour of this particular pupil**

Please be advised that you must not attend school or be within the school grounds, and will not take part in any school activities, until the end of the exclusion. Appropriate learning will be made available for you to complete at home. Should you need to discuss this further, please contact **(insert named contact)** on **(insert email or phone number)**.

As you will appreciate this is a very serious matter. I would like to meet with you on (insert date, time and place) for the return to school. You may choose to bring a parent, carer or supporter with you. If this is not convenient, please contact me as soon as possible to schedule an alternative appointment.

I advise you that, in terms of Section 28H of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, Section 41, there is a right of appeal. If you wish to appeal against the decision to exclude, you should write to the Education Manager at:

(insert Name and address and include e-mail address for submitting appeal).

A copy of this letter will be held in on your progress record. This letter comprises the only reference to the exclusion which will be retained within the progress record.

Decisions on any appeal, including the decision of an Appeal Committee not to annul the exclusion will be included in your progress record. If the decision to exclude is annulled, no reference to exclusion in your record will be disclosed.

Yours sincerely

(insert signature)

Head Teacher

cc. Education Manager,

To be included as part of exclusion letter

Information for Pupils, Parents and Carers - Exclusion Appeal

What Leads to an Exclusion?

There are only 2 circumstances in law where a pupil can be excluded are. These are:

- “where the parent of a pupil refuses or fails to comply, or to allow the pupil to comply, with the rules, regulations or disciplinary requirements of the school”; or
- “where a pupil’s continued attendance at the school is likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline at the school or the educational well-being of the pupils”

Notification Process

The school will always inform the parents of the length of exclusion and the reasons for the exclusion in writing. In these letters you will be asked to come into school to discuss the exclusion. It is extremely important that you attend such meetings, or telephone to make other arrangements. Parents and teachers are partners in this respect, and parents play a vital role in helping their children with problems at school. Regardless of such invitations parents are always very welcome to approach the schools directly to discuss issues which are important to themselves and their children. Please feel free to do so should there be anything you want to talk over.

Appeals Process

Parents, or pupils over 12 years of age, (and younger if the pupil is deemed mature enough to understand the decision to exclude), have a right to appeal against the decision to exclude. You can do this:

- At the time the child is excluded from school.
- After the meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the exclusion.
- After a meeting with the Service Manager to discuss the exclusion.

There is no legal deadline for appealing an exclusion, but it is usually best to submit the appeal as soon as possible to try and resolve the situation quickly.

If you appeal, this will lead to an Appeals Committee Hearing.

A decision to appeal will have no effect on the length of the exclusion or on any conditions attached to the pupil's return.

Who can I discuss this with?

You can discuss an exclusion further with the Headteacher. You can also contact the appropriate Education Manager whose contact details are on the exclusion letter.

Appendix 5 - Meeting template for a return to school meeting

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Return to school meeting | | | |
| Agenda and Minute | | | |
| Date | | | |
| Name of pupil | | D.O.B. | |
| Educational Establishment | | Stage | |
| Attendees (note Keyperson and Chair of meeting) | | | |
| Name | Designation | Contact Number | Email |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Main reason for meeting today: | | | |
| X | Absence from school – plan for return from exclusion | | |
| Agenda | | | Noted on ASN Profile |
| 1 | Recap on circumstances of exclusion (As this is a significant event, please summarise information in the minute) | | |
| 2 | Views of child, young person, parent, or carer | | |
| 3 | Child or young person's strengths | | |
| 4 | Factors or possible factors contributing to difficulties leading to exclusion | | |
| 5 | Updated or new Assessments if relevant | | |
| 6 | Future support needs | | |
| 7 | Agree actions to support a successful return | | |
| 8 | Any concerns or disagreements | | |
| Note of discussion | | | |
| Child or YPs Views | | | |
| Parent or carer Views | | | |

| Identified Need of Child/Young Person | New Actions | Who? | When? |
|--|--|--|--------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Additional Information/Disagreements Bullet point any additional information or disagreements not noted above. | | | |
| | | | |
| From the information above and in the Child and Young Person Planning, it is evident that | | | |
| | All child/young person's needs are being met through universal support. | | |
| | Additional support is in place to meet needs | | |
| | Action(s) or assessment are required to support child/young person's return to school/meet needs (include in next steps) | | |
| Next steps to support return to school | | Who? | When? |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Distribute minute and attachments, including (as relevant: | | | |
| Updated Child and Young Person Planning | | | |
| New assessments (please detail) | | | |
| Other (please detail) | | | |
| Update SEEMiS | | | |
| Review details (allow time for supports to become embedded before attempting to measure impact) | | | |
| Details of agreed review of SLIP | | Internal processes/communication/need for meeting/type of meeting/Call/Virtual/Update email/sharing of info/Meeting Agenda Items/Proposed Date | |

Appendix 6 - Reasons giving rise to Exclusion – SEEMis Codes

| Code | Reason | Code | Reason |
|------|--|------|--|
| 34 | Fighting | 66 | Damage to personal property of pupil |
| 35 | Spitting | 67 | Damage to personal property of staff |
| 36 | Verbal abuse - staff | 68 | Theft from pupil |
| 37 | Verbal abuse - pupil | 69 | Theft from staff |
| 38 | Fire Raising | 70 | Threat of sexual violence against pupil |
| 39 | Damage to school property | 71 | Threat of sexual violence against staff |
| 46 | Threat to school property | 72 | Threat of physical violence, no weapon, against pupil |
| 48 | Indecent exposure | 73 | Threat of physical violence, no weapon, against staff |
| 51 | Sustained peer exclusion causing significant distress | 74 | Threat of physical violence – weapon or improvised weapon, against pupil |
| 53 | General or persistent disobedience | 75 | Threat of physical violence – weapon or improvised weapon, against staff |
| 54 | Insolent or offensive behaviour | 76 | Threat to personal property (pupil) |
| 55 | Refusal to attend class | 77 | Threat to personal property (staff) |
| 56 | Parental non-co-operation | 78 | Malicious communications against pupil |
| 57 | Substance misuse -alcohol | 79 | Malicious communications against staff |
| 58 | Substance misuse – non alcohol | 80 | Slander and libel (incl. Website) against pupil |
| 60 | Physical assault with no weapon against pupil | 81 | Slander and libel (incl. Website) against staff |
| 61 | Physical assault with no weapon against staff | 82 | Stalking of pupil |
| 62 | Physical assault using weapon against pupil | 83 | Stalking of Staff |
| 63 | Physical assault using weapon against staff | 84 | Extortion from pupil |
| 64 | Physical assault using improvised weapon against pupil | 85 | Extortion from staff |
| 65 | Physical assault using improvised weapon against staff | 99 | Other |

Appendix 7 – Descriptors of Approaches/ Interventions

Solution Orientated Approaches (Steve De Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg, Bill O'Hanlon).

Solution orientated approaches have their origins in therapeutic approaches such as brief solution-focused therapy and have been found to have much wider applications in the way people work together. The approaches centre on key principles which help focus our minds on solutions, positive futures and strengths. This empowering approach helps to avoid the easy trap of becoming embroiled in negative thinking patterns which can impede progress and hamper the prospect of positive change.

“It seems clear that one cannot solve the problem with the same thinking that created the problem” (Berg and De Shazer, 1993).

A Solution Oriented approach helps people identify what they want to achieve, understand what is in their capacity and explores what they can do to move towards this.

Solution Oriented approaches have a number of applications within settings to help encourage positive relationships, tackle difficulties in a productive way, and promote an inclusive ethos.

Solution oriented approaches provide staff with opportunities to explore aspects of their working environment and relationships within it. When a problem has been identified solution-oriented approaches enable the individual to identify the skills, strengths and resources that they already have which can help them to find their own solutions. The approach aims to build individual capacity for effective problem solving and reflective practice and can often be used effectively to support key meetings and discussions within schools.

Training in solution-oriented approaches may include:

- exploration of the key principles, such as:
 - People have the necessary resources to make changes.
 - Everyone has their own ways of solving problems.
 - No sign-up, no change. Collaboration enhances change.
 - Language shapes and moulds how we make sense of the world.
- identification of applications to be used in day-to-day practice.
- planning and organising a solution-oriented meeting including multi-agency meetings, pre-and post-exclusion meetings and professional development reviews.

Solution oriented approaches have been used in schools for a number of years with regard to supporting day-to-day practice and can also be used to support whole school strategic change. More recently, solution-oriented practice has also been used effectively to actively support positive relationships and culture at the classroom level with a growing evidence base for its use at this level.

Restorative approaches

Restorative approaches are based on a philosophy which places relationships, respect and responsibility at the heart of effective practice. The skills and processes which are key elements of restorative approaches have been demonstrated by many schools, early years' establishments and other learning settings as being more effective in addressing issues of discipline and conflict than more traditional approaches based on rewards and sanctions.

Being restorative can be proactive (relationship building) or responsive (relationship repairing) and can be used at every level from everyday informal interactions to more formal restorative meetings. Restorative approaches articulate with, and compliment all other relational approaches, and influence the emotional atmosphere in a learning community.

A restorative approach provides a framework of values, thinking and language that is helpful when something needs to be repaired or restored. In different contexts this could be:

- effective communication.
- relationships or friendships.
- empathy and understanding for another person's perspective.
- trust and respect (this could mean a sense of security, self-confidence, self-respect, or dignity).
- understanding the impact of our own behaviour on others.
- repairing or replacing damaged materials or resources.

All practitioners can behave in a restorative way by demonstrating restorative values and using restorative thinking and language.

Restorative **values**:

- Promote relationship building, conflict resolution and reconciliation.
- Create environments where social learning and personal development can be supported.
- Embrace qualities such as open-minded thinking, compassion, empathy, perseverance and cultural sensitivity.

Restorative **thinking**:

- Helps us understand another person's behaviour and reflect on our own behaviour.
- Find solutions to disagreements and potential conflicts.
- Promotes self-compassion, empathy and compassion for others.
- Often involves thinking together which helps to develop our openness to alternative ways of thinking and potentially new ways of behaving.

Restorative Language

‘Changing one piece of language might not change the world but it might change the world for one student.’

(Whittaker, 2021: 67)

Restorative **language** and having restorative conversations can generate opportunities for listening and participation, co-operation, build an awareness of social responsibility, and sensitively recognise social and cultural differences. **Relationships** are the essential component of restorative approaches.

The Role of Consequences

In June 2025 the Scottish government published “**Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment, Guidance**”

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fostering-positive-inclusive-safe-school-environment-guidance/documents/>.

The document outlines the use of consequences in schools

How do consequences support children and young people's development?

- When applied consistently, equitably and as part of a school's wider approach to relationships and behaviour, consequences can positively influence children and young people's outcomes, including social and emotional development, learning, and long-term behaviour. They can also help maintain a safe, supportive and happier learning environment for all. Conversely, inconsistent or punitive approaches can lead to disengagement, exacerbating inequalities, and can negatively impact wellbeing.

Constructive, logical, predictable and developmentally appropriate responses and interventions can help children to feel safe, to understand the impact of their actions, and to learn how to respond differently. The goal is therefore not just to uphold values and expectations, but to promote responsibility, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills.

While consequences are often thought of as the actions or interventions taken in response to behaviour that falls below expectations, they can also be a response that reinforces positive behaviour and the meeting or exceeding of shared expectations.

Core principles

- Appropriate responses should include both support and challenge, aiming to improve relationships and behaviour while reinforcing a positive school ethos.
- The focus should not be on punitive action, instead linked to interventions designed to support and encourage behavioural change.

- They should help ensure the rights to safety and education for all children and young people and staff.
- They should be proportionate, fair, and tailored to both the needs of the child or young person and the wider school community.
- They should relate back to the values and expectations a school wants to reinforce.
- They should focus on learning and improvement, reinforcing the desired behaviour.
- They should be embedded in the school's culture and ethos and implemented fairly.
- They should be used in response to consistent whole-school expectations but should be child-centred and tailored to children's needs.
- They should take account of the legal and policy frameworks underpinning considerations relating to children with additional support needs and those who are care experienced.
- They should be natural, logical or positive where possible.

There are two main elements when identifying appropriate responses.

1. Action that is required in the moment. This is to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment by addressing behaviour as it occurs.

2. Identifying underlying needs contributing to behaviour and potential risk mitigations.

This allows appropriate support to be in place for children and young people to support long-term change and to keep themselves and others safe.

An effective approach balances both elements. Responding in the moment ensures that expectations are upheld consistently, while longer-term support ensures children and young people's needs are met and they are supported to develop the skills, understanding, and self-regulation needed to engage positively in school life and beyond.

It is important that schools do not just respond to behaviour in isolation and that they assess why it may be occurring. If consequences are applied without understanding the function of the behaviour, they may unintentionally reinforce it or fail to address the underlying cause, making long-term positive change in their behaviour less likely.

As such, responses should have two goals with regards to promoting positive relationships and behaviour:

1. to promote the child's wellbeing – including their social skills, executive function and emotional regulation.

2. to reduce the frequency and intensity of the behaviour over time (reducing the need for adults to address the behaviour).

De-Escalation Approaches

Despite relational approaches being in place, there will still be situations where a child or young person requires support from adults to regulate their emotions, behaviours and stresses in a school environment. These situations may occur unexpectedly. Some children and young people who are neurodiverse may mask increasing stress levels. Most children, over time and with support, will learn how to self-regulate when they are distressed. However, some children and young people, such as those with complex additional support needs or those who have experienced trauma, may require ongoing or periodic support from adults to regulate their emotions or behaviour. This is known as co-regulation. At times, and as a natural outcome of human interaction, individuals can misunderstand each other or disagree, causing disputes. In these situations, anger and stress can escalate quickly. De-escalation strategies can be used to reduce the intensity of a dispute. Resources on co-regulation and de-escalation can be found on Education Scotland's website. This section includes advice on using these strategies and the specific practice of withdrawal (both pupil and staff led). All these strategies can be used as alternatives to restraint and seclusion.

Children and young people, their parents or carers and all staff involved in supporting them should be actively involved in agreeing effective co-regulation approaches and de-escalation strategies, which should be subject to regular review. All staff working with the child or young person, including pupil support assistants and supply teachers, should be informed of any agreed approaches to enable them to respond appropriately.

