

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 4 December 2023
Title:	North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26
Responsible Director:	Caroline Cameron, Director, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
Report Author:	Scott Bryan, Interim Programme Manager

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Decision

This paper relates to:

- Integration Joint Board Strategy or Direction

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

Every local authority and its relevant Health Board are required to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority for each three year period, whilst the overall responsibility rests with the Council and Health Board it is expected that we will work collaboratively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families at various stages of the development and review of the Plan.

This report presents the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26 (Appendix 1), the Plan builds on the progress made since the previous Children's Services Plan 2020-23, in addition the plan reports on progress during 2022-23 against the previous plan.

The Children's Services Plan should be read in conjunction with the [Children's Poverty Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) and [Children's Rights Report](#) which form part of our suite of children's services planning documents.

2.2 Background

Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated, focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing. It aims to ensure that any action to meet need is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, this is taken to prevent need arising. The aims are about creating and maintaining a local environment which facilitates Getting it Right for Every Child Practice (GIRFEC) for individual children and young people.

Section 8(1) of the Act requires every local authority and its relevant health board to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority, in respect of each three-year period.

2.3 Assessment

The publication of the new plan brings the 2020-2023 Children's Service Plan to a close. A recent progress report was published for the period 2021-22 and previously presented to Cabinet, progress for 2022-23 is incorporated into the new plan and formally concludes the previous plan.

The 2023-26 plan builds on the work of the previous plan. The plan maintains its previous vision that in North Ayrshire, 'For all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up'.

In supporting these priorities, a suite of actions has been identified that will be delivered by CPP partners, progress will be monitored through the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) with work undertaken across partners to establish a set of outcomes indicators to measure progress.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

The children's Services Plan 2023 – 26 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

2.3.2 Workforce

No workforce impact is anticipated.

2.3.3 Financial

No financial impact is anticipated.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

No risks identified.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

The Children's Services Plan assists us to meet our Socio-Economic Duty set out in the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Plan aims to reduce inequalities and make things fairer and better.

2.3.6 Other impacts

The plan contains a range of actions aligned to the Children's Services Plan priorities. A progress report will be provided on these actions by agreed timescales. In addition, an annual CSP will also be published.

Following publication, work will be undertaken to identify appropriate key performance indicators for the plan.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

To inform the plan a period of engagement was carried out with local children and young people. During the 2022-23 service year, engagement activity was undertaken across a number of North Ayrshire Schools (Primary and Secondary), and across a number of local youth forums. In total, engagement took place with 195 children and young people.

Methods adopted included the use of the Jamboard engagement tool with school pupils, and focus groups, conversation cafes and surveys to engage with youth forums and modern apprentices. Young people were asked their views on the proposed priorities and asked to suggest what work could be undertaken to ensure the priorities were actioned. In addition to the CSP focused engagement, learning was also taken from other children and young people engagement groups, such as the North Ayrshire Champions Board.

CSSP partners have been fully engaged on the priorities and contributed to the actions described in the Plan.

2.3.8 Route to the meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- North Ayrshire Cabinet, 13th June 2023
- North Ayrshire IJB, 15th June 2023

2.4 Recommendation

For Decision. Members are asked to agree the new North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023 - 2026.

3. List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report with the published version via the link below:

Appendix 1, [North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#)



North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26

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Foreword

Welcome to our Children’s Services Plan 2023-26. Collectively across Community Planning Partners we want North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up, our 2023-26 plan builds on earlier plans and continues our focus on promoting children and young people’s wellbeing, underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Our Children’s Services Plan is part of a suite of plans which outline how we are actively supporting the wellbeing and wellness of our children and young people. These include our Child Poverty Action Plan, Children’s Rights Report, Corporate Parenting Plan, The Promise implementation, and our Child Protection Plans, all of which are at the centre of everything we do to support and nurture children and young people. Our Children’s Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) leads on the development of these plans and consists of representatives from across our Community Planning Partners.

We have a duty under the **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014** to produce a Children’s Services Plan every three years to demonstrate how we will improve the lives of our children and young people. Focussing on how services will work together to best safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of all children in the area, have a local workforce that is trauma informed, ensuring that action is taken to meet needs at the earliest appropriate time, that we have an integrated approach and make the best use of our collective resources. Central to plans is ensuring children and young people’s voices are heard and their rights are respected. We engaged with our children and young people to confirm our five priorities for the next three years and ensure they should be the key areas of focus. Our priorities are:



More information on how we identified these priorities, including how they align with GIRFEC, can be found in appendix 2.

These priorities directly link to our CPP [Community Plan](#) (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) vision of North Ayrshire – Fair For All. It also directly aligns with the Scottish Government Outcome for Children: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential, as well as the National Performance Framework. Of course, underpinning our approach is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The last few years have been some of the most challenging for everyone, the impact of the Covid-19 Coronavirus Pandemic on our children, families and services was significant and continues to affect all our lives. The economic outlook remains uncertain and the cost of living situation has further impacted on the wellbeing of our residents in North Ayrshire – which is covered in great detail in our

Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26. As we continue to adapt to our very changed environment, we are seeking opportunities to work differently and more effectively, and we will require to be agile and adaptable to addressing the challenges which our communities and services face.

During the pandemic our Children's Services were inspected in relation to those children who were at risk of harm. The inspectors concluded - *'Leaders in North Ayrshire were driving forward a coherent, shared vision, 'North Ayrshire – a Better Life'. This was underpinned by the following key priorities: a working North Ayrshire, a thriving North Ayrshire – children and young people, a healthier North Ayrshire and a safer North Ayrshire. This provided the strategic direction for improving the lives of people in local communities and protecting children and young people. Partners had an acute understanding of the persistent inequalities that existed in the area and had a purposeful focus on improving outcomes for children living in poverty.'*

We recognise the strong partnership foundation in North Ayrshire provides a strong commitment to continue to collectively focus on improving outcomes for our children, young people and their families. We will continue to strive to ensure we place them at the very heart of delivery of services so we can get the right support at the right time. There is no doubt that supporting our children and young people and their families will be one of the most valuable long-term investments we can make, through focussing on early intervention and preventative approaches we have the opportunity to make a real difference to life outcomes.

The plan provides a framework for partners to shape and improve how we work together to ensure services are planned and delivered in a way which best meets the needs of children and families, our focus being securing a joined-up approach, between local partners, to service planning and delivery, with collaboration at every level and across all service providers. We thank all those who contributed to the plan and their ongoing commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people in North Ayrshire.

Caroline Cameron – Director North Ayrshire HSCP
(Chair of North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership)

Craig Hatton

CEX North Ayrshire Council

Claire Burden

CEX NHS AA

National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework (NPF) sets out the government’s vision for Scotland and its overarching approaches, which apply across all the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and outcomes for children, young people, and their families. These are summarised as SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included).

The 11 national outcomes are interlinked, and actions taken to drive progress in each area are crucial to improving the lives of children and young people and into adulthood. Focusing on national wellbeing outcomes will help us understand what we need to do to make North Ayrshire the best place to grow up and contribute to the achievement of this vision. The improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing is one of the key priorities in the framework, recognising the need to improve outcomes and support the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people.



Policy Context and Strategic Themes

Improving outcomes and life chances for children and young people is a key priority for the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and all its partner organisations. It is also a key priority at the national level too. This section will help provide some of the context around the policy direction to help improve the lives of young people.

National Policies

The Promise

An independent review into the children's care system in Scotland resulted in a publication called the 'Promise' that focused on changes that should be made to Scotland's care system to ensure that more families were looking after their own children and when this was not possible their alternative living arrangements met their needs including family contact if appropriate.

Although the Promise implementation is aimed to address the needs of all our Care Experienced children and young people, the fundamentals outlined in the Promise are relevant to all our work across prevention, early intervention, and targeted specialist services. In all that we do we will take account of these in our approach to planning and service delivery. These are:

- **What matters to Children and Families?**
- **Listening**
- **Poverty**
- **Children's Rights**
- **Language.**

We are fully committed to the promise made to Scotland's infants, children, young people, adults and families. Our specific activities around the Promise and our Corporate Parenting Duties are highlighted in our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) and our Promise 3 Years On Report where the needs of our Care Experienced community are at the forefront of our planning and delivery around the five priorities of the National Promise plan, namely, **Care, Family, Voice, People and Scaffolding**.

Children's Rights and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

In North Ayrshire we are progressing Getting it Right for every Child (GIRFEC), a national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by identifying the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports working in partnership with services that can help.

The main aim of *Getting it right for every child* is to make sure that when children and/or their families have additional needs everyone gets the right help when they need it.

Getting it right for every child is a fundamental way of working that builds on research and practice to help practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and act to deliver these improvements. *Getting it right for every child* thread through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and families.

To meet the diversity of needs of all children and young people, early intervention and prevention are at the centre of our planning and delivery of children's services. We look to strengthen families and communities to support their own children, supplemented by universal services, and providing additional support when needed.

GIRFEC puts children's rights at the heart of the services that support them – such as early years services, schools, and the NHS –ensuring that everyone works together to improve child or young people's outcomes.

