

<b>Meeting:</b>	NHS Grampian Board
<b>Meeting date:</b>	09 October 2025
<b>Item Number:</b>	11
<b>Title:</b>	Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024/25
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Professor Shantini Paranjothy, Director of Public Health
<b>Report Author:</b>	Professor Shantini Paranjothy, Director of Public Health

## 1 **Purpose and recommendations**

This paper is presented to the Board for endorsement

### **Recommendations**

- **Endorsement** – The Board is requested to note the content of the report and the next steps following the publication of the report, specifically that the report will be used to inform the development of joint plans for Children's Services, Child Poverty, Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray, and a refreshed child health strategy for Grampian to be published in summer 2026.
- **Future reporting** – the Board is asked to note that joint plans for Children's Services, Child Poverty, Corporate Parenting and the refreshed Child Health Strategy will come to the Board for endorsement from summer 2026, when they are finalised.


### **This report relates to:**

- Other – It is usual practice for the Director of Public Health to produce an annual report. This year the focus is on children.

### **This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):**

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

### **This subject matter of this report is relevant to the mitigation of the following strategic risks (further information provided in the Risk section below):**

-  Worsening health in Grampian particularly in those who experience multiple disadvantages

## **2 Report summary**

### **2.1 Situation**

It is usual practice for the Director of Public Health (DPH) to provide an annual report. The DPH annual report for this year is focused on children and is presented to the Board for endorsement, along with an accompanying appendix that provides an updated overview of population health data for Grampian.

A short presentation about the Annual DPH Report on Children & Young People can be accessed here <https://youtu.be/yFfNKjiH5hQ>

### **2.2 Background**

The focus on children in year's DPH annual report is in recognition of the importance of the early years on health and wellbeing during the life course. Children's experiences during this formative time are a key driver of inequalities in population health outcomes.

The report has been informed by engagement with children and young people across Grampian. Community engagement groups across Grampian were contacted with a view to organise focus groups with young people. Due to a number of already scheduled events in Aberdeen City and Moray, focus groups were held in four locations across Aberdeenshire. Participants (aged 12 – 17) were asked about how they feel now, what they would like to keep and what they needed for the future. In addition to these engagement activities in Aberdeenshire, this report incorporates insights from recent consultations with children and young people in Aberdeen City and Moray. These conversations have collectively helped us to examine the four threats to population health that were described in previous DPH reports through the lens of children.

The Children's Services Board in Aberdeen City, Getting it Right for every Child (GIRFEC) Strategic Group in Aberdeenshire and GIRFEC Leadership Group in Moray were also engaged in to inform the production of this report.

### **2.3 Assessment**

Overall, children in the most deprived communities face significantly shorter lives than those in the least deprived. In Aberdeen City, boys born in the most deprived areas can expect to live 9 years less than their peers in the least deprived areas; for girls the gap is over 8 years. Aberdeenshire tells a similar story, with a 6.5 year gap for males and a 5 year gap for females. Even in Moray, where outcomes are slightly better overall, boys in the most deprived area still live 6 years less than those in the least deprived areas. This difference is 2 years for girls.

The report covers four themes - growing up in poverty, inequalities, mental health and neurodiversity, and climate change. Under each theme, we present what children and young people said, contextual information relevant to the theme including data and examples of work that is underway to address these issues.

Whilst there are many examples of good practice highlighting where we are making a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of children, there are also areas where inequities persist and further action is needed. These include breastfeeding, maintaining healthy weight, oral health, HPV vaccinations and teenage pregnancies.

#### **Next steps following publication of this report:**

Through our work with Health and Social Care Partnerships and our contribution to Community Planning Partnerships we have the opportunity to ensure a whole system, joined up approach to reduce inequities and provide the best quality of services for children and families. The following sets out the actions that will be taken to progress this.

1. Within NHS Grampian we will progress work to look at how we can 'poverty proof' our health and care services, using the learning from the Health Equity Learning Project that is highlighted in the report.
2. We will develop an innovative whole-system pathway to provide early identification, assessment, and tailored support for children with neuro-developmental differences. The developmental aspects of this work will be supported by NHS Grampian Charity funding, with a clear plan embedding this into usual practice to ensure the change is sustained in the longer term.
3. We will continue to progress ongoing work to address inequities in breast feeding drop-off rates, oral health, HPV vaccinations and teenage pregnancies, and supporting children to maintain healthy weight.
4. The Child Health Strategy for Grampian will be reviewed and refreshed for publication during summer 2026.
5. The Public Health team will continue to work with partners in the Integrated Children's Services Board in Aberdeen City, and the Getting It Right for Every Child Strategic and Leadership Groups in Aberdeenshire and Moray respectively to develop and use comprehensive population based needs assessments for children and young people in each area to inform the development of plans for Children's Services, Child Poverty, Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights. These will also be published during summer 2026.

#### **Plan for dissemination of the report:**

This report will be disseminated through the Chief Officers for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray to the respective Integration Joint Boards and Community Planning Partnerships. The intention is to provide this as a service update to Integration Joint Board (IJB) members in Aberdeen City and Moray, and use the report to inform a development session of the IJB in Aberdeenshire.

#### **2.3.1 Quality / Patient Care**

There are no impacts on quality of patient care as a direct result of this report.

#### **2.3.2 Workforce**

There are no impacts on workforce as a direct result of this report.

### **2.3.3 Financial**

There are no impacts on finance as a direct result of this report.

### **2.3.4 Risk Assessment / Management**

This report provides an overview of health and wellbeing of children and young people in Grampian, as well as broader population health outcomes. The examples of projects that have been undertaken and are ongoing contribute to the mitigation of the risk of worsening population health outcomes.

### **2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities**

An impact assessment has not been completed because this report provides an overview of data describing the health and wellbeing of the population and a suite of recommendations to be considered by the whole system to improve population health. The specific actions listed in the next steps section in 2.3 above will be subject to impact assessments as appropriate as they are progressed.

### **2.3.6 Other impacts**

The report includes a section on action needed to address climate change.

### **2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation**

Children and Young People were engaged with in the production of this report, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

- Virtual consultations with Getting It Right for Every Child Strategic Group in Aberdeenshire and Getting It Right for Every Child Leadership Group, Moray (July/August 2025)
- Aberdeen City Children's Services Board 01 September 2025

The feedback from these consultation has informed the plan for disseminating this report and the next steps following publication of the report.

### **2.3.8 Route to the Meeting**

Drafts of this report were considered by the following meetings. Discussions have supported the content and feedback from these meetings has informed the development and refinement of the content presented in this report and the plan for dissemination and next steps.

- Population Health Portfolio Board virtual consultation 03 September 2025
- Aberdeen City Children's Services Board 01 September 2025
- Public Health Monitoring and Governance Group 05 August 2025
- Moray Child Protection Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2025
- Population Health Committee 26<sup>th</sup> Sep 2025

## 2.4 Recommendations

- **Endorsement** – The Board are requested to note the content of the report and the next steps following the publication of the report, specifically that the report will be used to inform the development of joint plans for Children's Services, Child Poverty, Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray, and a refreshed child health strategy for Grampian to be published in summer 2026.
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## 3 List of appendices

The following appendix/appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – DPH Annual Report 2024/25
- Appendix 2 – DPH Annual Report Data Appendix 2024/25

Link to Video: Annual DPH Report on Children & Young People

<https://youtu.be/yFfNKjiH5hQ>