The same process of individualised needs-based assessment, planning, implementation and review should be followed when agreeing co-regulation and de-escalation strategies.

The least restrictive approach to supporting a child or young person whose stress levels are rising and where they are unable to self-regulate is to use co-regulation strategies. Where dispute arises, when co-regulation is not possible, de-escalation strategies should be used. The use of co-regulation and de-escalation should always be considered in the first instance. Co-regulation and de-escalation are most effective when planned and tailored to the individual needs of children and young people. However, both strategies can be used when unplanned distressed behaviour occurs. Features of co-regulation and de-escalation include:

- communicating in a calm, non-judgemental and non-threatening manner.
- maintaining a quiet sensory environment by speaking in a quiet voice, reducing the number of people present, noise and, if possible, reducing lighting.
- giving the child or young person time to regain their composure.
- distraction in the moment where this is helpful to the child or young person.
- an activity or movement break that supports self-regulation.

- time with a trusted adult or time alone with an adult in close proximity (within sight and hearing) if the child or young person identifies that this would be helpful to them.
- respecting a child or young person's personal space, by maintaining a suitable distance.
- being mindful of using open and engaged body language, facial expressions and tone of voice (and only speaking when appropriate).
- identifying and responding to what would be most helpful to the child or young person in the moment.
- accommodating, where possible, any previously agreed strategies or unplanned requests that would help the child or young person to self-regulate, including a pupil-led withdrawal.

Appendix 8 - Physical Intervention

Mechanical Restraint

In the context of this policy, mechanical restraint is the use of a prescribed device such as a helmet, lap strap in a wheelchair for other than immediate transport safety or cuffs for the purpose of reducing or controlling a pupil's severely self-injurious behaviour. Mechanical restraint should only be considered in situations where a risk assessment by an external clinical team has indicated this may be warranted on the basis of risk assessment and a written protocol incorporating recommendations for training staff, monitoring appropriate implementation etc. has been put in place. The use of a prescribed device with a restrictive element does not have to be recorded or reported if its use is in line with an agreed plan. Any use out with the agreed plan must be recorded and reported in line with other restraints.

Physical Contact

An active process which involves no greater activity than the action of touch to guide, sooth, comfort, encourage or protect a child

Physical Intervention

A range of approaches, which include restraint and also strategies where restrictive holding is not used, such as physically guiding an individual away from a harmful situation or influencing, modifying or preventing the actions of a child or young person. Physical intervention that does not involve restraint does not need to be recorded or reported. Physical intervention that involves restraint must always be recorded and reported.

Physical restraint

Any direct physical contact where the person intervening intends to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of the body, or part of the body of another person. Physical restraint is also sometimes called restrictive physical intervention. All physical restraint must be recorded and reported. It is only acceptable to physically intervene where the member of staff reasonably believes that **if they do not physically intervene, the child or young person's actions are likely to cause physical damage or harm to that pupil or to another person.**

Physical restraint does not include **protective physical interventions** which involve physical contact that serves to block, deflect or redirect a pupil's actions or disengage from a pupil's grip, but from which a pupil can move freely away.

Protective physical interventions should not be confused with physical restraint.

Protective Physical Interventions

Interventions by staff which involve physical contact that serves to block, deflect or redirect a pupil's actions or disengage from a pupil's grip, but from which a pupil can move freely away.

Restrictive Physical Interventions

Interventions by staff which restrict an individual's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently in order to

- take control of an immediately dangerous situation where there is a significant possibility of harm to the individual or others if no action is undertaken.
- end or significantly reduce the danger to the individual or others.

Restrictive physical interventions include physical restraint and seclusion. These should contain or limit the individual's freedom for no longer than is necessary and are only justifiable when a child or young person is at risk of inflicting serious physical harm on themselves or another individual. All restrictive physical interventions must be recorded and reported.

Reasonable Force

The use of force is judged to be the last resort i.e., that there was no other practicable alternative to prevent the harm anticipated if action was not taken. A use of force is judged to be proportionate if the force used, including its nature, level and duration were the minimum necessary to prevent the harm anticipated. The actions taken by staff in these circumstances would be likely to be considered reasonable by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Seclusion

The act of isolating a child / young person from their peers to an area from which they are prevented from leaving, to prevent harm. This is distinguishable from agreed use of 'safe space' or 'cool down' strategies. It is a form of physical intervention and should only be used as a last resort.

Seclusion of a child or young person within a separate space is also a form of physical intervention and should also only be used as a last resort to ensure the safety of a child or young person, or others. Seclusion should always be reported and recorded.

Any separation of a child or young person must be in a place that is safe and that does not cause any additional distress to the child or young person.

The use of this form of physical intervention should be included in an agreed plan for the individual. Where seclusion is used:

- it must be in a place that is safe.
- it should be managed under supervision.
- it should take into account the additional support needs of the child or young person.
- it should be time limited.

Schools should describe in their School Relationships and Behaviour Policy the appropriate levels of intervention when responding to challenging and distressed behaviour, recognising that the majority of children and young people in our schools will never require any form of physical intervention. School policy should outline training available to staff on promoting positive behaviour and de-escalation and how support for all involved can be accessed following stressful incidents

Any incident where a decision is made to physically intervene must be recorded and monitored. Details on how this should be undertaken should be included in an education authority's policy on de-escalation, physical intervention. The recording and monitoring of such incidents will help education authorities to monitor the effectiveness of their policy and practice. It will ensure transparency, enable them to review and improve their policy and help identify professional learning needs and further supports where appropriate.

The rights of all children and young people must be a key consideration where physical intervention is being considered. This reflects the recognition and realisation of children and young people's rights across Scottish public policy, public services and society as a whole. It is important to consider the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in this context. Article 37 states that 'No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way.' Article 3 states that 'the best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children'.

Please refer to the newest guidance on physical intervention which is linked below.

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-Based Approach to Physical Intervention In Schools](#)

Please also refer to the guidance below which gives examples of risk assessment templates and procedures to minimise risk

Guidance on risk assessments for violent, aggressive and dangerous behaviour
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/risk-assessment-guidance-violent-aggressive-dangerous-behaviour-local-authorities-educational-settings/>



Orkney Archive

Management Scheme 2026-2030

Orkney Archive promotes understanding of the history of the Orkney Islands by selecting, preserving and providing access to the archives of Orkney Islands Council and its predecessors, local individuals, estates, businesses and organisations, as well as published material.

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1. Purpose of the management scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to gather together the suite of policies and plans that are required to ensure that archive services are provided in a professional manner, thereby meeting the requirements of national guidelines in addition to the requirements of its stakeholders. Stakeholders are defined as those that have an interest in the present and future activities of Orkney Archive, and include:

- Orkney Islands Council, as the body responsible to taxpayers for the allocation of public funding
- The local community, who have an interest in the archive's activities on a number of different levels, as taxpayers, members of local heritage groups, users and future users, donors and volunteers. These different classifications can, and often do, overlap
- Members of the academic community and their students
- Internationally, the descendants of emigrant Orcadians who retain an interest in their family history

The scheme defines why and how Orkney Archive acquires, preserves, and develops its collections, as well as how it facilitates access to the archive collections and published works in its care.

This scheme serves as a guide for archive service staff and demonstrates to external organisations and individuals that Orkney Archive has adopted recognised professional standards and aims to follow good practice.

2. The role of Orkney Archive

Orkney Archive provides the archival service for Orkney Islands Council and for the area served by that council. Under sections 53 and 54 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994, Orkney Islands Council is empowered to make proper arrangements for the preservation and management of any records which have been transferred to them, created or acquired by them in the exercise of any of their functions or otherwise placed in their custody by way of gift, purchase, temporary or long-term deposit.

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 requires that a local authority publishes a records management plan, which includes particular provision about archiving, destruction or disposal of public records, including proper arrangements for records of enduring value to be transferred to an appropriate archive repository. Orkney Archive is identified within the Council's records management plan as the appropriate place of deposit for its archives.

Orkney Archive has also been accepted by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland as the archive for the records of Orkney Islands Council, and as a place of deposit for records under their charge and superintendence.

Orkney Archive seeks to abide by all relevant archive and records legislation, including but not limited to:

- Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011
- Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002
- BS4971:2017, Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- BS16893:2018, Conservation of Cultural Heritage – specification for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
- BSI PAS 197:2009 - Code of practice for cultural collections management
- Environmental Information (Scotland) regulations, 2004
- BS EN 16790:2026 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for protection of Cultural Heritage

3. Definition and value of archives

Archives are collections of materials (including documents, papers, books, electronic files, records, films, objects) that are deemed historically, culturally or socially important. Archives preserve these for future generations.

Orkney's archives are the documented memory of the islands. They tell our stories, enrich our lives, connect us with the past and give us a sense of identity. They may be used to provide evidence of our rights as individuals, organisations and communities and, through them, we can hold authorities to account. Archives can bring families and communities together by telling us who we are and where we come from.

4. Collections Management Policy

The purpose of the Collections Management policy is to define why and how Orkney Archive acquires, preserves, develops and facilitates access to the archive and published works collections in its care.

This policy is underpinned by the BSI *Code of practice for cultural collections management*, PAS 197:2009; and BS4971:2017, *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*.

4.1. Scope of the collections

The geographical area served by Orkney Archive is that governed by Orkney Islands Council, which encompasses an archipelago of around seventy islands, of which twenty are continually populated.

The archives are in a variety of formats – parchment or vellum, paper, linen, bound volumes, photographic material, magnetic tape, microform and electronic media. Ranging in size from a few centimetres to many metres the items document Orkney's diverse history and culture from the 15th Century to the present day and include archives of estate management, people, organisations and businesses throughout Orkney, reflecting the changing landscape, communities and economy over the past five centuries.

Orkney Archive is approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland as a place of deposit for records under his charge and superintendence. These include records of:

- Kirkwall Customs and Excise
- Justice of the Peace Court
- Orkney Sheriff Court
- Orkney Presbytery

Orkney Archive also manages, in partnership with Orkney Library, a significant collection of over 7000 books and other printed material relating to the Northern Isles – The Orkney Collection. It provides a local studies resource, which enhances the value of the archive as a centre for research and study.

4.2. Management of the archive collections

Orkney Archive selects and acquires unique and irreplaceable archive material of enduring historical significance to Orkney and printed material relating to the Northern Isles, in accordance with our Collections Development Policy, as detailed in section 10 below. The transfer of council records to the archive is governed by the Orkney Islands Council Retention and Disposal Schedule. Orkney Archive will also accept deposits or donations of archive collections from organisations and individuals for the benefit of future research. Orkney Archive Collections Development Policy aims to ensure that the collections continue to accurately reflect the lives of individuals and communities throughout the islands.

Orkney Archive lists, catalogues and provides information about the archive collections in accordance with the Collections Development Policy. Cataloguing is carried out by trained and qualified staff, under the direction of the Archivists. Collections are documented in accordance with appropriate professional standards and collection level entries are made available online on Your Scottish Archives (<https://yourscottisharchives.com>). Item level descriptions are also available online on the joint archive and museum catalogue (<https://oice-apw.adlibhosting.com/AIS/home>). Descriptions are created in accordance with the guidelines defined in the International Council on Archives General International Standard of Archival Description [ISAD(G)].

Orkney Archive seeks to preserve, care for and undertake archive conservation work on the archive collections in accordance with the guidance in BS4971:2017. Storage in purpose

built, environmentally controlled strongrooms, supervised use of the collections and assessment of condition, followed by appropriate remedial action, ensure that the archives are preserved to a high professional standard.

Conservation is essential to the long-term survival and accessibility of the archive collections and, when required, such work is outsourced to trained and qualified conservation professionals under the direction of the Archivist.

Access to the archives is provided in accordance with and respect to the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) Act 2002, DPA (2018)/UK GDPR, Environmental Information Regulations and current copyright legislation.

Direct public access is provided free of charge in the Orkney Archive searchroom, with staff present to assist visitors in finding the information they need and, where possible, to interpret the archive collections. Orkney Archive is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in all aspects of the service.

Orkney Archive recognises the value, as well as the risks, of exhibiting original archive material. In this regard Orkney Archive aims to fulfil the requirements as set out in BS4971:2017.

All physical access to the records will be risk-assessed to ensure, as far as possible, the safety of both staff and service users.

4.3. Management of the local studies collection

The Orkney Collection, comprising of books and printed material relating to the Northern Isles, is managed, developed and preserved in accordance with the Orkney Library & Archive Stock Management Policy.

Professional advice and support in developing, classifying and cataloguing the Orkney Collection is provided by qualified librarians who are members of CILIP Scotland (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland).

4.4. People and training

Orkney Archive manages, preserves and provides access to archives, books and printed material collections effectively by providing an adequate level of staffing and ensuring that the people who work in the Archive understand the value and significance of the collections and are appropriately skilled and trained. All staff are trained in the necessary skills to carry out their defined roles in supporting the preservation of our collections, and in accordance with Orkney Islands Council's Corporate Learning and Development Policy.

Orkney Archive manages the health, safety and well-being of all staff and volunteers working with the collections, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Orkney Islands Council's Corporate Health and Safety and Dignity at Work policies.

Professional archivists are encouraged to become members of the Archives and Records Association and are expected to adhere to its code of conduct and to continue to develop their professional knowledge and skills. Non-professional members of staff are encouraged to continue to develop their skills as part of an annual employee good conversation process.

4.5. Monitoring and review

The strategic aims for managing Orkney's archive collections have been incorporated into a four year Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is reviewed annually by the Orkney Library & Archive management team.

5.Orkney Archive Forward Plan 2026-2030

The aim of Orkney Archive is to safeguard the future of the unique, rich and irreplaceable archival heritage of Orkney and to provide an excellent and responsive archive service.

This is achieved by collecting and preserving archival collections and published material relating to past and present life in Orkney; by encouraging the use of archives and local history sources through the public services that are provided; and by increasing appreciation and enjoyment of Orkney's archival heritage through interpretational and promotional activities, which form an integral part of the work of Orkney Archive.

The Orkney Archive Forward Plan for 2026-2030 sets out the direction to be taken by the archive service to enable the service's continuing development and has been developed considering staff and stakeholders' feedback and is underpinned by a range of service policies and a regular monitoring schedule.