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child \(UNCRC\)](#) has 54 articles. Many of them relate to children's basic rights regarding protection, health and education. Some are about the key principles which drive this plan, especially:

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children (article 3)

- 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 (article 12)
- Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law (article 13)
- We will make sure that every child in North Ayrshire learns about their rights, and what they can do if they feel that any of their rights are not being recognised or respected.

Children's Services Plan 2020 - 2023

Our previous Children's Services Plan was published in 2020.



Many of the aspirations and priorities established in that plan remain relevant, so have carried over into this new plan. Tackling the challenges in North Ayrshire require short, medium and longer term approaches, so each plan builds on progress.

The priorities identified in the 2020-2023 plan were:

- Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.
- Acting early to improve what happens next.
- Making things fairer and better.
- Supporting Mental Health.
- Helping children and young people to be active and healthy.

Each priority was supported by a suite of actions that would be delivered by our partner organisations. A summary of progress against those actions can be found in [appendix 1](#).

North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire has many strengths and assets including; welcoming people, a strong sense of community, many local libraries, community centres, fantastic parks and shops all set against the backdrop of the stunning, picturesque landscapes, coast and beaches.

However, the area also has a number of challenges. The population of North Ayrshire is shifting, over the years the area is seeing a decrease in the number of people who live here. Within that decreasing population, we are seeing a shift towards higher number of older people offset by a decreasing working age and children's population. These changes will have a significant effect on the priority focus of public sector organisations, with more resources being required to support the growing older population.

In addition, North Ayrshire also has high levels of poverty and deprivation. In the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, of the 186 data-zones (very small areas with about 800 people living in them) across North Ayrshire, almost 40% are amongst the most deprived in Scotland. As of 2021, North Ayrshire has 26,246 people aged between 0 to 18 years. Of those, over 45% live in those most

deprived areas. As a result, it is likely that these young people are likely to face additional barriers and challenges in achieving positive outcomes.

In addition, information published by the charity EndPovertyNow in June 2023, suggests that 29% of local young people in North Ayrshire are living in poverty. This more than 1 in 4 young people. This is the second highest rate of child poverty in Scotland, second only to Glasgow City.

Covid-19 Recovery

Following the major impact and restrictions imposed on us all by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the return to community life and normal social interactions is welcomed by all. As we return to school and work it may be easy think that the worst of the pandemic is now behind us. However, the long-term impact of the pandemic is not yet well understood. In addition to the possibility of long-term effects on physical health, the mental and social impact legacy of the pandemic is still unclear.

Research from Public Health Scotland ([How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected children and young people in Scotland?](#)) highlights that a substantial proportion of children, parents and carers perceive the pandemic to have had a negative impact on child and family health and wellbeing. Around 3 in 10 children have experienced difficulties with their emotions, behaviours and mental health, with the majority of parents reporting the pandemic to have had a negative impact on their own physical and mental health.

Going forward, we must be mindful of these impacts and our services work together to support children, young people and families who have been adversely affected by the Pandemic.

Cost of Living

Following COVID-19, it now appears that post pandemic recovery is underway. Employment levels across the country are exceeding those recorded in 2019, with lower levels of unemployment and economic inactivity. However, many families in North Ayrshire and across the country still face many economic challenges. Due in part to rising inflation, and increases in cost of food and day to day products, the cost of living crisis is placing additional pressures on individuals and families. Despite higher levels of employment across Scotland, wages are not increasing in line with the levels of inflation.

This situation is effectively squeezing the resources of people both in and out of work. This is placing greater pressure and stress on local families, and likely having adverse impacts on children and young people.

Rural and Island Communities

Many areas in North Ayrshire are considered rural, with poorer access to services when compared to the larger rural areas. This is also true for our island communities living on Arran and on Cumbrae. While these areas have higher populations of older people, the challenges of rural life also impact on children and younger people.

Research from the University of Edinburgh has found that children and young people living in rural communities are more likely to suffer from feelings of loneliness and isolation. An article on the report can be found here: [Young adults loneliest in rural Scotland during Covid | The University of Edinburgh](#).

In terms of general health of young people, on Arran there is a lower uptake of the 6 in 1 Immunisation and the 24 month MMR Immunisation compared to North Ayrshire as a whole. In

addition, the percentage of primary one children with no dental cavities, and being of a healthy weight has decreased in recent years.

Information supporting our strategic needs assessment

To help improve outcomes for young people in North Ayrshire, it is important that we understand the local environment and the challenges that local children face. To do this, we collect valuable information that helps us better understand what life is like for a young person living in North Ayrshire.

This information contributes towards our strategic needs assessment, helping us identify the key areas for action.

Population

National Records of Scotland publish estimates of the population of each Local Authority area, by age. These publications show that the number of children and young people in North Ayrshire have been continually declining over several years. Between 2001 and 2021, the North Ayrshire population of people under 18 has dropped by 20%, from over 30,000 in 2001, to under 25,000 in 2021.

Similarly, the pupil census shows that the number of school pupils in North Ayrshire also declined over the last twenty years; having decreased by 17%, from 21,374 in 2002 to 17,691 in 2022.

School pupil attainment

In North Ayrshire we continue to make progress in raising attainment for school pupils.

- The performance of North Ayrshire leavers in attaining SCQF level 5 or above in literacy remained broadly consistent with the previous year at 84% in 2021/22. This remains above the national level (82% in 2021/22).
- For numeracy, the North Ayrshire rate increased from 69% in 2018/19 to 72% in 2021/22 which is in line with Scotland-wide figures.
- 96% of school leavers in 2021/22 progressed to a positive destination which is in line with the national rate.
- For Care Experienced children, there has also been improvement in attainment and destinations. In literacy 51% of North Ayrshire care experienced school leavers attained level 5 or above in 2021/22 (increased from 40% in 2020/21, above the Scotland figure of 45%)
- A notable increase in numeracy for Care Experienced children from 25% in 2018/19 to 33% in 2021/22 (above national figure of 30%)
- 95% of Care Experienced school leavers in North Ayrshire progressed to a positive destination in 2021/22 - an increase from 83% in 2018/19 and above Scotland-wide figure of 94%.

Looked After Children

Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, 'looked after children' are defined as those in the care of their local authority, which is sometimes referred to as a 'corporate parent', the public bodies which constitute the CPP are all corporate parents. Children can become looked after for many reasons, including:

- Facing abuse or neglect at home.
- Having a disability that requires special care.
- Being an unaccompanied minor seeking asylum, or who having been illegally trafficked into the UK.
- Having been involved in the youth justice system.

In North Ayrshire the number children and young people looked after has decreased in recent years, following a national trend. At the latest national snapshot taken for the Children Looked After Survey North Ayrshire had **447** Looked After Children and Young People, which is the lowest the authority has seen for several years.

However, at **18 per 1000** of the local 0 to 18 population, North Ayrshire still has one of the highest rates of children and young people looked after in Scotland, ranking 4th highest in in Scotland. The national rate for children looked after is 12.3 per 1000.

Over the last couple of years there have been notable decreases specifically in children and young people being looked after at home, with friends/relatives, and with foster carers. However, the number of formerly Looked After young people requesting to stay in their placement under Continuing Care is increasing. In April 2023, there were 58 young people in these placements, which as a rate of the population (2.3) is the highest in the country.

Children and Young People with Disabilities

A key focus for all partners in the CSSP is to support local children and young people to achieve positive outcomes as they move into adulthood, whether it be into employment or further education.

This is also true for children with learning or physical disabilities or additional support needs. School leavers are provided transition support as the move from children's and young people support services to adult support services.

Transition pathways are complex and often involve multiple organisations supporting and planning for individuals. These transition processes have faced challenges over the past few years. In particular being able to support people at an early enough stage to identify what their future, post school destination will be.

During 2023, a project team with representation from many partner agencies will work to identify How will we improve the experience of Children and Young People with disabilities and their families through the life-course.

Child Protection

Across Scotland, the number of Children on the Child Protection Register has decreased from over 2,500 in July 2020 to around 1,900 in March 2023, a decrease of around 25%. This decrease has also been experienced locally, with **93** children recorded on the Child Protection Register in July of 2022, the lowest figure since 2017.

Expressed as a rate per 1,000 of children and young people aged under 16, North Ayrshire's 2022 rate of **4.2** was the highest in the country (despite decreasing from 5.3 in 2021 which also ranked highest), comparing unfavourably to the national rate of 2.2. However, in recent months, numbers on the register have continued to decrease and the rate in April 2023 was **2.7**, comparing more favourably with the national average.

Young People's Health

In the last year, we have seen the highest rates of breastfeeding across the last 5 years in the following performance measures:

- % Overall breastfed at Health Visiting first visit **40.5%** vs 36.3% in 20/21
- % Of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-to-8-week visit **22%** vs 20.9% in 20/21
- % Overall breastfed at 6-to-8-week visit **31.1%** vs 27.9% in 20/21

There has also been the lowest reduction in five years of breastfeeding drop off rates between birth and first visit (4.8% reduction since 20/21) and between first visit and 6-to-8-week visit (reduction of 1.1% since 20/21). There is also evidence of sustained improvement in the percentage of babies exclusively breastfed at first visit with figures for 21/22 being 25.6% (25.7% in 20/21 was the highest rate in 4 years).

Immunisation uptake at 24 months remains high (97.2% in 2022 for 6-in-1 and 94.9% for MMR), although like the national picture has decreased slightly over the past few years.

2022 also saw improvements in child's dental health – 73% of primary 1 children had no obvious decay (highest figure reported from Public Health Scotland since it started reporting this in 2013). This mirrors the national picture which also saw an increase in 2022 to 75%.

Healthy birth weight for children decreased to 81% in 2022 (82.4% last year) while the figure for all Scotland decreased marginally to 84.1%. For primary 1 children the most recent data published in 2021 shows a decrease across the country – 70% in Scotland and 65% in North Ayrshire with a healthy weight.

Young People's Mental Health

Poor mental health is a growing concern across all our communities. This is also true for children and young people, where we have seen a growing demand for children's mental health services over the past few years. Information provided by CAMHS demonstrates year on year increases in referrals to the service. In March 2023, North Ayrshire CAMHS received 166 referrals for young people. This was a significant increase on the 77 referrals recorded for previous March.

There is also a high correlation between levels of deprivation and referrals to the service, with higher proportions of young people being referred to CAMHS coming from areas considered those amongst the most deprived in Scotland.

What was also highlighted, of all 1042 referrals between April 2022 and March 2023, **42.54%** were for a Neuro-developmental assessment. Children with neuro-developmental concerns are often referred to CAMHS but do not always meet the mental health criteria described in the CAMHS national service specification criteria. Additional services are required for those with neurodiversity to fully meet the National Neurodevelopmental Specification for Children and Young People. [Children and young people - national neurodevelopmental specification: principles and standards of care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/nns-specification/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

Speech and Language Therapy

Recent Public Health Scotland publications have underlined the importance of early childhood language development for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, educational outcomes, and employment opportunities later on in life. Public health Scotland further highlighted the impact of the implementation of public health measures – necessary to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 – on the speech, language and communication of infants, children, and young people across Scotland (Public Health Scotland, 2023). Beyond the impact of the pandemic, the 'Equity for All' document (Scottish Government, 2022) outlined that in Ayrshire we have the highest predicted speech, language, and communication need in Scotland, across the 0-18 population. Addressing this need locally has proven challenging in the context of local workforce capacity and national SLT recruitment issues. This has led to significant waiting times for speech and language therapy input for children and young people in North Ayrshire with the service having to close to new, non-high-risk, referrals for a period of time in 2022/23. This pause in acceptance of new routine referrals was to enable the SLT service to prioritise the ability to safely manage high risk requests for

assistance, to implement service and process improvements, and to progress recruitment to vacant posts. With the SLT service now re-opened to routine referrals, more than 160 children and young people are now waiting for an average of 18 months for specialist intervention.

Meeting the speech, language, and communication needs of our children and young people takes a whole system approach. Partners are actively encouraged to continue to use the universal and targeted resources already available to support speech, language, and communication development in North Ayrshire. Ongoing advice and support are available to young people, their families, and other partners through a local help line and drop-in sessions led by experienced speech and language therapists.

Vision and Key Priorities

We have identified key priorities to address over the lifetime of this plan. These priorities will help us to achieve our vision, which is:

For all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up

To identify and agree on our priorities for this plan, we collated information from a number of different sources and service areas. Yet, the most important factor in agreeing priorities is the feedback we have received through our ongoing engagement with children, young people and their families. These voices are central to our activity and to this plan, as well as our wider activity. We engage with children, young people and families in a variety of ways on an ongoing basis.

We involve young people through their participation in several engagement and decision-making groups. This includes our Champions Board for Care Experienced Young People, our Youth Cabinets, Community groups, pupil councils and we work in partnership to advocate and support children and young people with specific needs. This includes those with care experience, young carers, additional support needs and those subject to child protection measures.

We have a robust Youth Participation Strategy which was jointly developed with young people and seeks to be inclusive of all children and young people no matter where they live or what their situation may be. Our young people are also encouraged to apply for funds through our Participatory Budgeting Framework and through our Locality Planning Forums.

Close collaboration exists between the Statutory and Third Sectors and through our Third Sector Providers forum both sectors are brought together on a regular basis. The Third Sector have also had the opportunity to specifically comment and contribute to the priorities and actions in this plan.

Since 2021 we have also organised and facilitated conferences and events, such as our 'Cost of the School Day' and 'The North Ayrshire Annual Promise' conferences where the voices of young people addressed the selected priorities in this plan.

There was overwhelming agreement with all priorities. These priorities are:

1. The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Implement the North Ayrshire UNCRC plan actions, ensuring the rights of all children and young people are protected.
- Ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the work of the Community Planning Partnership.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to develop their citizenship skills, including active democratic participation opportunities.
- Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) will be carried out on all new policies that affect the lives of our children and young people
- Through the engagement workstream of the care experienced task force, work proactively with Children and Young People

- Co-create with children and young people new, systematic mechanisms for maximising learner participation and voice and create a new Learner Participation Policy
- Ongoing consultation with children and their families on service design and delivery.
- Ensure that Children’s engagement forums focus on rights, helping children and families understand UNCRC and what this means.
- Work with local partners / members to identify opportunities for children and young people to become involved locally.
- Through our Advocacy Strategy prioritise community-based advocacy to children and young people ensuring they are aware of their rights and are appropriately represented.
- Implement learning and improvements identified through the HSCP SDS Learning Review Board for the Children with a Disabilities Team.
- Include young carers in the planning and shaping of their services.
- Develop a young people users forum for KA Leisure and ensure their views and opinions are considered when developing programmes and initiatives.

2. Acting early to improve what happens next.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Work with our partners to keep all children and young people safe, with the robust implementation of the new National Guidance for Child Protection.
- Support families with children aged 0-5 through our integrated universal early years’ service.
- Increase access to early learning and childcare.
- Work together with parents or carers to provide support to their children.
- Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people.
- We continue to develop and implement the Childsmile programme, focussing on early referral and preventive advice for all families.
- We will continue to deliver Jumpstart, a family centred healthy lifestyle programme for children aged 2-17, who are above a healthy weight.
- Expand our peer support service to all breastfeeding mothers as part of our integrated infant feeding service working alongside the Breastfeeding Network
- Continue working with whole families, whole systems and whole communities to provide early intervention support to all of North Ayrshires Children.
- Providing training / guidance to families, schools, partners and communities that enhances the understanding of early intervention & provides skills needed for families to feel confident and equipped to manage family life.
- We will implement the Signs of Safety approach to social work practice.
- Improve planning for transitions of care to ensure children and young people are able to thrive moving into adulthood.
- Invest in premises infrastructure to support children and young people experiencing distress in appropriate environments.
- Work across partners to develop robust pathways of support for infants, children and young people and their families seeking support for speech, language and communication development support.
- Improve access to Speech and Language therapy for children and young people who require specialist support.

- Develop a trauma informed workforce by rolling out trauma aware and trauma skilled resources.
- Develop an evaluation framework to maximise resources to support children and young people, to enable system partners to invest and sustain early intervention approaches.
- Reach and identify all young carers earlier in their caring role and promote increased uptake of Young People’s Carer Support Plans.
- Expand and develop the Health & Wellbeing Service to accommodate children and young people, with a focus on partnership working within the Mind and Be Active programme to establish an early intervention approach that provides supported physical activity opportunities for children and young people who are experiencing poor mental health.

3. Making things fairer.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Implement the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan
- Improve attainment and achievement for all.
- Close the poverty related attainment gap.
- Implement the recommendations from the Independent Care Review (Scotland), The Promise.
- Implement the recommendations from the Additional Support for Learning Review (Scotland)
- Build strong collaborative partnerships in local areas to ensure we deliver high-quality services for all of our children, young people, and families.
- Create a new 3 year raising attainment strategy.
- Maximise opportunities to work with Third Sector providers to provide early intervention and prevention supports, with a particular focus on primary prevention approaches.
- Providing a robust ‘peer’ support model that upskills parents and carers, providing training and volunteering opportunities and enhances employability skills as well as building self-esteem and confidence.
- Take an asset-based approach to communities / children and families and build upon the skills and strengths that exist.
- Establish a Financial Inclusion Partnership in North Ayrshire to better support access to support for families.
- Develop peer support models.
- We will strive for parity of access to support and services for our Island Communities including for Children and Young People.
- Provide multiple points of access for young carers into carer support services.

4. Promoting good mental health and wellbeing.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Develop our nurturing approach across all Children’s Services
- Work with children, young people, families, and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social participation.
- Continue to have appropriate pathways in place for supporting mental wellbeing.
- Work together with children, young people, and their families to help build resilience.