The challenges over the next four years are for Orkney Archive to continue to deliver excellent and high-quality archive and local history services against a background of decreasing budgets and resources, shifting staffing structures and the rising demands of preserving and managing digital archival collections as well as the physical collections traditionally held.

There is a great need to continue raising awareness of the services available to all service users, whether they live in Orkney or elsewhere. Extending online provision to catalogues and finding aids, as well as digital images is key to this, as is continuing to promote the service via outreach activities and partaking in local, national and international archival campaigns to highlight the significant collections held in Orkney Archive. The challenges around digital preservation and managing access to these collections is also a key deliverable for the archive service over the coming years.

5.1. Service profile

Orkney Archive forms part of the Orkney Library & Archive Service, which sits within the Active Communities remit within the Education, Communities and Housing Directorate provided by Orkney Islands Council.

5.1.1. Service aims

- To preserve the recorded heritage of Orkney for present and future generations by locating, collecting and preserving irreplaceable archive collections and printed material.

- To contribute to local democracy and local authority accountability by ensuring that the archives of Orkney Islands Council and its predecessor bodies are preserved for present and future use by the Council and members of the public.
- To reinforce the role of the archive as a keeper of community memory, promoting social inclusion and a sense of place, whilst recognising the differences between each island and community.
- To support and encourage research on all aspects of Orkney's heritage.
- To provide wider access to Orkney's documentary heritage for all, including those disadvantaged through disability, income, digital exclusions or geographical remoteness.
- To support ancestral tourism as an economic boost to all areas of Orkney.
- To provide a high quality and responsive archive and heritage service by effective and efficient management within available resources and in accordance with best practice.
- To respond to the challenge of managing digital information so that it is accessible now and remains so in the future.

5.1.2. Service delivery

Orkney Archive is operated via a single record office located at the Orkney Library & Archive building in Kirkwall. Office space is provided for two partner organisations in the building – Orkney Family History Society and the Orkney Talking Newspaper.

Orkney Archive provides public access to its collections in a supervised searchroom as well as via displays and exhibitions throughout the building and externally. Some archival documents have been electronically copied to provide archive material to the public at Stromness Library.

Orkney Archive has developed a strong partnership with Orkney Museum Services and supports them in the creation of exhibitions at various sites. Archive staff provide specialist advice on collection management to heritage groups and individuals throughout Orkney.

5.2. Review of Orkney Archive Forward Plan 2020-2025

There have been several successes in meeting the aims and objectives of the 2020-2025 Forward Plan and how the service as a whole is continuing to develop to meet the needs of the wider profession. There are also some areas which require further work and will be developed more fully as part of the 2026-2030 Forward Plan.

Five key headings were identified as areas to develop during 2020-2025:

5.2.1. A positive experience for all service users

Three desired outcomes were identified:

- Maintain levels of staffing
- Increase quality of indexes to archives available online
- Work in partnership with Orkney Museum Service to provide a joint online access to both service catalogues

All desired outcomes have been achieved over the course of 2020 to 2025.

Staffing levels have remained stable after the successful recruitment of a Digital Archivist. The successful applicant was recruited as a Digital Archivist Trainee and is in their final year of remote studying to complete the necessary Archives and Records Management diploma from the University of Dundee.

The archive worked in partnership with the Scottish Council on Archives to ensure that Orkney Archive collection descriptions were included in the newly launched 'Your Scottish Archives' portal. The portal includes catalogue descriptions from archives across Scotland, including local authority, health, business and community archives, and records of under-represented groups. There have also been volunteer projects in the archives working on indexing key archival collections as well as improving existing descriptions which increases accessibility, with links being made on the Orkney Library & Archive website.

A major milestone achieved in 2024 was the launch of the joint online catalogue of Orkney Archive and Museum Services. This has been an objective for the archive for many years, and it was a huge achievement to finally be able to showcase industry standard catalogue descriptions to remote users all over the world. The online catalogue will be continually updated.

5.2.2. A sustainable service that continues to meet national standards

The three desired outcomes of this objective were:

- Successful recruitment of a new Senior Archivist following the retirement of the previous incumbent and maintaining staffing levels
- Maintain Archive Accreditation achieved in 2017
- Increase revenue

All outcomes were achieved between the period 2020-2025, with some deviations in relation to the staffing structure within the archive.

A new Senior Archivist was recruited and started in the role in September 2021. That person then went on to become the Team Manager for Libraries and Archives in April 2022 when that post became vacant after a retirement. At that point it was decided to restructure the staffing within the archive to reflect the need of the service in relation to digital preservation, so the post of the senior archivist was removed. The current structure still has two professional posts, now made up of an Archivist and a Digital Archivist. The remaining staffing structure within the service remains unchanged.

The service worked very hard to retain accredited status in November 2023. After a successful panel visit, the service was commended for its impressive engagement activity as well as for its positive approach to developing digital capacity, with recommendations for future actions given. Two action points around future storage needs and collections care were marked as required actions, while the others were improvement actions. These action points will form part of the objectives for the 2026-2030 Forward Plan.

Over the course of 2020-2025 the amount of revenue the archive brings in has increased. More digital images and physical print requests have helped generate income, as well as publishing and commercial outfits using archive material in productions. This is something that will continue to be looked at going forward as budgets become more challenging.

5.2.3. Improve service user access to archive collections

The projected outcomes of this objective were:

- Successfully adapt access protocols for the archive to take account of restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic
- Target for cataloguing of 400 hours achieved each year
- Online access to full archive catalogue provided

Most of the outcomes were achieved over the course of 2020-2025, with cataloguing hours falling slightly below the projected targets for some of the Plan's period due to Covid-19 access difficulties.

Dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic was certainly challenging, as it was for all organisations, and complying with strict and ever-changing restrictions while still providing access for service delivery was a lot of work for the team. Updated risk assessments and access procedures were brought into force, and the archive was one of the first in the country to be open and allow public access, meaning as minimal disruption as possible for service users and staff. Some procedures brought in during Covid-19 have remained in place as they worked well for service delivery, so the likes of searchroom bookings and room layouts have continued beyond the restrictions being lifted.

Cataloguing proves to be a continuing challenge to achieve the desired number of hours over the course of a year. While staff make good progress to try and deal with a cataloguing backlog that has built up over a number of years, new collections are continually coming in and there is a balance that needs to be struck between cataloguing and access and ensuring that other duties like answering remote enquiries, dealing with physical visitors, outreach work, digital preservation and physical storage of the archives are achieved. This is something that will be looked upon further in the 2026-2030 Forward Plan.

As previously outlined, the online catalogue was launched in 2024 and so this outcome has been achieved and will be an online resource that is continually added to.

5.2.4. Ensure the care of archive collections for the future

From this objective, three outcomes were identified:

- Maintain or improve levels of care of collections in all formats
- Explore methods of increasing archival storage within the existing building, including the capacity to store and manage digital records
- Participate in development of Orkney Islands Council's electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) where it affects storage and access to archived electronic records, through membership of the Information Governance Group

Progress has been made against all three of these outcomes, and for some it is a continual process that will always be an ongoing task for the service to show best practice is being adopted.

Collections care is a key priority at all times for the archive service. Regular monitoring of environmental conditions in the repositories takes place and efforts are made to ensure the

air handling units run as they are supposed to, keeping the temperature and humidity levels within permitted limits. There have been challenges around these units and them breaking down on a regular basis, but engineers are called out as soon as problems are identified. There does need to be a plan made going forward about how to best manage this situation.

The Collections Care Policy and Plan are routinely updated, and this was a required action point from the Accreditation panel visit who felt that there needs to be some changes to reflect best practice within the sector. Therefore, this will also be carried over to the 2026-2030 Forward Plan.

The archive has been reaching storage capacity for a number of years, and temporary measures have been put in place to allow for some expansion within an empty office in the archive. While it was projected that this space would last us until the end of 2025, it is clear that a more permanent solution is required. This will also therefore be an objective that will carry over into the new Forward Plan.

Dedicated and secure server space has been allocated to the Archive for storage of its digital records, and this is something that will again continue and so will carry on into the future objectives of the service.

The Digital Archivist has taken over from the Team Manager attending the meetings of the Information Governance Group and receives project updates on the EDRMS project. The EDRMS project was delayed during Covid-19 but has successfully conducted trials with service areas moving data over to SharePoint. The project is now progressing with moving other service areas over to using SharePoint. Discussions have taken place to acknowledge that the archive needs to be part of the planning for how to access and manage archived electronic records in the longer term that service areas have no further business need of. This will also be an objective carrying forward to the 2026-2030 Forward Plan.

5.2.5. Provide volunteer working opportunities

The three outcomes attached to this final objective were:

- Maintain levels of interest from volunteers and variety of projects
- Continue partnership working with VAO
- Provide increased accessibility to collections for all service users

All three outcomes have been achieved and are seen as ongoing objectives for the archive service.

During the period 2020-2025, Orkney Archive has continued to successfully engage with volunteers of mixed ages and abilities. During Covid-19 restrictions there were challenges getting volunteers back into the building to safely work on projects, but slowly the volunteer numbers came back up to pre-pandemic numbers, and over the course of the Forward Plan, 2,909 hours of volunteer time has been recorded. Projects worked on included the ongoing Service Personnel database, the creation of a Photographic Archive database, indexing work on the Balfour Estate collection as well as Fereday Project listing.

Successful partnership working with Voluntary Action Orkney has continued over the period of the Plan, with all volunteering opportunities being advertised and processed by them. Partnership working with Developing the Young Workforce, who are part of the University of

the Highlands and Islands, has also led to volunteering opportunities in the archive for students with additional support needs to learn new skills and gain confidence in a new social setting. Both partnerships will continue through the term of the future Forward Plan.

Through all the hard work of the volunteers, indexes are constantly being added to and created, which has improved access to several collections, as well as descriptions being made available on the new online archive catalogue.

5.3. Key service aims and outcomes for 2026-2030

5.3.1. Continue to develop a sustainable service, meeting national standards

Key themes around this aim will be:

- Ensuring succession planning for the service
- Maintaining professional standards for the service
- Maintaining contacts with other archival services/bodies as well as national bodies.
- Developing and delivering income generation within the service

Projected outcomes:

- Retain Archive Accreditation status
- Maintaining staffing levels within the service and timely recruitment should any of the present staff members leave/retire
- Ensuring continual professional development opportunities are taken up by staff to keep skills up to date and awareness of best practice within the industry.
- Increase income from the likes of prints, digital photos, scanning and publications

5.3.2. Ensure the ongoing care of archive collections for the future

Key themes within this aim are:

- Meeting the relevant standards such as BS4971:2017 and BS16893:2018 with regards to conservation, care and storage
- Identifying records at risk and ways to provide alternative access
- Progressing with digital preservation and the management of electronic records, both internal and external

Projected outcomes:

- Achieving medium term storage solutions on site using an existing library space and fitting it out with archive quality shelving to provide five years' worth of accrual space, while a longer-term collections centre, which would accommodate archival collections, is explored
- Maintain or improve levels of care of collections in all formats, undertaking preservation assessments of collections
- Exploring the long-term management of OIC's electronic records once captured in the EDRMS system by working with the Information Governance Group

- Continued development of digital preservation processes in line with the reviewed and updated Digital Preservation Policy and Strategy

5.3.3. Continue to improve service user access to archive collections

Key themes within this aim are:

- Continue to look at ways to improve the accessibility of collections
- Increase online access to collections
- Increase access to digital collections
- Ensure collection information is kept up to date and relevant to service users' needs

Projected outcomes:

- Achieve 500 hours of accessioning and cataloguing over the course of each year
- Continue to add cataloguing descriptions and images to Axiell Collections and the online catalogue as well as updating entries online at Your Scottish Archives
- Provide robust access to digital collections both internally and externally
- Use social media and outreach work to highlight collections and increase awareness of the archive service

5.3.4. Continue to provide opportunities for volunteer working

Key themes within this aim are:

- Providing opportunities for people of all ages to contribute their time, learn new or make use of existing skills, and assist in making archive collections more accessible.
- Supporting those with challenges to positively contribute to the wider community
- Supporting equality and diversity in the workplace

Projected outcomes:

- Maintain or increase levels of interest from volunteers for a variety of projects
- Continue partnership working with Voluntary Action Orkney and Developing the Young Workforce Orkney
- Providing increased accessibility to collections for all service users

5.3.5. Maintaining a service that provides a positive experience for all

Key themes for this aim are:

- Maintaining support for all archive staff to ensure they have the skills necessary to provide an excellent archive service
- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction levels
- Develop and improve access to online information about the collections and access to digital content

Projected outcomes:

- Levels of staffing maintained and identifying areas where development is required
- Continue to engage with the ARA visitor and remote user surveys on an annual basis to understand the needs of archive users
- Continue to expand the joint online catalogue with Orkney Museum Service, uploading new content and images to a professional standard
- Develop procedures for ensuring access to digital collections in a way that meets customer expectations while ensuring professional standards and access requirements are still fully met

5.4. Conclusions

The Orkney Archive Forward Plan 2026-2030 provides the necessary structure to continue building on the strengths of the archive service and ensure the continuing quality of its provision.

The archive provides a range of services which benefit not only Orkney residents, but those further afield. And while it is important to recognise the financial constraints across all Orkney Islands Council services, including the archive, it is imperative to acknowledge the economic benefits the archive brings. Orkney Archive attracts ancestral tourism visits, researchers from all over the world, as well as generating income from images and media and commercial publishing rights. The educational benefits of the archive service can also be seen in the work the staff do to support historical and cultural learning in the local primary schools and in supporting the annual Orkney Heritage Society Fereday Project.

With online access to collection information now achieved via the online catalogue, it is essential that the service continues to update and add to this resource. This requires the continuation of accessioning and cataloguing collections to professional standards and promoting the service across various methods such as via the Library & Archive website, social media, outreach events and with colleagues across the country.

Digital Preservation and access to digital collections continues to be an area of focus for Orkney Archive. The Digital Preservation Policy and Strategy will focus on priorities identified for the four years ahead and will require the archive team to work with various Information Governance and IT colleagues within OIC, as well as more broadly across the archive profession.

The next four years will be challenging but rewarding for the archive team and the service as a whole and will see the reapplication for Archive Accreditation take place late in 2029.