- Improve services for children with neuro-developmental conditions, implementing a whole system approach with partners across Health, Education, Social Services and the Third Sector. (Implementation of the National CAMHS and Neurodevelopmental Specifications)
- Public Health will implement a life course approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing, focusing on the first thousand and one days, infancy and Children and Young People.
- Support services that are nature based to encourage connection with nature and the outdoors.
- Build on services that encourage parenting skills and interactions with between family members.
- Build on the National CAMHS Specification through the 3 established pathways (core, unscheduled care, neuro), ensuring young people are on the correct pathway at a much earlier stage.
- Continue to provide ‘worry workshops’ e.g. identifying key issues raised as worries by North Ayrshire children and using this to develop targeted workshops on these issues.
- Establish a CPP led Health and Wellbeing Alliance to bring key partners together to co-ordinate approach to targeting support to improve individual, family and community health and wellbeing.
- Be responsive and pro-active in responding to and learning from Young Person’s Suicide through our Young People’s Suicide Prevention Taskforce.
- Deliver the new National Secure Adolescent Inpatient Secure Unit (Foxgrove) for children across Scotland, which will also benefit young people in North Ayrshire.
- Explore opportunities to ensure young people are not admitted to non-specialist environments including options to develop and in-house CAMHS inpatient provision.
- Building on the success of the Kilwinning Wellness Model, the Revised Wellness Model working group will now seek to roll out the approach across all North Ayrshire localities.
- Enable young carers to have a quality of life outside caring and ensure support when moving through key life stages.

5. Inspiring children and young people to be active.

In progressing this priority, we will:

- Create innovative physical activity and sports opportunities with communities and partners.
- Adopt a whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight.
- Design opportunities into the whole system to enable children, young people, and their families to access supported physical activity opportunities and have a healthy lifestyle.
- Ensure all our early years indoor and outdoor learning environments and activities enable children to be physically active.
- Promote access to leisure services for children and young people to encourage participation in physical activities.
- Promote the introduction of the INSPIRE programme to improve opportunities for alternative activities, including arts, drama and music.
- Create and protect safe space for children to play and enjoy being outdoors.
- Support parents to understand the importance of movement and enjoyment for children and young people.
- Work with local small business/ fitness team to provide access to activity and nutrition information.
- Creation of new and local growing spaces to support communities to grow foods, to upskills families, enhance family time and connection.

- Ensure all primary, secondary and ASN schools are provided with quality extra-curricular opportunities in sport and physical activity that are open to all.
- Ensure all young people have the opportunity to compete and perform regardless of what level they are at.
- Create and support a school to community club pathway for sport across North Ayrshire.
- Ensure an effective leadership pathway is developed for P6 through to S6 and beyond to develop transferable skills.
- Ensure we remove any barriers to participation for care experienced young people to take part in sport and physical activity.
- Expand and develop the Health & Wellbeing Service to accommodate children and young people, with a focus on partnership working within the Mind and Be Active programme to establish an early intervention approach that provides supported physical activity opportunities for children and young people who are experiencing poor mental health.

We will work across CPP partners to establish a set of outcome indicators to measure progress on each of the priorities and actions.

Further rationale behind the decision to focus on these priorities can be found in [appendix 2](#).

Children's Services Strategic Partnership

Improving the life chances and opportunities for all children in North Ayrshire cannot be achieved by any one organisation or service. In fact, it requires support and dedication from many partners across the public and third sector.

This is what the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) is, a collaboration of local organisations that work together to achieve our vision for local children and young people.

The members of CSSP are:

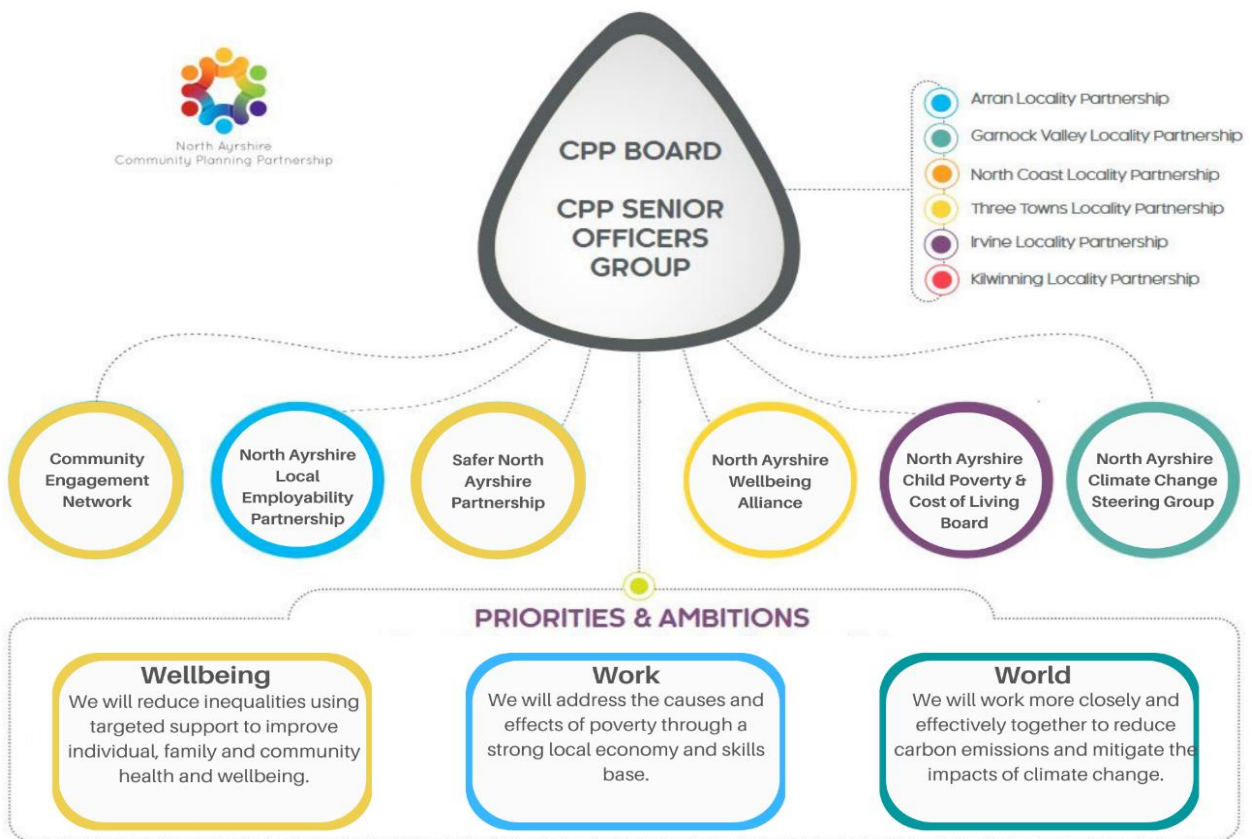
- North Ayrshire Council
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration (SCRA)
- Children's Panel Area Support Team
- Ayrshire College
- The Care Inspectorate
- The Third Sector Interface

More information on the CSSP Partners and their vision in relation to improving services for children can be found in the on page 20.

Relationship with North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership

The CSSP is part of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP), primarily sitting under the 'Wellbeing' strategic priority of the North Ayrshire Partnership Plan alongside the work of the Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board and Wellbeing Alliance. This CPP has overall responsibility for this Children's Services Plan and will ensure partners work together effectively to help achieve our vision and improve outcomes for children and young people across North Ayrshire.

In addition, the CSSP is supported by a suite of multi-agency sub-groups. These groups ensure collaborative working across our key themes, enhancing our planning arrangements to the benefit of local young people.



(Please see [appendix 3](#) for textual description of Community Planning Structure image)

Local Policy

This section highlights some of the key policies considered in the development of this plan.

Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan)

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) produces the [Community Plan](#) (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan), that sets out a strategic vision and direction for improving the lives of the people living in North Ayrshire. Published in April 2022, the plan covers the eight-year period up to 2030.

The CPP has identified three key areas for focus through the Partnership Plan:

- **WELLBEING** – providing a focus on the health and wellbeing of local people, with an aim of reducing local health inequalities through targeted support to improve individual, family and community health and wellbeing. This area will aim to:
 - Address health inequalities
 - Promote children and young people’s wellbeing, and
 - Enable community wellbeing
- **WORK** – focussing on the local economy and improving the local skills base to help address the root causes of poverty and deprivation. This area will aim to:
 - Better support our young people to develop the skills they need to play a strong role in our local economy
 - Increase local employment
 - Develop volunteering
- **WORLD** – focussing on efforts to address climate change, reduce carbon emissions and improve the local natural environment.
 - Work together to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change
 - Increase active travel, and
 - Increase carbon literacy within our organisations and communities

With a key focus on health and wellbeing and on addressing social, economic and health inequalities, the LOIP 2022-30 has the focus of improving the lives of local families and young people at its core.

Going forward CPP partners will continue to collaborate to identify and deliver on joint actions to achieve our shared goals.

Child Poverty Action Plan

The Child Poverty Action Plan is produced by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The development of the Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26 coincides with the development of this Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 and the Children’s Rights Report, with a joined-up approach taken to their development and delivery.

In North Ayrshire 24.7% of children are living in poverty after housing costs (2020/21, though this figure is caveated due to issues with data collection during the pandemic). Addressing child poverty, is one of the key focus areas of North Ayrshire Council, particularly with the current cost-of-living crisis. The Child Poverty Action Plan sets out the key ambitions and priorities for the CPP partners to help reduce the levels of poverty experienced by children and young people locally and improve the wellbeing of our children and their families. In June 2022, North Ayrshire Council established the

[Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board Chaired by the Leader of North Ayrshire Council](#). The Board ensures a joined-up approach across our Community Planning Partners to addressing child poverty and the wider impacts of the cost of living.

Further details on the Child Poverty Action Plan can be found on the North Ayrshire Council Website.

Children’s Rights Report

North Ayrshire Council is a child centred Council, focussed on the wellbeing and life chances of our children and young people. In doing so, the Council champions the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that all children in North Ayrshire have their fundamental Rights met, protected and advocated for. The Council has a duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Children’s Rights Report every three years which details the activities undertaken to secure and promote children’s rights in North Ayrshire.

The current report is being developed in parallel with the Children’s Services Plan and Child Poverty Action Plan, as recognising the rights of our children and young people is central to improving their lives. Examples of what has been achieved so far include:

- The appointment of a policy officer to drive forward the UNCRC within the Council and ensure it is recognised throughout our operations.
- Embedding Children’s Rights into the Equality Impact Assessment Framework.
- Participating in the Rights Respecting School Programme, with ten schools now achieving this status.
- Developing our [Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-25](#) alongside our young people called ‘Step Up, Speak Out’. This shows how we are supporting [youth forums and youth participation](#) including our Joint Cabinet where our North Ayrshire Youth Council Executive Committee (our young people aged between 12 and 25 years) meet with the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council to have their voices heard.
- Providing a strong focus on child protection and support services.

North Ayrshire Council Plan

The Council Plan 2019-24 aim is ‘A North Ayrshire that is Fair For All’ and has equality at its heart. The mission ‘Working together to improve wellbeing, prosperity and equity in North Ayrshire’ aligns directly with the priorities within the Childrens Services Plan while emphasising the importance of partnership working. The three priorities ‘Aspiring Communities’, ‘Inspiring Place’ and ‘A Council For The Future’ ensure our children and young people experience the best start in life.

Following the Local Government Elections in 2022, a new Council Plan is in development and is expected to be published during the summer of 2023. It is anticipated the new plan will have the wellbeing of our residents, equity and advocacy of rights at its core, so will continue to be in line with the suite of children’s plans.

North Ayrshire Education Service Improvement Plan

Almost all children and young people in North Ayrshire will be supported by Education Services throughout their school lives. Our Education Service is ambitious for our local young people. The services aim is to improve educational outcomes for all learners and to the most disadvantage learners in our schools.

In its most recent service improvement plan (2022-23), the service has identified five key priorities to deliver to improve the educational attainment of pupils:

1. Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
2. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
3. Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
4. Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
5. Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Each of these priorities are supported by operational themes and supporting actions.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Commissioning Plan 2022-30

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care partnership (HSCP) provides locality-based health and social care services for people throughout their life. As an integrated partnership, the majority of HSCP services are delivered by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran under the governance of the North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) published its latest strategic commissioning plan, 'Caring Together (2022-2030)' in April 2022. The plan maintains the same vision for local people that has been in place since the HSCP was first launched in April 2015, that is:

All people who live in North Ayrshire are able to have a safe, healthy and active life

The plan sets out the key priorities for the HSCP to help improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of local people, recognising the impact social and economic inequalities has on long-term health outcome. As a key provider of statutory health and social care services for children and young people, they are prominently featured in the strategic plan.

To help improve the opportunity for positive outcomes for children, young people and their families, the HSCP identified a number of key ambitions to achieve by 2030. These ambitions are aligned to the partnership's strategic priorities. The full suite of ambitions can be found on the HSCP Strategic Plan Caring Together, a sample of those include:

- All families in North Ayrshire provide nurturing and loving support to their children and have fast and effective support to continue doing so when it is needed.
- Fewer of our young people are cared for in a placement outside of North Ayrshire. Through greater local support and resource, more young people who require to be looked after can remain in their own community.
- Adults and young people who provide care and support to family members, or other people in their community, are offered a carers assessment and have access to a range of meaningful support options, including respite provision, affording them a short break from their caring activities, and supporting them to continue in their caring role.
- Children, young people and families who experience, or are at risk of, poor physical and mental health, substance use, or involvement in the justice system are fully supported as soon as possible.
- By delivering 'The Promise', our care system prioritises working closely with families to ensure their experience is as supportive and positive as it can be. The experience and journey of young people in care is greatly improved and informed through meaningful conversations with family and professionals.

HSCP Workforce Plan

In Children, Families and Justice Services, we will seek to build our workforce and processes to ensure delivery of the Promise. This will include further developments in:

- Early help and intervention approaches
- Whole Family Wellbeing
- Co-located, multi-disciplinary team working
- Supporting local families address poverty
- Child protection procedures (Signs of Safety and Safer and Together)
- Trauma informed practice

The HSCP are implementing the Signs of Safety strength and safety organised approach to social work case work that analyses detailed information for a balanced risk assessment. It will provide a practice framework that revolves around balanced risk assessment, risk management and effective safety and care planning.

Signs of Safety integrates professional knowledge with knowledge from families and their wider networks to rigorously explore harm and complicating factors alongside existing strengths and safety.

Partnership working with families to reduce risks and increase safety by building upon the family's strengths, resources and networks to change the everyday lived experience of the child so that we are confident the child is safe. As a consequence of working in a risk sensible approach with families more children will be supported to remain within their family network.



Preparation for implementation commenced in April 2022, with a 2 year intense implementation period concluding in October 2024, fully embedding the approach in every day social work practice for future years.

Resourcing the Plan

To ensure we can work towards achieving our vision and priorities, the CSSP and its partners will require to allocate appropriate financial and service resources.

Financial Resources

In 2021/22, we spent more than £218 million in Education, Child Health and Social Care, on services to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people living in North Ayrshire. This includes almost £140 million on Primary and Secondary education, over £22 million on pre-primary education, over £13 million on special education, over £5 million on community learning and over £38 million on Children and Families Social Work services. (Source: [Supporting documents - Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2021-22 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2022/06/Supporting_documents_-_Scottish_Local_Government_Finance_Statistics_2021-22_-_gov.scot_(www.gov.scot))))

Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) is a Scottish Government programme that provides investment to Local Authorities across Scotland to support the development of holistic, whole family support services. The programme has the ambition that by 2030, at least 5% of community-based health and social care service budgets should be focused on preventative, whole family measures.

For the 2023/24 service year, an allocation of £959,000 has been confirmed.

Local community groups and third and independent sector organisations can apply for up to £250,000 of the total allocation to deliver support services to families in North Ayrshire. To improve this application process, a scrutiny panel is being established that will provide robust oversight of the distribution of the funds locally.

To date the funding has supported the many approaches including:

- Scaling up our Family Centred Wellbeing Service
- Providing therapeutic counselling support for care experienced and vulnerable young people
- Scaling up support to families in the early years
- Recruiting a Dad's Support Worker to support local Dads as they care for their children
- Investing in whole system supports for children and young people with neuro-developmental conditions

Support Services and Committees

Throughcare and Aftercare Services

The Throughcare and Aftercare teams support young people transitioning from being accommodated by the Local Authority away from home onto living independently within the community or Supported Care. The team offer wide ranging supports in line with the identified needs of the Young Person. This may include support to access college or work, build and promote healthy relationships with friends and family, support access to additional funding such as Benefits and Care Leavers payments; promote engagement with services such as Legal, Housing and Health and finally provide advice, guidance and emotional support to the young person in times of worry or problems. The team pride themselves in being both creative and flexible within their approach so as Young People can achieve their journey to successful independent living.

Named Person Service Evaluation Workstream

Part 4 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which was revoked in September 2019, required local authorities and the relevant health board, to put in place arrangements for the provision of a 'Named Person' for each young person from birth to 8. The legislation indicated each Named Person would act as a single point of contact for each child with responsibility for providing advice, information and support where required.

While it is no longer a statutory requirement to provide a Named Person for each young person, GIRFEC policy continues to describe the benefits of a service supporting Named Persons, Lead Professionals and wider integrated, multi-agency working, in order to meet the needs of all children, young people and their families through early intervention and preventative action. North Ayrshire's Named Person Service adopts an approach that complements North Ayrshire's Child Protection processes and procedures to safeguard vulnerable children by supporting families through early intervention and preventative non statutory measures.

A review of the Named Person Service function was concluded in 2022, and included the views of stakeholders from across health, social care and education. Stakeholder feedback was very positive with the majority of NPS users rating the efficiency, effectiveness, speed and reliability of the service as excellent. Specifically, the Named Person Service for children under the age of 5, and their families, is highly regarded by a range of staff working within early years. The usage data and the processes which involve the NPS, show the integral role the service plays in the early intervention and preventative approach advocated by North Ayrshire.

Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework Workstream

The Children and Young People's Community Mental Health Supports and Services Framework was published in February 2021, the framework provides a set of principles for community- based services to support children and young people's mental health, wellbeing, and distress. Additional funding was provided to local authorities to implement the framework and is used to strengthen existing integrated working between Services and partners to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and enhancing existing supports as well as identifying the need for additional or new supports.