6. Digital Preservation Policy

6.1. Scope of policy

The purpose of the Digital Preservation Policy is to define why and how Orkney Archive acquires, preserves, develops, and facilitates access to the digital records in its care.

The Policy reflects the overall mission and objectives of the archive service and should be read in conjunction with the Collections Management, Collections Care and Conservation, Collections Development and Access Policies.

This Policy also needs to be read in conjunction with Orkney Archive's Digital Preservation Strategy which will outline how the service will achieve effective and efficient practices in digital preservation to ensure the long-term survival and accessibility of its digital collections.

6.2. Scope of collections

The geographical area served by Orkney Archive is that governed by Orkney Islands Council (OIC), and the types of digital records taken into the custody of the archives reflects those of a physical nature (paper, parchment, photographic, microfilm etc) and represent the Orkney Islands Council and its predecessor bodies, local estates, people, organisations, and businesses, reflecting the changing landscape, communities, and economy.

Orkney Archive will also be the place of deposit for any future electronic records given over to the service by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland under their charge and superintendence, which can include Court and Church records, for example.

6.3. Professional standards

Orkney Archive seeks to be guided by all relevant legislative and professional standards as set out in the Collections Management Policy, as well as those specifically relating to digital preservation, including but not limited to:

- *ISO 14721:2012 Space Data and Information Transfer Systems – Open Archival Information System – Reference Model (OAIS)* - provides a systematic framework for understanding and implementing the archival concepts needed for long-term digital information preservation and access, and for describing and comparing architectures and operations of existing and future archives. It describes roles, processes and methods for long-term preservation.
- *ISO/TR 18492:2005 Long-term preservation of electronic document-based information* - provides a practical methodology for the continued preservation and retrieval of authentic electronic document-based information and to ensure authenticity of records beyond the lifetime of original information keeping systems.
- *ISO 16175:2011 Principles and functional requirements for records in electronic office environments* - relates to electronic document and records management systems, and the need to maintain records over time and that format obsolescence issues need to be considered in the specification of these electronic systems.
- PREMIS (Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies) - data dictionary and supporting tools that have been specifically developed to support the preservation of digital material.

It is important to note that the rate of change in technologies and standards make it impossible to base a policy solely on standards. A mix of standards and best practice that meets the need of the archive service will form a comprehensive strategy to meet the needs of the digital materials held and preserved by the archive service.

6.4. Roles and responsibilities

The Team Manager (Libraries & Archives) is responsible for developing the Digital Preservation Policy and ensuring that it is implemented, monitored, and reviewed regularly (at least every three years), while also ensuring that there are sufficiently trained staff with appropriate knowledge to accomplish long-term objectives in this area.

The Digital Archivist will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and subsequent strategy is put into practice within the archive, as well as being the main point of contact with internal and external agencies relating to digital preservation. This will include, but is not limited to, OIC IT, Information Governance, Information Security and Digital Communications colleagues, as well as external agencies such as the Digital Preservation Coalition, ASLAWG sub-groups relating to digital preservation and depositors of digital records.

The Archivist and Digital Archivist will work closely to align practices where possible between physical and digital collections to ensure best practice across all archival collections in the care of Orkney Archive.

6.5. Digital record keeping

6.5.1. Principles

Orkney Archive undertakes to preserve and offer access to the digital records in its care.

Relevant national standards and best practice are followed, and a professional code of ethics (Archives and Records Association Code of Ethics) is observed.

It may be necessary to apply appropriate techniques to stabilise digital collections to ensure long term access. Such interventions will be documented, and appropriate metadata collected to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the digital records.

6.5.2. Formats

Orkney Archive will strive to accept most formats, but there may be some that cannot be supported. In this instance the Digital Archivist will discuss options with the depositor.

Depositors will not be advised to convert file formats pre-deposit as this may remove essential metadata from the records.

Orkney Archive may create additional copies of records in other formats for preservation and access purposes, but the original deposited file will always be retained.

6.5.3. Metadata

Depositors will be encouraged to supply as much technical and descriptive metadata as possible.

Assistance can be provided by the Digital Archivist to help gather metadata for deposits.

Applications may be used to extract technical metadata, such as those advised by The National Archives and the Digital Preservation Coalition and approved for use by OIC IT.

6.5.4. Deposits and accessions

The deposit process for digital records will take more time than for the physical analogue records held by Orkney Archive. Digital deposits require to be prepared for transfer to digital archive storage.

The legal deposit and accessioning process remains the same as it is for physical analogue records.

It is imperative that digital deposits retain their authenticity and are properly documented to retain the chain of custody/ownership.

The Digital Archivist will support depositors through this process in the same way the Archivist does.

6.5.5. Storage

The archive will store at least two copies of digital records in separate locations, with one of these being offsite from the archive building.

Storage for digital collections will be secure and have methods of being backed up to prevent the potential for data loss and corruption.

Long term storage solutions will be discussed with OIC IT, Information Governance and Information Security colleagues as digital collections continue to expand.

6.5.6. Cataloguing

Digital records will be catalogued using, where possible, the same style and format as the analogue/physical collections in the custody of the archives.

Cataloguing standards will be met when cataloguing digital collections.

Cataloguing to item level is preferred, but depending on the size, complexity, and organisation of the digital records this may not always be possible. If item level cataloguing is not achievable, a note will be put on the catalogue entry to make this clear to all researchers.

6.5.7. Appraisal

Digital records, just like analogue/physical records, in the care of the archive will be subject to appraisal during the cataloguing process. Any digital material not in keeping with the Collections Development Policy will be offered back to depositors or securely destroyed after consultation with them.

6.5.8. Access

Access to digital collections will, where possible, be provided in line with Orkney Archive Access Policy.

Finding aids will be produced for digital collections as they are for analogue/physical collections to facilitate access.

Access to digital collections will be given via public access computers in the public searchroom, or by sending electronically to a person's email depending on what is being requested, size and format etc.

Access restrictions will apply to digital collections in the same way as they do for analogue/physical collections. Reasons for restrictions may include, but are not limited to, Data Protection legislation, copyright, political and commercial sensitivity, and will be discussed and agreed with depositors prior to the collections coming into the custody of the archive.

At present, there are no plans to access digital collections in an online environment apart from when individual items may be featured in archival blogs, on the library and archive's other social media platforms, or as images on the future online catalogue.

6.5.9. Preservation and care

Digital deposits will be fixity checked on accession into the archives. This will be the case for any copies made by the archives for preservation or access purposes.

Fixity checks will also be carried out at set intervals to ensure the bitstream remains the same as at time of deposit.

Such checks will remain in place and be a manual process for the Digital Archivist until such times as digital preservation software may be procured to make such checks automated.

6.5.10. Withdrawal

The process for withdrawing digital collections will be discussed with the depositor at the time of deposit and will be in line with what is discussed for analogue/physical collections.

Gifted digital deposits cannot be withdrawn from Orkney Archive.

6.6. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, and in line with any changes to the Digital Preservation Strategy as required. As with other archival policies, this policy and accompanying strategy is incorporated into the wider Orkney Archive Management Scheme and is reviewed and submitted for approval by the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee of OIC.

7. Digital Preservation Strategy 2026-2030

7.1. Scope of strategy

This strategy provides a framework for Orkney Archive's digital preservation activities and focus between 2026 and 2030. It clearly identifies strategic priorities within this area, reflecting on the Orkney Archive Digital Preservation Policy to achieve effective and efficient practices in digital preservation, ensuring the long-term survival and accessibility of its digital collections.

7.2. Digital collections

Orkney Archive currently holds approximately 1.2TB of digital material, mainly in the format of digitised audio, photographic and text-based files. There is great potential to also add digitised newspapers and manuscripts, electoral registers, and personal/private digital archives to the collections in the future.

It must also be acknowledged that a lot of Orkney Islands Council (OIC) electronically created files, which have a legislative requirement to be preserved or are deemed to be historically significant, will also pass into the archive's possession.

Digital content is acquired under robust accessioning and deposit procedures just like physical analogue records. Accession forms and deposit guidance is available. Records which are analogue and are subsequently digitised are held under the same deposit conditions.

Currently, most records being deposited in Orkney Archive are traditional analogue records; however, the amount of digitised content is steadily increasing, as well as the offerings of more born digital records, including official OIC electronically created content. Orkney Archive recognises the need to standardise and implement procedures to ensure it can preserve such digital content in the long term like it does for its physical collections.

7.3. Challenges

There are many technical challenges surrounding the preservation of digital preservation. Technological obsolescence and the pace of change in technology is a massive test to ensure that digital content remains accessible as well as authentic and reliable.

Digital content requires earlier intervention than traditional, physical records. The fragile nature of digital records means issues around data integrity and its authenticity need to be addressed as it is easier to make unnoticed changes to digital files, as well as managing the process of appropriate changes and accompanying metadata.

The fragile state of digital storage media is also a cause for concern. Corruption and bit rot can render digital content inaccessible and at a swift pace. This needs to be actively observed and managed to ensure long term accessibility and usability.

The long-term management, storage and accessibility of digital records is a challenge, and how OIC manages its digital records to ensure statutory obligations are met with regards to record series which require long term retention. A move to a new EDRMS goes some way to beginning to tackle these challenges, but it is not a permanent solution to ensure long term management and accessibility.

Staff expertise and learning new skills to enable Orkney Archive to properly look after its digital collections can be challenging when trying to keep pace with technological advancements and shifting best practice.

7.4. Review of strategic priorities 2023-2025

The digital preservation strategy of Orkney Archive between 2023 and 2025 was oriented around establishing dedicated staff resources, surveying existing digital collections, creating workflow priorities, as well as embedding key processes and procedures to ensure the long-

term preservation of digital records following the necessary professional standards required. The strategic aims fitted in with the overall mission statement of Orkney Archive as well as the general principles of the Collections Management, Development and Care policies.

7.4.1. Staff development and resources

By 2025:

- The Digital Archivist trainee will be close to completing their formal Archive and Records Management qualification – [Ongoing](#)
- Collaborative working with OIC IT, Information Governance and Information Security colleagues will be standard practice – [Ongoing](#)
- Outcomes of the ASLWAG Digital Preservation sub-group will have been achieved, or at least well under way. The sharing of best practice, processes and procedures should be inbuilt to the reporting process of the group and wider archive network – [Ongoing](#)
- Budgets and resources for digital preservation will have been investigated and assessed against current Archive funding – [Ongoing](#)

7.4.2. Assessing capabilities for digital preservation

By the end of 2023 Orkney Archive will have:

- Used the NDSA Levels of Preservation and DPC's Rapid Assessment Model to inform where the Archive is sitting regarding its capabilities for digital preservation – [Achieved](#)

By 2025 Orkney Archive will have:

- Used the above Models of assessment as live documents, updating our progress in each of the categories to inform future strategy and practice within Orkney Archive and the wider OIC – [Ongoing](#)

7.4.3. Surveying existing collections

By 2025 Orkney Archive will have:

- Conducted a survey into its existing digital collections, capturing necessary data to inform any collections at immediate risk, and priorities for action - [Achieved](#)
- Informed procedures and best practice on areas such as file formats, metadata, security, integrity, and access – [Achieved](#)

7.4.4. Procedures for transferring and accessioning digital collections

By 2025 Orkney Archive will have:

- Well established procedures in place for the transfer and accessioning of digital records into its custody. This includes guidance being in place for Archive staff, depositors and record creators around accessioning and the overall process for digital content – [Ongoing](#)

- Accepted tools embedded into such procedures which will ensure virus and integrity checks happen as standard, with metadata extraction and capture happening for each digital record coming into the custody of the Archive - [Achieved](#)
- Procedures in place for the secure transfer of OIC created content to a dedicated Archive space within the OIC EDRMS, with access controls established – [Ongoing](#)

7.4.5. Storage of digital collections

By the end of 2023 Orkney Archive will have:

- Agreed with OIC IT colleagues to secure space on a dedicated OIC server, and safely transferred copies of the Archive's digital collections to this server to give better resilience to the records and their future access - [Achieved](#)

By 2025 we will have:

- Looked at longer term storage needs and solutions that could be put in place to properly manage the digital collections coming into the custody of the Archive - [Ongoing](#)
- Assessed the longevity of the records being held in the OIC Microsoft 365/SharePoint environment as part of the EDRMS project and how those with permanent retention will be managed in the long-term by the Archives - [Ongoing](#)

7.5. Strategic priorities 2026-2030

7.5.1. Staff development and resources

The Digital Archivist trainee, who is enrolled on the Dundee University Archives and Records Management Diploma course, should achieve formal qualification early 2026. The post title will then become Digital Archivist and will be dedicated to the implementation and management of digital preservation activities within Orkney Archive and contribute to wider OIC digital preservation initiatives.

There will be ongoing opportunities for staff to develop and enhance their skills in digital preservation, through formal courses and continuing professional development prospects. This will ensure that there is a staffing skill set to sufficiently deliver and manage the preservation of Orkney Archive digital collections. The Digital Archivist will cascade training and knowledge share with team members.

The Digital Archivist will continue to work collaboratively with OIC Information Technology (IT), Information Governance and Information Security teams to enhance knowledge on the principles and practices required to receive, manage, and provide access to both internal and external digital collections. This collaborative work will ensure there is a wider OIC approach to digital preservation and safeguard that archive practice is in line with OIC information security and governance policy.

The Digital Preservation sub-group of the Archivists of Scottish Local Authorities Working Group (ASLAWG) is ongoing, and the Digital Archivist will join other representatives from across the local authority archive sector to look at best practice in digital preservation and look at common processes and procedures to align what archives are doing across the

country. This sub- group will be a means to look at resources required, and lessons learned from other services who are further along in their digital preservation journey, and the tools and systems put in place to judge what will work best here in Orkney Archive. This should also help inform what budgets may be required and the potential need for separate resources from the current Archive funding structure.

By 2030:

- The Digital Archivist will be fully qualified, having completed the Archive and Records Management Diploma
- The Digital Archivist will be cascading training to archive team members and relevant CPD opportunities will be made available to all staff members
- Continued collaborative working with Information Governance, IT and IT security colleagues
- Continued contributions to the Digital Preservation sub-group of ASLAWG
- Budgets and resources for digital preservation continue to be investigated and assessed against current Archive funding

7.5.2. Assessing capabilities for digital preservation

To gain meaningful insight into moving forward with digital preservation, it is necessary to assess the risks associated with digital records and what processes and procedures are already in place.