New supports in North Ayrshire include the Family Centred Wellbeing Support Service, Welfare Rights Officer in our Secondary Establishments, and the appointment of 2 MHWB Project Delivery Officers within our Connected Communities Team. We have continued to collaborate with Third Sector Partners to deliver mental wellbeing support. Communication of supports and services available is a priority and details can be found following this link: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/na/mhwbpandc>

During 2022 more than 4,000 children and young people across North Ayrshire accessed services to either promote positive mental wellbeing or to receive targeted support.

Our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework Workstream will provide formalised governance arrangements for the coordination of our Community Mental Health Framework allocation and to build upon existing practice to embed early intervention and preventative supports as well as promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Child Protection Committee

The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (NACPC) is a locally based inter-agency strategic partnership which leads on child protection policy and practice. The Committee has an Independent Chair and is comprised of senior staff from across key services in North Ayrshire, including both statutory services and the third sector. The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee adheres to Protecting Children & Young People: Child Protection Committees and Chief Officer's responsibilities. As such the NACPC has a range of day to day business activities to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities. Current priorities include implementation of the updated National Child Protection Guidance (2021), implementation of North Ayrshire's Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and taking forward priority outcomes identified by the CPC within the 2022 – 2025 CPC Business Plan.

Corporate Parenting Steering Group

The Corporate Parenting Steering Group provides strategic leadership for the Corporate Parenting Partnership. This Group receives reports from the Promise Operational Group (PrOG) on the implementation of the Promise and is responsible for overseeing the six Corporate Parenting duties, ensuring close collaboration between Corporate Parents. The Group also ensures that our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) meets the needs of all our Care Experienced Community, and that all actions are evaluated and reported on.

The Group is chaired by an Elected Member (Deputy Leader of North Ayrshire Council) and is comprised of Senior Managers from across the Community Planning Partnership including local Corporate Parents.

Scottish Attainment Challenge

North Ayrshire Council benefits from Attainment Scotland Funding to reduce the poverty related attainment gap between pupils living in North Ayrshire's most and least deprived areas. Locally, North Ayrshire benefits from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), Strategic Equity Funding, and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding. To support effective use of funding the Education Service has recently reconfigured programme governance through a new Attainment Scotland Fund Improvement Forum, which acts as a mechanism to encourage collaboration and integrated use of funding to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people. A number of workstreams have been established to review professional learning and leadership development; redesign family learning supports; further integrate whole school nurturing approaches; and promote collaborative use of PEF to maximise impact at school level.

Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board

North Ayrshire Council established a new Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board in June 2022, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and supported by NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the North Ayrshire HSCP, the Third Sector Interface and Community Planning Partners. The Board is developing the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26 to maximise learning and guidance from the Scottish Government's National Plan – 'Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026'. With the escalation in cost-of-living concerns this Board now also oversees the Council's response to the current cost-of-living crisis and provides a strategic approach to the themes in relation to child poverty and cost-of-living, which are agreed by the Board and explored in conjunction with Community Planning, third sector partners and residents through a series of innovative mini-enquiries. This demonstrates one of the Board's key strategic priorities, which is to ensure greater

involvement of residents, including children and young people, in service design. As outlined in the Board's of terms of reference, this groups priorities are:

- To provide leadership in the development and delivery of the Tackling Child Poverty Strategy for North Ayrshire.
- To oversee the implementation of the Child Poverty Action Plan to tackle the inequalities affecting the outcomes for children and families, with a clear focus on early intervention and prevention and a whole system approach.
- To monitor the Child Poverty Action Plan, including a performance framework linked to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Council Plan, on progress in delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- To advise on and agree an annual report for Cabinet approval and submission to Scottish Government
- To consult with children, young people and families on the priorities and actions within the plan so that they influence the design and delivery of policies and services.
- To promote effective partnership and whole system working and information sharing between services and organisations.

[Self-Directed Support Learning Review](#)

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 was implemented on April 1st, 2014. Self-Directed Support (SDS) is the national approach to social care delivery in Scotland ensuring people have the fundamentals of participation and involvement, collaboration, dignity, control over their support needs and informed choice when making decisions on the support they need to live their life.

During the 2022-23 service year, North Ayrshire HSCP undertook a learning review of the implementation of SDS locally. The review was established to help services, teams and partners share information, engage, challenge operations, and provide collective learning points on key issues relating to the current practice of SDS. It was also to ensure there was local capacity and ability to deliver on the National SDS Standards and relevant legislative frameworks for the provision of assessment and social care support.

The review identified several areas of recommendation, this included improvements around:

- Continuing the Social Work Conversation
- Developing Ethical Care Frameworks
- Clear information, early help and support
- Progressing a community social work model, and
- Improving Transition planning

Evaluating this plan

This Plan provides details of our activities and how this will contribute to the achievement of our priorities and better outcomes for children. Our framework will include a range of performance measures to help us track our progress. All of our Children's Services Strategic Partners are committed to contributing to our success. A smart action plan, aligning service area actions to this plan's key priorities will also be developed. This action plan will form the basis for the on-going performance and review framework.

Our performance will be driven and monitored by the Children's Services Strategic Partnership. An annual performance report on our progress of this Plan will be published by the Partnership and reported through the Community Planning Partnership governance structures, as well as being submitted to the Scottish Government to meet our legal requirements.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Progress against the previous plan

Priority 1: Young people’s rights and views are respected and listened to.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>CPP partners, notably Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, will continue to build relationships with the Champions Board, Education and other partners and further support activity in relation to care experienced young people to ensure that they are active contributors in Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>CWU officers in North Ayrshire have linked in with the Champions Board and intend on making this a regular scheduled meeting as we are keen to seek further partnership working. CWU are regular attendees at Children’s Homes which has had a clear and positive impact on the number of young person’s being reported missing. Future engagement will take place at community open days in collaboration with Donna Anderson, the first of which will take place on 02/06/23 in line with the Joint Cabinet action.</p>
<p>We will introduce new models of provision for free period products across schools and communities</p>	<p>Through our free period product provision, every pupil who menstruates, will have access to free products in their school. Products are also available in libraries, halls and centres and can be located via a free app – Pick Up My Period.</p> <p>We regularly provide bulk products to pupils in secondary schools ahead of longer school holiday periods to ensure there is continued access. The products are given to every pupil to ensure no one feels targeted or stigmatised.</p> <p>Pupils were consulted on the free period products provision in schools as well as community settings to ensure the model met their needs.</p>
<p>We will review our approach to nurture across our educational establishments.</p>	<p>30 primary schools and 8 secondary schools are benefiting from targeted Nurture support in the 2022-23 academic year. Nurture support is specifically focused on enabling pupil readiness to learn with data indicating this has a strong impact on delivering better outcomes for learners. The data analysis continues to illustrate the importance of nurture in supporting the health and wellbeing of identified pupils. Almost all schools have elected to continue with the NAC approach to nurture for 2023/24. We have piloted a few variant models and are liaising with establishments moving forward. We have undertaken full quality assurance visits and analysis. We have</p>

	<p>trained 56 nurture practitioners in the Lets Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) intervention and most have started the intervention with young people. In addition to targeted Nurture, schools without a dedicated Nurture teacher and classroom assistant benefit through the Whole School Nurture framework that has been further developed in the current academic year.</p>
<p>We will raise the awareness of children’s rights (UNCRC) across all our partners.</p>	<p>We have employed a Policy Officer who will drive the implementation of UNCRC throughout North Ayrshire We have established a young people’s UNCRC group, which is led by North Ayrshire’s Young People’s Champion. We are working with our learning and development team and the Improvement Service team to identify and implement the best way to develop training materials and guidance on UNCRC. Identifying the target groups and their specific needs will allow us to know the level of training needs required. An Education Service UNCRC Policy and Operating Procedure was drafted in late 2022 and is in the process of being finalised ahead of sharing with education establishments to support further embedding of children rights within education settings. In addition, a realising children’s rights policy insert has been drafted that is being considered as a proposal that will enable alignment between future Education Service policy and UNCRC requirements. We have developed a communications plan, the remit of which is focussed on raising awareness.</p>
<p>Police Scotland are building on the excellent work already carried out by Campus Officers in school by identifying other ways that they can provide mentor support and enhance life skills for school leavers. This will be extended to include young people who have already left school or further education.</p>	<p>Our PSYV coordinator carried out numerous inputs to schools in North Ayrshire with a view to recruiting new volunteers whilst providing positive role modelling and support for youths in addition to that of Campus Officers. North Ayrshire PSYV group currently has 16 youth volunteers and will begin their annual recruitment campaign in partnership with Campus Officers after the summer break with a view to having a further 8 join. The optimum age for recruits is between 13-15 to allow them the best opportunity to complete their induction and deploy to as many events as possible, however candidates are welcome up to and including 17 years.</p>

	The Ayrshire Division Senior Leadership Team have had an initial meeting with MCR Pathways to learn more about mentoring opportunities.
Police Scotland will work with partners over the coming three years to conduct focussed activity with individuals and support them into employment or other positive destinations. They have identified an Inspector to lead on this work and engagement has already begun with partners.	<p>Community Wellbeing Unit (CWU) officers in North Ayrshire work closely with the Eglinton Growers, referring those in the community who have an interest in gardening to them, particularly those who are looking for connection and who may have underlying poor mental health. School leavers are also referred to assist with enhancing their CV and building social skills.</p> <p>Regular referrals are made to CEIS in Bank Street who assist with CV writing, first aid courses and interview preparation. Further engagement is planned for the Kilwinning Campus of the Ayrshire College with a view to opening up opportunities for those in the community who may not have considered further education.</p> <p>CPP partners, notably Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, will continue to build relationships with the Champions Board, Education and other partners and further support activity in relation to care experienced young people to ensure that they are active contributors in Corporate Parenting.</p>

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
Refresh and strengthen the focus of the school-college partnership and provide enhanced opportunities for achievement, e.g. through the Regional Improvement Collaborative, in the senior phase	<p>Ayrshire College has continued to work with Secondary Schools to develop skills mapping from Senior Phase courses to College Pathways. This has been shared with young people and parents to enhance and inform career choices.</p> <p>Through the school / college partnership forum, a series of engagement opportunities were planned for completion during April-June. For example, all schools have been offered campus tours for groups of S1 & S2 pupils and also Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) 'Vocational Bursts' for various college courses.</p>
Design tailored programmes with partners to provide enhanced support for specific groups of	Working with the Local Employability Partnership, identification and tracking of vulnerable leavers has increased. Schools are

<p>school leavers, including those with identified needs</p>	<p>increasingly using the school management information system (SEEMIS) 16plus tab which helps to inform Skill Development Scotland (SDS) Data Hub. This data is used by SDS and other partners for early intervention and support in advance of anticipated school leaving date.</p> <p>The Employability Team has an identified Ambition Agreement worker to offer individualised support. This feeds into a programmes, partners and referrals process which offers various pathways for vulnerable leavers and supported by partner agencies. For example, Barnardos are employed for targeted and outreach work with young people, including care experienced, facing significant challenges in accessing a positive destination.</p>
<p>Improve the quality and accessibility to services for children and young people who themselves (or whose parent/care givers) are at risk of the harmful effects of alcohol or drug use, by establishing a specialist support team in partnership with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.</p>	<p>Child & Adolescent Specialist Substance Team (CASST) is a joint funded venture by North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). The service aims to support children and young people aged 5-20 years old who are impacted by substance use. That could be from either the young person's own or a carer's substance use. The aim is to reduce harm/risk, meet needs, improve outcomes. In a bid to contribute to the reversing current trends of chaotic and fatal drugs and alcohol use. Interventions take place across an array of care plans including statutory, court ordered, child protection, kinship, looked after, vulnerable young person, and intensive support services. The service aims to support vulnerable children, young people, and families; many of whom face complex and multiple challenges as result of substance use. This is done by providing evidence-based and tailored interventions to address need. The team provide support and interventions in areas including substance use, parenting through substance use, promoting/improving mental health/wellbeing, diversion strategies/activities, holistic therapies, community links, accessing peer recovery, groups, local assets/resources. In addition to providing support to access. training/employment/education. While promoting pro-social skills and lifestyle choices. More recently the team have been working with</p>

	young female adolescents who are caught up in sexual exploitation and drug use.
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Priority 3: Making things fairer and better.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
Develop a three-year Raising Attainment Strategy to improve outcomes for all learners and reduce inequity of outcomes, including a focus on accelerating progress in early primary and early learning centres following the implementation of 1,140 hours of funded childcare for all 3–5-year-olds.	Work continues across the education service to gather views from across early years, primary and secondary schools to inform the raising attainment strategy. Engagement with identified key partners will inform the longer-term strategic development and implementation of a Raising Attainment Strategy in the 2023-24 academic year.
Reprioritise our targeted interventions to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap in North Ayrshire, maximising the coherence and impact of our work.	Following announcement of a significant reduction in local authority Scottish Attainment Challenge funding by £1.1m each year until 2025-26, work has been undertaken to streamline approaches utilised within North Ayrshire to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. This has included a review of the Professional Learning Academy and commencement of work to target Nurture and data literacy support for practitioners in education establishments.
Continue to work collaboratively in partnership across the local authority, South West Education Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) and national networks to support sharing of highly effective practice that reduces the poverty related attainment gap.	The education service to work collaboratively with a range of partners at a local, regional and national level to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. This year this has included showcasing the work of Nurture at a national conference, leading a range of SWEIC offered leadership programmes, and sharing good practice through a range of professional networks.
Work closely across North Ayrshire services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.	The COSD action plan was launched at a COSD conference in June 2021, with educational establishments, families and partners, including CPP and third sector partners and local businesses. A further COSD Conference aimed at children and young people took place on the 30th of May 2022. This year's conference included representation from staff and children across almost all Primary, Secondary and ASN schools, including children from as young as P4 through to S6. The children and young people participated in a full day of activities, led by Education staff and the Youth Services team. Elected Members and Community Planning Partners joined the pupils and staff to allow the

	<p>continued co-design and co-development of a renewed action plan to mitigate the impact of child poverty in North Ayrshire</p> <p>The learner voice of the 174 children attending the conference has been used to inform North Ayrshire schools on the Council's approach to reducing the Cost of the School Day (COSD) action plan 22-23 and support school staff to take on board the voice of children and young people as to how the COSD plan will be implemented throughout North Ayrshire schools. The conference's collaborative approach to putting the learner voice front and centre to decision making and planning. This supports North Ayrshire schools' approach to placing children at the centre of decision-making.</p>
<p>The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) will develop a strand of mentoring within the Positive Steps with Partners Project employability project. The project will have volunteer mentors who will support new referrals, supporting them to attend volunteer interviews and placements helping mentees to overcome worries and fears and helping to increase confidence in individual abilities and be more included in their communities.</p>	<p>TACT employ two sessional Project Mentors to work alongside the Positive Steps Team. We have one Project Mentor delivering our Cooking on a Budget Programme, working with 15 individuals. This support comprises of support with budgeting and nutritional advice, as well as teaching basic cooking skills. Positive Steps are keen to continue to develop this role and are looking to implement Mindfulness Sessions in the near future. Our other Project Mentor offers support and advice for our participants at Eglinton Community Garden. They have been supporting 16 different individuals with a range of advice and support around planting their own fruit and vegetables at Eglinton Garden and also at home. The Project Mentor has been a great support for all participants, easy to approach and offers a huge amount of support for all people with their own personal issues.</p>

Priority 4: Supporting Mental Health.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>Review the impact of school counselling services and external counselling/ community wellbeing supports and refresh provision, strengthening the relationship between school counselling and other available supports.</p>	<p>Over the past year we have undertaken a number of activities to review both our external and internal counselling supports as well as trying to align these further with wider community wellbeing supports. This has included a short survey to all schools, Education Psychologists, counselling staff and a range of children and young people. We have explored the data we have on the use of our counselling services over the last few years and also aligned this with the data we have on requests for</p>

	<p>assistance for wider wellbeing supports. This review has already resulted in a few actions being taken forward including: an update of our school counselling guidance; the streamlining of the evaluations we currently gather for school counselling and an update of the post counselling questionnaire we use. Our next steps include: an update of our service delivery in line with the feedback from stakeholders; the completion of our school counselling guidance and an exploration of how our school counselling funding can be utilised to support wider awareness of mental health and wellbeing supports which may require the reprioritisation of the funding currently used to support primary counselling.</p>
<p>Assist education establishments to implement the national mental health and wellbeing Whole School Approach, including curricular, professional learning, and parental supports</p>	<p>An audit of establishment improvement plans and analysis of the Health and Wellbeing Survey took place. In addition, work is underway to support establishments who have highlighted the whole school approach to support mental health as a priority. One Primary school cluster (10 schools) have been supported to utilise the Whole School Approach MHWB self-evaluation tool against the eight principles. A whole staff session around the approach was delivered to 82 participants with positive feedback. Staff highlighted the principles they found particularly useful to improve practice. Professional Learning was identified as a key priority and we have developed a professional learning programme to meet the needs of all education staff. Staff have been encouraged to engage with the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Professional Learning resource developed by the Scottish Government Mental Health in Schools working group. This academic year, an additional 118 members of staff across the authority have completed the training with senior leaders supported to develop an action plan and evaluation will take place during term 4 of the 2022-23 academic year.</p>
<p>Promote staff mental health and wellbeing in a range of ways, including through the development of a programme of supported reflective practice sessions.</p>	<p>Reflective SW Supervision 4 weekly</p> <p>Whole Family Wellbeing Funding has provided vicarious trauma counselling sessions to a small number of staff within children's services. This will be expanded in 2023/24 to include increased availability of sessions as well as</p>