It is an ongoing priority to use toolkits and assessment models to accurately assess Orkney Archive's capabilities for digital preservation and define where the Archive and wider organisation is at present for record keeping.

Toolkits such as the NDSA Levels of Preservation and DPC's Rapid Assessment Model will continue to be used to define where Orkney Archive are regarding capabilities for digital preservation. The outcomes of which will help inform future strategy and practices with regards to preserving digital collections within the Archive and wider OIC environment.

By 2030:

- Continue to use the NDSA Levels of Preservation and DPC's Rapid Assessment Model to inform on the capabilities of digital preservation and areas for action within the Archive

7.5.3. Surveying existing collections

There is currently 231.49GB of born digital collections preserved in the Orkney Archive, but there are many records created by both OIC and external bodies that have been created electronically which will be scheduled to be transferred to the Archive for long term preservation in the future.

The bulk of the digital collections within the Archive are records that have been digitised by the Archivists over several years. These collections mainly consist of audio, photographic and text-based files. A survey of all digital collections held in the Archive has been conducted by the Digital Archivist, capturing information on file formats, essential metadata, security,

integrity and any access requirements. Processes and procedures for conducting a digital collections survey have been documented and are consistent with the Orkney Archive Digital Preservation Policy.

The aim for the next few years is to look at internal transfers of OIC records identified as requiring long term/permanent retention by conducting a similar survey and determining relevant workflows and procedures to allow those digital records to transfer over to the Archive.

By 2030:

- Conduct surveys into OIC digital records identified as requiring long term/permanent preservation and capture necessary data to inform collections or records at risk and priorities for action
- Continue to make sure processes and procedures reflect best practice on areas such as file formats, metadata, security, integrity and access

7.5.4. Procedures for transferring and accessioning digital collections

A formal procedure has been developed for accessioning external digital collections into Orkney Archive. This legal deposit and accessioning process reflects that already in place for physical analogue records, and ensures the authenticity, collected metadata and integrity of the digital records coming into the Archive are documented to accurately reflect the chain of custody so far in the records' life cycle.

Procedures and guidance now need to be developed for dealing with internal depositors and transfers of electronic records from OIC service areas to the Archive. This documentation will help colleagues within OIC know what is expected of them during the accessioning and transfer period to ensure vital information is passed over along with the digital assets.

It will be imperative for the Digital Archivist to continue working with OIC's IT, Information Governance, and Information Security colleagues. Appropriate programs have been secured with the help of IT colleagues for virus checking, fixity checking and metadata capture, and these will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the digital collections being preserved in the Archive are maintained and traceable through continual auditing and reporting processes.

The OIC EDRMS project being rolled out within OIC will see electronically created records from OIC service areas stored and managed within Microsoft365/SharePoint. While there has been input from the Archives since the start of the project, there is a need for the Digital Archivist to ensure that processes and procedures are put in place to manage the transfer and access to a dedicated Archive space within the EDRMS.

By 2030:

- Assess and implement workflows for internal transfers of electronic records to the Archive, including guidance on accessions, fixity checking and metadata
- Continue to work with IT and Information Governance colleagues
- Ensure records which require permanent preservation are properly managed and appropriate checks routinely carried out in the SharePoint environment

7.5.5. Storage and accessibility of digital collections

With the progression of the EDRMS project, the medium-term storage of OIC electronically created content which has long term preservation requirements will be relatively stable. There will still need to be all the necessary checks put in place to ensure metadata capture, integrity and authenticity and access controls, but the environment will be secure, and the Archive will have access to the content.

The digital collections already held by Orkney Archive are currently stored on secure OIC server space, on networked drives, external hard drives, and USB flash drives. External hard drives are located in a variety of locations to allow for the preservation of digital collections in geographically different locations to the Archive which reduces the risks of information loss, follows industry best practice and is in line with Orkney Archive Digital Preservation Policy and its Disaster Plan.

A big challenge for Orkney Archive is around access to digital collections in a way that provides safe and manageable access to records, while considering sensitive data and other access restrictions. This is more challenging in ways compared to physical analogue records. While the long-term aim would be for online access to digital collections, for the short to medium term, access via a dedicated PC in the public searchroom will be the objective.

By 2030:

- Monitor space on OIC secure server space to continue being able to store digital collections safely and securely, and continue to back up collections in various locations to give resilience and secure future access
- Assess the longevity of the records being held in the OIC Microsoft 365/SharePoint environment as part of the EDRMS project and how those with permanent retention will be managed in the long-term by the Archives.
- Establish, with the assistance of OIC IT colleagues, an access station PC in the Archive searchroom to allow secure and controlled access to digital collections

7.6. Conclusions and review

Orkney Archive has made good progress in their digital preservation journey, with a clear plan of what next steps need to be to ensure this progress continues while complying with best practice and in keeping with professional standards which are already upheld when looking after the physical analogue collections.

Good use is being made of available toolkits, programs and assessment models to show the areas where more development is required, and continued working with wider OIC colleagues and service areas is essential for the Archive to meet the outcomes of this strategy, and to inform future progress.

Longer term storage and access solutions needs to be considered by Orkney Archive and OIC. Solutions identified in 7.5.5 will cover short to medium term risk regarding digital preservation. This will inform future strategy requirements and will require joint resourcing and planning across OIC.

8. Collections Care and Conservation Policy

The Collections Care and Conservation Policy should be read in conjunction with the Collections Management Policy, as detailed in section 4 above, which describes the statutory and legal basis for Orkney Archive, the preservation and management of its collections and the framework of standards within which it operates.

The Collections Care and Conservation Policy outlines the strategic approach of Orkney Archive in caring for and conserving the archive collections to ensure that they will be available for future generations to use, learn from and enjoy. It provides a comprehensive statement on the preservation of the archive collections and communicates principles that guide the conservation activities necessary for long term protection and security.

The policy is underpinned by the *BSI Code of practice for cultural collections management*, PAS 197:2009 and BS4971:2017, *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*.

The Archivists and Team Manager are responsible for developing the Collections Care and Conservation policy and ensuring that it is implemented, monitored and reviewed regularly (at least every three years); ensuring that funding is available for collections care, conservation, and sufficient trained staff with appropriate knowledge to accomplish long-term objectives in this area.

8.1. Collections care and conservation principles

Orkney Archive stores archival material in secure and suitable accommodation, with appropriate environmental conditions, which are controlled and monitored weekly.

Relevant national standards and best practice are followed and a professional code of ethics (Archives & Record Association Code of Ethics) in all aspects of collections care and conservation is observed.

Appropriate techniques are used to stabilise and slow down further deterioration of archives with the minimum of intervention.

Access to archives is provided, whilst ensuring their protection and minimising risks from handling.

8.2. Accommodation for the archive collections

Orkney Archive aims to fulfil the requirements of BS4971:2017.

The archive collections are housed in purpose-built accommodation comprising four strongrooms situated within a dedicated archive area of the Orkney Library & Archive building, which was completed and opened in 2003. There are also collections now housed in vacant office space within the building as the strongrooms reach capacity.

Archive collections are stored in the strongrooms according to their physical nature and condition, on clearly labelled mobile and static steel shelving, wall mounted wooden map racks and in steel cabinets.

Orkney Islands Council's Infrastructure and Organisational Development Service inspects and maintains the building and carries out regular testing and servicing of the fire detection system. Members of the Library & Archive management team carry out weekly tests of the intruder alarm system.

The Orkney Library & Archive building is constructed of materials designed to withstand fire and is fitted with fire doors and smoke detectors throughout the building. An automated fire detection and alarm system is linked to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Automatic fire extinction is not installed because of the building design controls in place. Fire extinguishers of a type appropriate to their locations are available throughout the building.

The Fire Risk Assessment for the Orkney Library & Archive building considers the risk to the archive collections as well as to staff and visitors and documents the measures in place to minimise the risk of fire.

All archive accommodation is situated on the first floor of the building to provide protection against the dangers of flooding.

8.3. Security of the archive collections

The Orkney Library & Archive building is situated in a well-lit area of Kirkwall and has its own external lighting, reducing the risk of vandalism and theft. Internally, an intruder alarm system and CCTV cameras are fitted throughout the building.

All doors are fitted with appropriate locks. Archive strongrooms are manually locked by key with access restricted to authorised staff only. The Archive Searchroom is where archive materials are consulted by service users and is always supervised by at least one member of staff.

Lockers have been provided for visitors to secure personal possessions and to ensure that large items and bags are not brought into the public access area of the Searchroom.

8.4. Environmental control and monitoring

Orkney Archive aims to provide environmental conditions which conform to BS4971:2017. An environmental control system operates in all four strongrooms. The current system was installed in 2019 under the supervision of Orkney Islands Council's Development and Infrastructure Service.

Environmental conditions within each strongroom are set according to recommendations. Relative humidity and temperature in all storage areas are monitored on a weekly basis by archive staff.

For collections housed in areas which are not environmentally controlled, the conditions are regularly monitored and generally remain within permitted parameters set out in BS4971:2017.

The windows in the archive storage areas are blocked with light tight material to protect against the risk of damage by UV light and assist with environmental control. Lighting within the building is provided by fluorescent tubes which are protected by diffusers. Windows in public and staff working areas are fitted with vertical blinds and tinted glass.

Orkney Archive recognises the importance of a safe clean environment in the storage areas and the value of good housekeeping as part of collections care. All strongrooms are cleaned regularly and are regularly inspected by the Archivists as part of the routine monitoring of these areas.

At Orkney Archive collections care is the responsibility of every member of staff. All staff work closely with the Archivists to minimise the risk of infestation and of carrying and transporting contaminated material within a collection. Wherever possible potential new accessions are surveyed at source or, if not, are treated within a designated area of the building to prevent cross contamination.

8.5. Packaging and storage of the archive collections

Proper cleaning, packaging and storage reduces the risk of damage to the archive collections. Orkney Archive uses appropriate conservation products; high quality acid-free paper and board, polyester sleeves, unbleached tape and plastic paperclips which meet the technical specifications recommended for archive use.

Boxes constructed from acid-free board are ordered flat packed from a specialist supplier and assembled by archive staff. These, together with acid-free folders and envelopes provide the optimum storage solution for our archive collections; light, but strong, reusable packaging which is safe and easy for staff to handle.

The physical condition of all new accessions is assessed in a designated area. Contaminated archive material, which has the potential to harm or infect other collections, is placed in isolation until a solution can be arranged.

Archives are stored in the strongrooms according to their physical nature and condition - on shelves, in cabinets, drawers and boxes as appropriate for their format. The location of items is clearly indicated by shelf signs and labels, as well as within the archive catalogue.

A tidy and safe environment is sought in the strongrooms. Ladders and trolleys are provided to aid staff access and transport of heavy boxes and regular inspections are carried out by senior Library & Archive staff.

8.6. Conservation treatments

Conservation is an essential consideration for the long-term survival and accessibility of archive collections. Orkney Archive does not employ a qualified conservator, so any conservation work required is outsourced to appropriate qualified archive conservators.

Orkney Archive recognises that regular conservation audits would provide the best protection for the records in our care, however due to the length of opening hours and staffing levels, completing an audit is currently not possible but is included, as recognition of its importance, within our Collections Care and Conservation Plan, as detailed below in section 9. Archive staff inspect documents during the retrieval and return process, and regular weekly inspections of collections and their condition will commence in 2026. Any information regarding conservation treatment required and its priority is recorded in the archive collections management system (Axiell Collections). Individual items are prioritised for treatment depending on demand, the context of the item within the collection and/or its physical condition.

Basic preservation practices (cleaning and putting records in acid free enclosures for example) are carried out with the minimum of intervention in order to retain the integrity and authenticity of the item. The future storage format, storage location and anticipated use of the item also influence the level of treatment applied.

8.7. Access and handling

Orkney Archive provides access to collections in accordance with its Access Policy (see section 11 below). Archives catalogued as 'Open' are available to all users for consultation in appropriately controlled and supervised conditions and in accordance with the searchroom rules. Uncatalogued material may be produced at the discretion of archive staff.

Access to archives is subject to legitimate closure requirements, the reasonable wishes of the depositor and the physical condition of the item.

Orkney Archive supports the use of surrogate copies which are made available where the condition of the original material is unstable, or where current or anticipated use will pose a threat to its survival. Researchers are encouraged to use surrogate copies where possible to minimise handling and reduce the risk of further damage to the original.

Staff and volunteers are trained in handling archives and staff promote best practice in the searchroom. Appropriate aids are provided to researchers, such as foam book wedges, protective polyester sheets, and a variety of weights, to protect books and archives. Training is given in the use of these aids.

Orkney Archive recognises the value of using digital technology to increase access to archives and safeguard the collections. Full archival descriptions are available remotely via the joint Orkney Archive and Museum online catalogue as well as being available on the Your Scottish Archive online catalogue.

Digital copies of documents provide remote access and are supplied at the discretion of archive staff, in accordance with copyright laws and the reasonable wishes of the depositor. These digital copies are saved to decrease the need for future handling/copying.

Orkney Archive recognises both the benefits of displaying archives and the risks of exhibiting original material. Material from the archive collection is made available for exhibition in line with national and professional standards.

8.8. Emergency planning

Orkney Archive subscribes to Harwell Drying Restoration Priority User Service which, in the event of a disaster, will provide recovery and emergency salvage services. The Orkney Library & Archive building is constructed to retard the spread of fire and the joint service has procedures in place that, in the event of a fire, ensures protection of staff and users. These procedures have provision for staff training and testing.

In the event of a serious event that endangers the archive collection, staff will follow the procedures set out in the Orkney Archive Disaster Plan, which has been created with the assistance of staff at Harwell.

8.9. Communication and training

Orkney Archive provides advice and guidance on best practice and the importance of collections care to other Orkney Islands Council Services, external organisations and institutions, community groups, owners of private archives and the general public.

Staff communicate an understanding of the nature and value of archives and the importance of collections care and appropriate conservation through their interaction with users, outreach activities and exhibitions. All staff and volunteers are trained in handling archives and in safe working practices.

Orkney Archive maintains active professional relationships with the archival and preservation communities and organisations in the UK, including the Archives and Records Association and ASLAWG (Archivists of Scottish Local Authorities Working Group).

9. Collections Care and Conservation Plan

The Collections Care and Conservation Plan will enable Orkney Archive to minimise the risk of harm to the collections we hold, from handling and from the environment. It should be read in conjunction with the Collections Care and Conservation Policy, as detailed in section 8 above, and the Orkney Archive Forward Plan, as detailed in section 5 above, which set out the overall institutional strategic approach to Collections Care. This Plan is a more practical guide to procedures and Orkney Archive's programme to maintain or improve care of collections over time.

9.1. Building

The collections of Orkney Archive are held at the Orkney Library & Archive, Junction Road, Kirkwall. The building is maintained by Orkney Islands Council. The building is the collections' primary protection against the external environment, damage or theft by others, and is fit for purpose, providing significant protection from the elements and being of appropriate strength and quality of construction.

Floors are capable of safely supporting the loads placed on them. Changes in use, particularly in storage areas, will only be made after an assessment of loading limits.

It is recognised that the nature of archive collections is to continue to grow, and that the current storage space is close to capacity. It is therefore vital that additional suitable storage space is identified within the timescale of this Management Scheme.

The building is regularly inspected by library and archive staff and any potential threats, such as missing roofing slates, blocked gutters and water ingress are identified and reported to Development and Infrastructure Services for action.

Plant and equipment, such as lifts, are inspected periodically, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Portable appliances, fire extinguishers, burglar and smoke alarms, and circuit testing are all carried out at agreed times either by appropriately trained staff or contractors.

9.2. Collections condition overview based on assessment

Orkney Archive's collections contain a broad range of materials with varying needs in terms of care and conservation. To ensure that an awareness of the condition of the collection and its needs are maintained, material will be subject to regular assessment.

Assessment takes place through regular inspection during use of the collections and by this method awareness of the needs of individual items and groups of materials continues to grow.

Assessment considers the following risks to the collections:

- The nature and vulnerability of different materials and the condition of individual items.
- Potential risks from other items and materials in the collection.
- Environmental factors, including temperature, relative humidity, light, airborne pollution and pests.
- Accidental or malicious damage.
- Theft or loss.
- Emergencies and the risks posed by the response of the emergency services to such an event.

9.3. Conservation requirement

In order to provide all items in the collections with appropriate care, and that priorities for conservation are identified, the following procedures will be followed:

- Items currently in the collection are visually inspected during the retrieval and return process, as well as during weekly shelving checks. After assessment, the requirement for conservation treatment will be recorded in Axiell Collections, being noted as High, Medium or Low priority. It is then possible to create a prioritised list of any items requiring conservation. New acquisitions will be assessed on arrival at the Archive.
- When conservation work is required, it will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced conservators.
- It is recognised that care of the collection would be enhanced by the carrying out of a full preservation survey.

9.4. Environmental monitoring

The following ranges of temperature relative humidity (RH) are recommended (BS 4971:2017, *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*) as a means of preventing even sensitive archive materials from being compromised when stored alongside less critically sensitive archival material:

- 13 °C to 23°C
- 35% RH to 60% RH

The annual average temperature in the archival storage areas should not be above 18°C however, and while there are allowances for seasonal fluctuations between these ranges, sudden and frequent variations will lead to the deterioration of the archival documents.

Environmental measurements are collected, evaluated and retained in an environmental monitoring and control file. Professional archive staff will regularly review records of relative humidity and temperature and will notify Development & Infrastructure Services if these fall outside the recommended range so that appropriate action can be taken.

9.5. Environmental control

All collections are kept within the Orkney Library & Archive building in secure storage areas. Temperature and humidity controls are in place in the majority of the storage areas, which achieve the conditions identified in section 8.4 for most of the time. The storage areas are kept dark when unoccupied by staff to avoid the damaging effects of UV light, and doors are kept closed except when in use to provide protection from airborne pollutants.

Archival quality materials and products are used in storage and display areas to ensure that collections are given the best protection possible. Some older, non-archival, materials are still in use in some areas of the archive, and a programme of replacement of these materials is continuing as funding allows.

9.6. Housekeeping

Orkney Archive's accommodation and collections are carefully cleaned and boxed to reduce the risk of damage being caused by infestation, mould, abrasion or chemicals. All display and storage areas and furniture are cleaned and inspected regularly. Cleaning methods, products and tools have been selected to reduce the risk of physical and chemical damage to collections.

All incoming material is examined for signs of infestation, dampness or mould. Where this is obvious items will be isolated immediately. Advice will be sought promptly, and appropriate action taken as a matter of urgency.

The design of the Orkney Library & Archive building and location of the archive within the building offer protection against the risk of infestation by insects or rodents, and this is reinforced by staff monitoring of all accommodation. Any existing items in the collection that show signs of pest infestation will be isolated from the rest of the collection until treated.

9.7. Handling

All handling of collections, whether for display, research or conservation, will be carried out in ways that minimise the risk of physical or chemical damage.

All staff and volunteers who are expected to work with the collections will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding the care of the collections during their induction training, and will undergo appropriate training in handling, packaging and safe storage methods.

Staff members are also given training on correct handling procedures during their induction to guard against personal injury or damage to archives during the retrieval or return of archives to strongrooms.

Archive staff will ensure that public access to the collections is always supervised.

9.8. Emergency preparedness

Orkney Archive operates on the principle that prevention is better than cure and seeks to identify risks to the collections and take steps to reduce the threat occurring. The Orkney Library & Archive building is constructed to retard the spread of fire and the joint service has procedures in place that, in the event of a fire, ensures protection of staff and users. However, it is acknowledged that situations beyond the control of staff can occur which could endanger the archives and impede the abilities of staff to provide an archive service.

The Orkney Archive Disaster Plan includes the information required to quickly and efficiently react to any emergency which threatens the archives or the continuity of the Archive service and will be regularly reviewed.

Orkney Archive subscribes to Harwell Drying Restoration Priority User Service which, in the event of a disaster, will provide recovery and emergency salvage services.

9.9. Action plan

| Actions | Priority | Timescale | Resources |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| Continue regular environmental monitoring | High | Ongoing | Staff time |
| Identify suitable additional archive storage space | High | Ongoing | Staff time Financial resource |
| Complete a preservation survey | High | For completion by 2029 | Staff time Conservation expertise Financial resource |
| Replace non-archival storage materials | Moderate | Ongoing | Staff time Materials |

10. Collections Development Policy

A collecting policy plays an integral part of good practice in managing and caring for archive collections. This Collections Development Policy has been created to support continuing good practice at Orkney Archive and provide guidance in the future shaping of the archives in our care.

The policy aims to define the role of the archive service in the wider framework of national archive collecting and to provide clear guidance to potential depositors and to staff, ensuring effective use of resources by minimising duplication of effort and potential conflict between repositories through overlapping interest.

This policy covers all collecting situations, i.e., both active (through surveys of specific categories of records leading to deposit) and reactive (responding to unsolicited offers of material). It will assist staff in exercising judgement as to whether to accept or reject material and, as appropriate, to advise on a more suitable place of deposit.

The Team Manager and the Archivist are responsible for developing the Collections Development Policy and ensuring that it is implemented, monitored and reviewed regularly (at least every three years).

10.1.Scope of collecting

Orkney Archive will consider any collection of archival material, ephemera or illustrations that document the topography, ownership, occupation and use of land in Orkney, or records or illustrates aspects of human activity in the islands.

The geographical boundaries of this policy are the administrative area governed by Orkney Islands Council, encompassing an archipelago of around seventy islands, of which twenty are continually populated.

Records relating to other areas may be accepted on the grounds of preserving archival integrity if they are received with material relating primarily to Orkney. However, the service shall have discretion, with the consent of the depositor, to split group collections of archives and transfer material to other repositories where this course of action is deemed to be appropriate and in the best interests of researchers.

There are four types of deposit:

- Official deposit – deposited from the Local Authority or other public body.
- Gift – the depositor is authorised and wishes to transfer title to the Archive.
- Long Term Loan – the depositor wishes to provide researchers with access to items while retaining ownership.
- Temporary loan – the depositor agrees to a short-term loan to allow the material to be copied and for the copies to then be made available to researchers.

There are no date limits on material eligible for collection provided that they are no longer in use.

Orkney Archive will accept records in all media, except for moving film, for which the archive has no storage or viewing facilities, and three-dimensional artefacts, which would usually be offered to Orkney Museum.

In the opinion of the archivist(s) evaluating them, all records must be of sufficient quality and condition for permanent preservation.

Orkney Archive collect microfilm copies and facsimiles of documents held elsewhere where it is considered that they will support the archival collections and maintain a select library of printed material to support research relevant to the Northern Isles (Orkney and Shetland).

10.2. Where the collections come from

Internal transfer

The core of the collection comes from the records of Orkney Islands Council and its predecessor bodies. Records are transferred to the archive at the end of their retention period if they are marked as having, or having the potential for, long-term historical or legal value, as advised by the Council's Retention and Disposal Schedule, which has been developed using the Scottish Council for Archives Records Retention Schedule model (SCARRS) as its basis. The Schedules are endorsed by each Head of Service (as appropriate) and apply to both paper and electronic records.

Charge and Superintendence

Orkney Archive is approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland as a place of deposit for records under their charge and superintendence. These include records of Customs and Excise, Justice of the Peace Court, and Orkney Sheriff Court. While Presbytery records are normally held under charge and supervision arrangements, Orkney has a separate agreement with the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland whereby Orkney Presbytery records are permitted to remain in the County. However, in recognition of responsibilities to national archiving aims, Orkney Archive will inform the National Records of Scotland of new acquisitions of such records. Most transfers of Presbytery records are prompted by changes of circumstances such as staff changes or lack of storage space.

External transfer

The archive accepts private collections from businesses, social groups, charities, families and individuals. Most transfers from external bodies are prompted by changes of circumstance such as staff changes, accommodation moves or lack of storage space. Limitations of space and other resources within the archive prevent a more proactive approach to transfers.

Orkney Archive seeks to maintain strong relationships with our depositors, and they are encouraged to provide finding aids where bulk is likely to render the records inaccessible until processed by archive staff.

In certain circumstances, Orkney Archive will acquire collections by purchase, either by obtaining external funding or internally where the acquisition is deemed to be an appropriate investment of public funds. Acquisitions requiring significant funding will be subject to committee approval.

10.3.Appraisal and disposal

When materials are received, they are appraised to determine their suitability for preservation by the service. The Archivists will have authority to weed records during processing and to return or destroy items identified as not appropriate for permanent preservation. This will be made clear to the owner at the time of deposit, and they will be consulted before any records are destroyed.

In some instances, the suitability of materials previously acquired by Orkney Archive may come into question. Should this occur, they will be subject to an appraisal procedure and, where considered appropriate, removed from our collections.

We are committed to making use of experience in the appraisal of particular classes of archives or types of records. Professional judgement will nevertheless be the ultimate deciding factor in all appraisals.

10.4.What Orkney Archive does not collect

In some instances, materials offered to the archive will be refused. This may be because the archive lacks the correct facilities for long-term preservation, because it is not considered a suitable use of public resources or because the collection is better suited to another collecting institution.

These considerations mean that the service will usually not accept the following types of material:

- Three dimensional objects.
- Document containers such as chests or picture frames.
- Duplicates of documents already held.
- Digital material in unsupported formats or on prohibited media.
- Moving images on film.

Should a deposit be refused, the owners are advised of suitable repositories to approach, how to preserve documents themselves, or how to convert digital material into supported formats and approved transfer methods.

10.5.What Orkney Archive seeks to collect in the future

To ensure that the best use is made of the limited space and resources available to the archive, existing collections and recent acquisitions are regularly assessed to determine their strengths and weaknesses in relation to documenting as broad a view of life in Orkney as possible. Orkney Archive seeks to maintain its strengths and acquire records for areas considered under-represented.

Our ongoing priorities for acquisitions are:

- Local Authority archives.
- Orkney church records.
- Sheriff Court records.
- Family and estate archives.

- Records of land management and agriculture.
- School records.

The following areas have been identified as under-represented, and Orkney Archive will therefore seek to address the lack of material in the following categories:

- Records reflecting LGBTQIA+ lives as well as cultural and racial diversity in Orkney.
- Records relating to the renewable energies sector and the world leading research Orkney is involved in.
- Records depicting life on the outer isles.
- Collections showing local crafting and traditional activities in Orkney.
- Collections, both sound and physical/electronic, preserving Orkney dialect.

11. Access Policy

The Access Policy aims to provide a measurable statement which informs users and researchers of what to expect from the archive service in terms of accessibility. It gives details of access arrangements for the Orkney Library & Archive building and specifically for the archive service as well as providing a description of Orkney Archive's services and facilities.

11.1. Onsite access to archive services

Orkney Library & Archive provides public access to library, archive and local studies facilities through its premises at 44 Junction Road, Kirkwall.

The Orkney Library & Archive building in Kirkwall is a two-storey building with the archive service situated on the first floor. The public entrance provides ramps for disabled users and a lift is available for access to the upper floor. Disabled toilets are available on both floors and baby changing facilities are available on the ground floor. Both the library and archive reception desks provide access to an induction loop for users with hearing loss.

In Orkney Archive you can access records that document Orkney's diverse history and culture from the 15th Century to the present day and include archives of estate management, people, organisations and businesses throughout Orkney, reflecting the changing landscape, communities and economy over the past five centuries. You can also access the local studies collection of printed and published material.

Original records will be accessible at the discretion of archive staff. Orkney Archive is committed to providing access whenever possible but reasons for not providing it include current legislation, such as Data Protection restrictions, or the physical condition of the archive. Researchers will be provided with handling aids, such as gloves, book cradles and weights to protect the archives. They will also be required to adhere to archive searchroom rules, which are displayed throughout the archive.

The archive is committed to providing access to archives through an internal programme of exhibitions and displays, within the archive and at other locations within the building.

Exhibitions are created mainly using surrogates. Any original archive materials used are displayed within secure display cases and for a limited time.

11.2.Admission to the archive

Users can access the archive and local studies collections free of charge. Membership of the library service is not required if using reference materials, meeting rooms, study areas, reading newspapers and magazines or visiting the archive.

Visitors wishing to come into the archives are encouraged to book in advance.

When entering the Archive searchroom, visitors are asked to fill in a Visitor Registration form for each day of their visit and store any large bags and coats in the lockers provided.

Archive staff are available to help visitors with enquiries about the archive and local history collections, and assist with specific enquiries, such as family history research.

Orkney Archive is open every day, excluding Wednesdays and Sundays, a total of 38 hours per week.

Last admission to the archive is 15 minutes prior to the published closing time to allow staff time to return all archives to secure storage areas and carry out other closing tasks.

Opening hours are advertised on Orkney Library & Archive's website and in other relevant publications and websites.

11.3.Access facilities

Orkney Archive aims to provide physically accessible space throughout our facilities for everyone who wants to visit us. Accessible facilities include:

- Hearing Induction loop at archive reception desk.
- Public access computer, with adjustable internet browser accessibility settings.
- Microfilm readers which have magnifier and zoom controls to view an enlarged area of the displayed image.
- Digital microfilm scanners which allow users to zoom in and highlight areas on the screen.
- Height-adjustable chairs.
- Magnifying glasses and sheet magnifiers available to borrow in the archive searchroom.
- Accessible toilet facilities.
- Four disabled parking spaces available outside the building.

11.4.Obtaining copies from the archive collections

Orkney Archive is committed to making its collections available to the widest possible audience, whilst balancing this with the responsibility of preserving them for future generations and adhering to copyright legislation. Staff provide a range of copying services for the purposes of private study or research, and users are required to complete a copyright declaration form to that effect. Copying services provided are; scanning of archives or

microfilm and transfer of copyright cleared audio recordings on to CD or into MP3 format. Information about the charges for these services can be found on the Orkney Library & Archive website. For a small fee, Archive users are also permitted to take photographs of documents with their own photographic equipment, when it is permitted by archive staff and copyright law and, is for the purpose of private study or research.

Remote users can also place orders for copies of items held in the archive and local studies collections for the purpose of private study or research, which can be supplied either electronically or as printouts.

All copying is at the discretion of staff and there are some items that cannot be copied for a variety of reasons, such as legal restrictions and/or the size or condition of the material.

11.5. Online resources

Orkney Archive recognises the importance of access to information online and also digital access to items in the collections to ensure wider access generally. The following are available:

- Online catalogue of Orkney Archive and Local Studies collections which includes information and low-resolution images from the Photographic Archive. The catalogue is regularly updated with new material. As it is held jointly with the Orkney Museum, the catalogue also contains information and images of the objects in their collections.
- Online catalogue of Orkney Library collections, which includes the local history collection. The catalogue is regularly updated with new material.
- Orkney Archive contributes catalogue information to national online catalogue Your Scottish Archives.
- The Archive provides access to a number of finding aids on the Orkney Library & Archive website, including guides to the records held by the archive, gifts and deposits, the George Mackay Brown collection and an index to the Orkney Register of Sea Fishing Boats 1852 - 1968.
- The Archive also provides online information about its photographic collections, including galleries of selected images.
- Orkney Library & Archive recognises the value of social media to increase access. The library Facebook, Instagram, X and Bluesky accounts, as well as the Archive Blog, are used to highlight events and increase access to the collections through interpretation. They also provide an important tool for communication with users.
- We provide access to a range of electronic resources, including online bibliographic and image databases, electronic dictionaries and encyclopaedias. They are all available free of charge to library members and many of them can be accessed from home or outside of the building.
- Free public Wi-Fi is available to all visitors.

11.6. Enquiries

Orkney Archive is committed to helping members of the public who have enquiries about the collections. These may be answered face-to-face or by telephone, letter or email. The archive

receives enquiries from all over the world covering a wide range of different subjects. All enquiries are acknowledged as soon as possible after receipt and recorded in the enquiries database.

Due to staffing levels and the volume and complexity of some enquiries, full answers can take some time, but all enquires will be responded to within 20 working days.

11.7. Monitoring and evaluation

Orkney Archive ensures it is meeting its targets and the needs of its users in the following ways:

- Monitoring use – number of visitors and number of items retrieved from archive strongrooms, number of remote enquiries and types of material used.
- Cataloguing material and establishing cataloguing priorities based on requests, projects and targets.
- Surveys e.g. customer questionnaires and annual ARA visitor surveys
- Evaluation of user comment cards as well as comments received on social media or by other methods.
- Monitoring the role of the collections for internal and external research (for exhibitions, publications, events and activities).

11.8. Staffing

Orkney Archive staff are key to providing access to archive services. Their commitment, knowledge and expertise are vital to ensure visitors get the most out of their visit and archive resources. The staff are trained to deal with a wide variety of enquiries and assist with access and interpretation of the collections whenever possible.

12. Conclusions

The suite of policies and procedures detailed above provide a structure on which to continue to build on the strengths of Orkney Archive and demonstrate to stakeholders that the archive service is managed responsibly.

It is recognised that there will be financial and other constraints on all OIC services during the period of this scheme, but that Orkney Archive provides services that have wide ranging benefits to all Orkney community members, as well as those further afield, and provides value for money.

Key to raising awareness of collections held by Orkney Archive is to continue adding collection descriptions to the online archive catalogues, as well as partaking in outreach activities and further developing work in how people access the collections.

Digital preservation continues to be a key priority, as well as ensuring the long-term storage needs of the collections are met and the collections care elements of this scheme are adhered to.

Orkney Archive continues to strive to improve and meet best practice in all areas, with the staff committed to providing the best service possible.

Education, Communities and Housing Risk Register – November 2025

Strategic Risks

| Cluster. | Risk Number. | Owner. |
|------------|--------------|---|
| Financial. | 1. | Director of Education, Communities and Housing. |
| Staffing. | 2. | Director of Education, Communities and Housing. |

Operational Risks

| Cluster. | Risk Number. | Owner. |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Financial. | 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 | Director of Education, Communities and Housing. |
| Staffing. | 2, 3, 7. | Director of Education, Communities and Housing. |
| Governance | 12. | Director of Education, Communities and Housing. |
| Technological | 13. | Director of Education, Communities and Housing. |

Risk Matrix

| | | | IMPACT | | | | |
|------------|----|-----------------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|---------|
| | | | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. |
| | | | Insignificant | Minor | Moderate | Major | Severe |
| LIKELIHOOD | 5. | Almost Certain. | Medium | Medium | High | High | Extreme |
| | 4. | Likely. | Medium | Medium | Medium | High | Extreme |
| | 3. | Possible. | Low | Medium | Medium | High | High |
| | 2. | Unlikely. | Low | Low | Medium | Medium | High |
| | 1. | Rare. | Low | Low | Low | Medium | High |

Risk Title: 01 – Financial Pressures.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 5 | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20 | Target Risk Score. | 15. |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|--|-----------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| <p>It is predicted that ongoing savings will be required each year. The next three years require significant savings for ECH.</p> <p>Level of funding for the service is insufficient to maintain the existing standard and range of provision.</p> <p>Lateness of award and lack of certainty around some Scottish Government funding leads to additional pressure on services.</p> <p>Inflation and pay settlements, combined with a standstill budget and/or budget reduction further reduces the capacity to maintain a safe standard of provision.</p> <p>Impact of Council's strategic financial plan exacerbates the vulnerability.</p> | Reduced resource base | <p>Decrease in the quality and resilience of the services provided by ECH (as assessed by inspectors and regulators).</p> <p>Reduction in service offer.</p> <p>Disinvestment in professional learning offer for staff teams.</p> <p>Possible reduction to progress, achievement and attainment of learners.</p> <p>Spiral of decline as increasing time and resource spent on accounting for service failures and complaints, and on making cases for discrete resource allocations in-year.</p> <p>Additional strain placed on staff many of whom already work significant additional hours that they are not paid for.</p> | Tolerate. | <p>Ensure 'fair' distribution of available funding to mitigate differential impacts across the service.</p> <p>Increase budget management and scrutiny to identify both significant and marginal efficiencies.</p> <p>Manage ad-hoc grants to minimise unplanned commitments 'in kind'.</p> <p>Manage vacancies where possible to optimise in-year savings.</p> <p>Explore and exploit opportunities for sharing costs and/or community funding.</p> <p>Oversee budget management.</p> <p>Continue work to identify additional efficient/different</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|--|----------|---|----------|---|
| <p>Some aspects of service provision are reliant on income through income generation, donation or sales which cannot be entirely guaranteed.</p> <p>The funding regime for housing development in Scotland leads to difficulties in making development achievable, given the range of pressures on a small Housing Revenue Account. This, in turn, is impacting on affordable housing provision.</p> <p>Additional changes to welfare benefits following the further rollout of Universal Credit and existing impact of original roll out (from September 2018) plus the legacy of the pandemic has resulted in increased rent arrears.</p> <p>Reduction or loss of key services.</p> <p>Difficulty with covering costs of casual / relief staff. Difficulty with backfilling maternity leave etc.</p> | | <p>Insufficient houses and higher levels of disrepair.</p> <p>Reputational impact; Community impact; Impact on staff morale; Increase in difficulty with recruitment and retention; Potential staff losses either through ill health or choosing to leave the Council; Economic impact if people leave the islands; potential limitations on housing development (unless additional provider(s) can be sourced); Increased homelessness; Additional housing pressure; Sustainability threatened in fragile communities; Increased rents; Failure to meet SHNZS (Social Housing Net Zero Standard); Reduced staff wellbeing and increased staff illness; Potential impact on vulnerable groups within society.</p> <p>Increased requests for additional funding from third sector agencies who receive funding and who deliver vitally important services for us at a cost below that of internal delivery.</p> <p>Reduction in income due to cost of living crisis.</p> | | <p>ways of working/ service redesign to release budget savings and increase income generation.</p> <p>HRA Business Plan developed – close monitoring to continue.</p> <p>Working with alternative housing providers who may be prepared to build in Orkney.</p> <p>Reduction of service provision in some areas / loss of services to maintain core activities.</p> <p>Work with Scottish Government to ensure more efficient and effective ways of working through multi-year funding.</p> <p>Request island impact assessment to ensure island circumstances are considered in funding allocations.</p> |

Risk Title: 02 – Recruitment / Retention Challenges.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 5. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20. | Target Risk Score. | 16. |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|---|-----------------|--|
| <p>Some posts remain very difficult to fill. For example, Housing staff, Tenant Participation Staff, Sheltered Housing staff, Papdale Halls, School Catering Staff (particularly cooks), Admin staff, ELC practitioner, Employability Keyworkers, some teaching posts, Staff on insecure contracts eg employability staff and Management staff. Recruitment and retention failures result in un-filled posts.</p> <p>Some posts are subject to annual or specific funding from Scottish Government which are subject to a lack of certainty which limits post security and may potentially limit ability to be flexible with use of staffing resource (Employability, Cultural Services, Housing Support for Refugees etc).</p> | <p>Key posts still remain unfilled following another recruitment drive, casual and relief staff unavailable and often unaffordable.</p> | <p>Reduction in service offer, including not offering undersubscribed courses. Inability to meet the Safe Staffing Standard and / or operational standards.</p> <p>Capacity to deliver specific curriculum subjects compromised.</p> <p>Service failure with respect to progress, achievement, and attainment of learners.</p> <p>Lower quality of service as assessed by inspectors and regulators.</p> <p>Increase in workload and pressure on existing teams.</p> <p>Capacity to deliver specialist housing services is compromised.</p> <p>Capacity to deliver full school meals offering across all schools is compromised.</p> <p>Reduction in performance standards across all Services; Reputational impact; Community impact; Concern about closures; Impact on staff morale; Economic impact if people leave the islands.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>Support access routes (initial training, career change programmes).</p> <p>Provide support to unqualified staff to gain relevant qualifications.</p> <p>Support for 'grow your own' staff / succession planning and mentoring. This may include incentives to encourage staff retention.</p> <p>Use recruitment processes to ensure applicants are aware of opportunities and (if unsuccessful) are open to continue to seek employment with the Council.</p> <p>Continue to use appropriate alternatives including the use of agency staff (where affordable).</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|----------|--|----------|---|
| <p>Vacancies remain unfilled for an extended period.</p> <p>Limited access to appropriately qualified workforce, hampers recruitment, including the availability of casual and relief staff.</p> <p>Age profile of staff and singleton posts in some areas leads to increasing risk of loss through retirement, sickness absence etc. Vulnerability due to certain health conditions including mental health. Difficulty with backfilling maternity and ensuring staffing levels required for services registered with Care Inspectorate / Safe Staffing / Operational Standards.</p> <p>Turnover rate rises to unsustainable levels.</p> | | <p>Negative impact upon staff wellbeing and sickness rates.</p> <p>Increased challenge in recruiting quality candidates.</p> | | <p>Seek to challenge position with insecure Scottish Government funding.</p> <p>Essential workers housing strategy to assist with recruitment / retention of essential workers.</p> |

Risk Title: 03 – Unmet Additional Support Needs.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 5 | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20. | Target Risk Score. | 16. |
|--------------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|---|-----------------|--|
| <p>Demand across service areas is out with capacity to deliver.</p> <p>Impact of available additional support is limited as it is shared across too many needs.</p> | <p>Increased demand for additional support combined with an increase in the indicators of unmet need.</p> | <p>Appropriate additional support (approaches to learning and teaching, support from personnel, and provision of resources) to meet the needs of learners / residents is not available.</p> <p>Service fails to meet statutory duties.</p> <p>Facilities with or without support insufficient to meet needs and demands.</p> <p>Level of dissatisfaction increases.</p> <p>Number of complaints increases.</p> <p>Resources diverted to manage complaints and if necessary, legal challenge, which exacerbates the vulnerability.</p> <p>Increase in difficulty with recruitment and retention.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>Improve and increase efficient and effective use of available resources.</p> <p>Improve and increase staff confidence and capability.</p> <p>Explore and exploit opportunities for collaborative work within and across service and agencies to deliver preventative and early intervention service models.</p> <p>Explore and exploit budget and funding options to increase sufficiency and capacity. £1.5 million is subsidising free school meals and music tuition. If ECH had the funding this could be reallocated to ASL and Inclusion.</p> <p>Explore staffing needs on a regular basis.</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|----------------|----------|--|----------|---------------------|
| | | <p>Reduction in staff morale.</p> <p>Increase in staff sickness absence levels.</p> <p>Increased likelihood of legal challenge for additional support needs unmet.</p> <p>Likelihood of increased costs for management and outcome of legal challenge.</p> | | |

Risk Title: 04 – IT Systems Capability.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Likelihood. | 4. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 16. | Target Risk Score. | 12. |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|--|---|---|-----------------|--|
| <p>IT systems insufficiently developed to meet contemporary needs within Service</p> <p>Insufficient wifi within Council buildings limits the flexible and efficient use of staff and buildings</p> <p>Access to modern apps, services, etc are limited, can't access and communicate with service users in expected ways, future provision of AI (or risks of, not planned for)</p> <p>Manual systems required to be developed or maintained, resulting in unnecessary/inappropriate use of resources.</p> <p>Lack of dedicated resource (both staffing and financial) for systems administration and development</p> | <p>The Council fails to maintain and develop information management systems that support the current and future needs of the Service appropriately.</p> <p>Education, Communities and Housing management information systems fail to support the Service appropriately.</p> | <p>Inability to achieve an acceptable level of efficiency (as might be achievable in organisations with more appropriate IT systems).</p> <p>Needs of service users, children/young people/residents, parents/ carers, staff, other stakeholders are not efficiently met.</p> <p>Service ability to provide external bodies with the information they require is impaired.</p> <p>Manual/alternative approaches are costly (diverting resources and time away for core activity) and potentially less 'safe'.</p> <p>Long lead in times for implementing new IT packages means that efficiencies are not realised or become redundant.</p> <p>Inability to communicate with service users to meet expectations of modern service users.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>Establish a systems review and development roadmap.</p> <p>With colleagues across the Council, explore the possibility of taking a project development approach to improvement.</p> <p>Continue to review effectiveness of SEEMIS and Northgate undertake upgrades as a planned process (includes implementation of direct debit).</p> <p>Concerto continues to be expanded to include all asset management requirements. Ensure provision for homelessness and advice monitoring is developed.</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|----------------|----------|---|----------|---------------------|
| | | <p>Limit ability for income generation / collection eg through online shop provision / income collection apps etc (staffing is also a limitation).</p> <p>Inability to work with partner agencies in a modern manner eg online housing application / common housing register.</p> | | |

Risk Title: 05 – Expansion of Childcare Provision/Provision of Non-statutory Provision.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|---|-------------|-------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|---|
| Likelihood. | 4 | Impact. | 3 | RAG. | Amber | Current Risk Score. | 12 | Target Risk Score. | 9 |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|--|--|---|-----------------|---|
| <p>Leadership capacity.</p> <p>Insufficient number of high quality and / or qualified practitioners.</p> <p>Insufficient budget to meet emerging demands of Scottish Government.</p> | <p>Failure to recruit high quality candidates.</p> <p>Legislation/policy insufficiently funded for the local context (e.g. discretionary deferrals, nursery milk and snack).</p> | <p>Lack of leadership in settings.</p> <p>Vacant posts and repeated recruitment.</p> <p>Impact on quality and outcomes for children.</p> <p>Failure to meet National Standard.</p> <p>Budget overspend.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>Refocus the Leadership pathway to develop leadership capacity within the workforce.</p> <p>Support practitioners to gain relevant qualifications to meet the requirements of their role, including SVQs and degrees</p> <p>Continuation of head teacher training to support development of pedagogical leadership capacity.</p> <p>Continue to work with UHI Orkney to review the availability and quality of courses on offer.</p> <p>Lobby Scottish Government so that they take account of the unique island challenges relating to new policies.</p> <p>Ensure Orkney attendance at national meetings / forums to ensure the remote and rural voice is heard.</p> <p>Ensure Elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team are well briefed prior to national meetings.</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|--|--|-----------------|--|
| Financial model for 0-3 service becomes unviable. | Inability to appoint adequate numbers of practitioners to ensure maximum ratio and maximum income. | Greater than acceptable losses. Service failure in workplaces due to lack of childcare available. | | Carefully monitor occupancy, staff ratios and fee payment to ensure the setting is running as efficiently as possible. |

Risk Title: 06 – Cost of living crisis.

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| Likelihood. | 4. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Yellow. | Current Risk Score. | 16. | Target Risk Score. | 12. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| <p>Cost of living crisis is likely to exacerbate inability to pay housing costs. Impact of welfare reform and further changes to welfare benefits continue to impact on ability to pay rent and this has been exacerbated by the initial rollout of Universal Credit (2018/19), Tax Credit transition to Universal Credit (rollout to all remaining groups) during 2024 and the impact of the pandemic.</p> <p>Negative impact on those we work to support across ECH.</p> | <p>Reduced income for HRA, increased provision for bad debt, increased homelessness.</p> <p>Increased demand for service and inability to meet need.</p> | <p>More rent arrears; Increased impact on HRA; Increased homelessness; Loss of staff; Failure to meet SHNZS (Social Housing Net Zero Standard); Damage to reputation re arrears figures (previously were very good); Negative impact on rural/isles area.</p> <p>Reduced Income levels from OIC (rents) and the general public.</p> <p>Rise in children living in poverty.</p> <p>Inability to meet the required needs of communities leading to increasing vulnerability and exacerbating future demand for services.</p> <p>Poor learning and poor school experience and need for additional services in future.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>HRA Business Plan to continue to be monitored.</p> <p>Issues of affordability are considered in respect of potential impact of annual rental increase. Monitor situation and continue to pursue rent arrears and also to try and prevent other households from falling into arrears by encouraging payment in advance and seeking to identify vulnerable households at as early a stage as possible.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Cost-of-Living Taskforce and Strategic Children's Services Planning Group.</p> <p>Issues of affordability are considered in respect of potential projects and costs.</p> <p>Continue to increase awareness of free school meal criteria and awareness of anonymity. New</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| Meal provision not chosen by particular groups such as Primary 6 and 7 and including S3 due to cost. | Meal of lower nutritional value chosen instead. | | | ordering system will ensure complete anonymity between those who pay and those who don't. Information re system being disseminated to all users through user groups etc. Includes provision of nutritional advice, recipes etc. |

Risk Title: 07 – Tertiary Sector (UHI Orkney) Funding and Business Plan.

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| Likelihood. | 4 | Impact. | 4 | RAG. | Amber | Current Risk Score. | 16 | Target Risk Score. | 12. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|--|-----------------|---|
| UHI Orkney fails to achieve zero budget. UHI Orkney requires financial support from OIC to continue to operate in a sustainable manner Curriculum and/or staffing cuts are required to balance budget | Flat/capped funding from Scottish Funding Council in Further Education (FE) sector. Challenges in recruiting sufficient Higher Education (HE) students and subsequent shortfall in activity-based funding. Demand for student support services significantly above budgeted provision and rising. Signing up to the National Recognition and Procedure Agreement for Scotland's Colleges. Staff costs at 70% of budget; Distant Islands Allowance not funded by Scottish Funding Council. | UHI Orkney cannot manage within its resources. Falling student satisfaction Student Support expenditure above budget and/or needs go unmet meaning vulnerable students are placed at risk, increased risk in course delivery and practice, additional pressure and strain on teaching staff or refusal/inability to accommodate some students. Reputational damage, increased complaints against the College and legal challenge. Staff exposed to unnecessary risk or harm. Increase in staff absence or sickness. Reduction in staff morale. Lack of skills, experience and capacity (link to Risk 2, Recruitment and Retention Challenges). Growth potential lost. Reduced curriculum leads to skill shortages in the local economy and restricted economic growth for Orkney. | Treat. | Advance from loans fund approved to balance 2024/25 budget and to set balanced budget for 2025/26 Officer Task Force instigated, reporting to ELH Committee. Improve and reinforce budget monitoring. Work with budget holders collaboratively to understand the budget as a whole and take collective responsibility for balancing income and expenditure across the college Ensure appropriate budget profiling and timely invoicing to support budget monitoring. Implement common course viability assessments ensuring all teaching staff resource is directed to income-generating activity, or less viable but locally significant delivery is offset by income elsewhere. Increase corporate training via UHI Orkney for OIC staff training. Work with Island Colleagues to request unions to push for |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| | <p>Rising costs (see Risk 2 which is particularly significant).</p> <p>Expenditure on staff costs insufficiently offset by grant, fee, credit and commercial income.</p> <p>Insufficient funding to sustain aging property assets, which are self-financed by UHI Orkney.</p> | | | <p>Distant Islands Allowance to be incorporated into national pay bargaining for academic staff.</p> <p>Capitalise on the rebranding and strongly promote the strengths of UHI Orkney.</p> |

Risk Title: 08 – Significant demand for emergency accommodation and general needs housing.

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| Likelihood. | 5. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 20. | Target Risk Score. | 16. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| <p>Inability to meet demand for emergency accommodation (double the number of households are in temporary accommodation than was the case pre-pandemic).</p> <p>Increased housing pressure locally impacting on provision of housing irrespective of tenure.</p> | <p>Current lack of capacity and increased demands due to national policy of rapid rehousing, pressure for housing for essential workers etc.</p> <p>Housing pressures generally mean fewer people can meet their own housing need through private sector tenancies etc.</p> | <p>Significant level of homelessness; Increased risk of OIC being unable to meet its statutory requirements in respect of homelessness; Breach of unsuitable accommodation order; Out of Orkney placements; Substantial unbudgeted increased financial pressure on OIC; Additional demands placed on smaller staffing base (sourcing accommodation and supporting households in transition); Bad publicity; Recruitment issues exacerbated by housing position.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>Keep demand under review.</p> <p>Further review of Temporary Accommodation provision through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Likely to require additional temporary accommodation to be sourced which is contrary to the national policy position.</p> <p>Delivery of local housing strategy (including homelessness and essential workers) and Strategic Housing Investment Plan etc.</p> |

Risk Title: 09 – Failure to meet Social Housing Net Zero Standard (following publication of Scottish Government guidance).

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| Likelihood. | 3. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 12. | Target Risk Score. | 9. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| <p>Substantially reliant on external funding. Risk that funding is not available.</p> <p>Budgetary position within Housing Revenue Account Business Plan is insufficient due to increases in costs.</p> | <p>Some houses will be below the Social Housing Net Zero Standard.</p> | <p>Government criticism for failing the standard. Failure of Scottish Housing Quality Standard and failure to meet requirements of Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> <p>May have sanctions imposed; Negative impact on inspection results; Adverse effect on tenants; Potential for properties to be damaged as a result of damp, mould, inability to heat etc, Bad publicity leading to increased complaints. Increase in fuel poverty.</p> | <p>Treat.</p> | <p>Review progress on a regular basis (following confirmation of Scottish Government guidance and confirmation of date). Develop detailed plan to ensure properties meet the Social Housing Net Zero Standard within the designated timescale.</p> <p>Monitor through Annual Return against the Charter in line with requirements of Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> |

Risk Title: 10 – Buildings and Facilities.

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| Likelihood. | 4. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 16. | Target Risk Score. | 12. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|---|---|--|------------------|--|
| <p>Council's financial position leads to reduction of spend on repairs and improvements and gradual decline in quality of buildings</p> <p>Buildings will not meet accessibility / equality requirements.</p> <p>Lack of office accommodation and service user space.</p> | <p>Quality of buildings may decline, and condition / suitability does not meet the standard expected.</p> <p>Quality of internal structures become unsuitable for current use eg food preparation.</p> <p>Buildings lack flexibility to meet needs around accessibility and equality requirements.</p> <p>Insufficient desk and office space for employees and no space to undertake the statutory work of CLD.</p> | <p>Reduced spend on repairs and maintenance leading to poorer quality buildings; safety of buildings declines; historic buildings will be lost without investment; lack of investment in catering equipment will lead to failure to deliver / breach of legislative requirements; no maintenance provision will lead to loss of availability of play areas; impact on staffing requirements due to change to national practice by key agencies including Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>Failure to meet legislative requirements / service user needs.</p> <p>Poor working environment which debilitates the prospects and outcomes of staff.</p> <p>Not meeting the occupational standards and health and safety requirements for office space.</p> | <p>Tolerate.</p> | <p>Review progress on an annual basis.</p> <p>Work with partners in NSI to make best use of limited resources. Investigate options for additional income / funding to assist with preservation of some buildings / ensure risk assessments are regularly updated / PPE provided / training provided.</p> <p>Consider suitability of existing buildings and ability to source additional funding.</p> <p>Identify additional office space within OIC building.</p> <p>Secure an external functional space for staff and service users</p> |

| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
|--|--------------------|---|----------|---|
| Inability to repair and replace essential equipment. | Equipment failure. | No space for working with user groups and vulnerable people keen to benefit from our services support. Inability to maintain and run services. | | to utilise, especially with the loss of The Learning Link building in 2025 due to financial reductions. Identify and cost a rolling programme for replacement. |

Risk Title: 12 – Business Continuity.

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| Likelihood. | 3. | Impact. | 4. | RAG. | Amber. | Current Risk Score. | 12. | Target Risk Score. | 9. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| An event or incident leads to the inability of teams to carry out their core functions. | Pandemic, IT incident, power outage, fire, flood etc | Backlog of work and failing to meet deadlines. Loss of critical documents. | Treat. | Directorate ensures that service business continuity plans in place. Remote working possible at home on laptops. Ensuring documents are stored in the cloud using the Microsoft 365 stack (OneDrive, Teams and SharePoint). |

Risk Title: 13 – Development of Systems and Processes.

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| Likelihood. | 3. | Impact. | 3. | RAG. | Yellow. | Current Risk Score. | 9. | Target Risk Score. | 8. |
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| Vulnerability. | Trigger. | Consequences. | Options. | Mitigating Actions. |
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| Due to other work being prioritised by services - failure to support services to progress system developments and lack of progress on strategic outcomes. | Services unable to lead system developments due to volume of attention that day to day operational tasks require. Unable to progress systems development without service lead and project management. | Strategic priorities not delivered. Cost savings not identified and achieved. Negative impact on service delivery. Reduced staff morale. | Treat | Improvement Support team to ensure project management support and guidance in place. Mechanisms identified for escalating issues in project delivery at an early stage. Expectations managed and good communication on timescales and clarity of roles. |