	<p>training for children' services' staff on vicarious trauma.</p> <p>PRI sessions via CPC</p> <p>Staff wellbeing funds for Health and wellbeing activities as a team e.g. yoga sessions.</p> <p>An Education Senior Leaders collaborative day took place in September 2022, attended by representatives from all establishments. Presentations were delivered on the psychological theories underpinning staff wellbeing and staff contributed their thoughts on concerns and proposed support. We listened to staff and identified key themes, these included concerns around working practices that impact on wellbeing and that staff valued being listened to. We were able to share current measures in place to support staff, for example the Head Teacher's Reference group which listens to and responds to education staff views on working practices. We signposted staff to e-learning modules we have developed around staff wellbeing and shared the spotlight on our research around what works to support Staff Wellbeing.</p> <p>It was clear from this event, that staff welcome and find peer support valuable and we have continued the conversation around wellbeing with a number of establishments.</p> <p>As we move into next session we plan to build on this work and develop a model/framework of support which focusses on validation, identifying strengths and empowerment, we aim to ensure this model is co-created with staff.</p>
<p>Review approaches to promoting positive relationships and whole school nurture and continue to adapt our approaches based on an analysis of need.</p>	<p>Feedback has been gathered from Head Teachers, children and young people, educational psychologists, and wider education staff to help determine where the main strengths and needs lie with regard to the whole school nurturing approach. This feedback is being used to make improvements in the education service's Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) approach. In addition, the education service has continued to develop, implement, and evaluate its 'Building on Positive Relationships' approach, which is a more targeted approach to whole school PPR.</p>

	<p>Support has now been provided to education practitioners, including area inclusion workers, in primary and secondary schools. Two parents' groups have also been run and evaluated using this approach with positive results. A service improvement group has been used this year to progress whole school nurture work and a collaborative session with this group was run in early May 2023 to evaluate progress to date and develop future plans.</p>
<p>We will continue to prioritise mental health and wellbeing in schools and communities.</p>	<p>We have supported education establishments to further develop their Health and Wellbeing curriculum and have shared evidence based curricular resources.</p> <p>We have continued to focus on the importance of respectful relationships and have now fully implemented the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme across all our Secondary Schools, an MVP staff network meets regularly and shares good practice; senior pupils have led PSE lessons to S1 and S2, evaluations are positive with younger pupils responding well to the input.</p> <p>The See Me See Change programme goes from strength to strength, with over 200 pupils trained by See Me in September 2022, to develop their understanding of mental health, stigma and discrimination and were supported to create an action plan to implement learning in their own schools. Examples of their progress includes, delivering learning to junior pupils, becoming mental health champions and ambassadors, holding bake sales, creating posters to raise awareness and influence change. To ensure ongoing sustainability 23 members of staff have been trained as See Me trainers and a further 200 senior pupils will be trained in June 2023.</p> <p>Our MHWB Project Delivery Officers (PDO) funded through the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health Supports and Services Grant Funding (CYP CMHWB) have continued to build on their successful community-based work. This year has seen them develop a strong partnership with Ayrshire College, as we work to reach 16–24-year-olds. They have delivered the Your Resilience programme to 60 college students with 37 completing the full course.</p>

	<p>In partnership with the Family Learning Team, they have developed a programme which promotes positive mental health and wellbeing aimed at primary aged children and their families “Take Time Families”. This was piloted in 2 of our Primary Schools and in partnership with locality officers from the Community Learning and Development Team has since been rolled out to libraries.</p> <p>The Bee-You Ambassadors have been supported by the MHWB PDOs, to deliver Resilience Programmes both in the community and in a number of Primary Schools where pupils have had the opportunity to train as Mini Mental Health Ambassadors, they are encouraged to role model positive wellbeing.</p> <p>During the summer months, the MHWB PDOs assisted and supported the summer food programme, delivering a Wellbeing that visited centres and halls across North Ayrshire.</p> <p>The aim of the Wellbeing Roadshow was to deliver interventions and activities that promote wellbeing methods, tips and strategies that could be used when the young people most needed it. Building resilience in these young people and giving them the skills to better their own mental health and wellbeing. In total the PDOs have engaged with over 2000 children and young people with almost all reporting they had improved MHWB.</p> <p>Engaging with at-risk groups remains a priority and the team have continued to deliver wellbeing sessions and run groups with New Scots, Care Experienced, LGBTQI. This reporting period they have also developed sessions to support Young Carers.</p> <p>Through the CYP CMHWB grant funded projects we have engaged with and supported an increasing number of children, young people, and families. We have continued to collaborate with multi-agency partners, third sector organisations and children, young people, and families to co-construct supports and services.</p> <p>Communication remains a priority and our Community MHWB Supports blog (NA community WB supports and services (glowscotland.org.uk)) has had 8506 webpage views with our bespoke MHWB education staff blog having 14725.</p>
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Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy.

ACTION FOR 2022-23 FROM LAST CSP PLAN	UPDATE
<p>Recruit additional dental health support workers to support vulnerable families across NHS Ayrshire and Arran focusing on minority ethnic and our most deprived communities</p>	<p>Following additional funding from the Scottish Government, NHS Ayrshire and Arran was able to recruit three WTE additional DHSW workers to support children across the Health Board area. There had been natural turnover in the team leading to additional vacancies and therefore 8 individuals were offered posts. All have either completed or are in the process of completing their NES accredited training and will be working across the Health Board to support families as part of the Childsmile programme.</p>
<p>As the cost-of-living increases, we are working to ensure that the whole family can be active for one affordable price. Our family membership will launch later in the year and provide a tailored package of opportunities which suits each individual family's circumstances</p>	<p>"We've been working with further partners to remove/reduce financial barriers to participation. The introduction of our Inspire children's membership has been a product which provides a range of sport, arts/drama and social opportunities as well as facilities. This offers best value for and the easiest way to access more.</p> <p>We continue to support the school meals programmes during the summer break with free activity provision.</p> <p>We are proud to report that our Inspire membership numbers have continued to grow, reaching 334 members in total. Not only have we attracted more members, we have also developed strong relationships with partners who will be referring young people for memberships. These include Justice Services, Phoenix Futures and the Childhood Obesity and Health Weight Group.</p> <p>Our North Ayrshire Community Sport Hub officers are finalising plans for a clothing and equipment recycling programme. It will focus on redistributing them throughout North Ayrshire in order to reduce participation-related obstacles. The programme will be promoted amongst partners and clubs will be encouraged to get their members involved in the scheme.</p>

	Donors will be able to use bins at KA Leisure venues to drop off their clothing and equipment.
We are working closely with Active Schools to develop a community programme on Arran. The recruitment of key delivery staff will allow us to ensure that residents have opportunities to stay active.	<p>We have secured a full-time person for the post of Active Schools Co-ordinator who is from the Island. Their key focus has been to provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community. The post holder has established a comprehensive extra-curricular programme of activities across all primary and secondary schools. The opportunities are led by North Ayrshire Sports Academy pupils, Clubs, school staff and volunteers. The Secondary school has on average 21 different opportunities each school term on offer. The primary schools depending on size have been 2-5 opportunities weekly on offer to them.</p> <p>Over and above, the islands Multi Sports Club that runs weekly at Arran High school for P6's and P7's bolsters around 50-60 participants weekly. This club is supported by Stagecoach to allow any young person who would like to attend can and doesn't have transport as a barrier.</p>

Appendix 2a – Agreeing Our Priorities

1. The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected

We Asked: How can we better ensure that children and young people’s rights and views are respected and considered in North Ayrshire?

“Don’t just listen actually do” Going forward with the new plan our children and young people thought time should be given to reviewing if their voices resulted in tangible actions ‘What is done that proves young people were listened to’.

Children and Young people voiced they want to be listened to on an individual and collective basis and gave good examples. The young people we heard from preferred that they were part of small groups where more outcomes could be achieved and they themselves needed a forum where they can ask challenging questions to prompt change.

We will take the learning from our pilot activity around ‘One Good Adult’ and apply across all our services.

Moving forward they said, ‘Look into having a committee of pupils from all the secondary academies across North Ayrshire which would allow pupils to give an input into the plan’, and indeed the review of the plan.

We are reviewing our participation and engagement strategy to ensure voices are heard and acted upon if appropriate.

Awareness raising activities designed by children and young people that help in understanding rights and can be communicated to all children, young people and their families could be progressed.

It was stated by Third Sector colleagues that an annual survey of all children, young people and their families could be sent to address changing priorities and throughout the lifetime of the plan.

2. Acting early to improve what happens next.

We asked: How can we act sooner to improve the lives of our children, young people and their families in North Ayrshire?

Our children and young people tended to focus on their education setting when considering this priority with a greater focus on life skills and wellbeing through the Personal and Social education curriculum.

We will continue to review our Personal and Social Education curriculum, ensuring that a broad range of subjects are addressed.

They indicated that one of the keys for schools is to identify issues early and have the structures in place to respond with either personally structured pathways and/or clear support structures to address common themes, e.g school attendance, sexual health, exclusions.

Early intervention – ‘everyone in the community should be offered this when it’s needed not just when in crisis.’

Third sector colleagues mentioned that many families with children who have additional support needs struggle during the school breaks as the same level of support isn't always available when schools are open.

Stigma – Asking for help can often be stigmatizing and a message to say, 'we all struggle at times and that it's ok to seek help!' needs to be communicated to all parents, children, carers, young people etc.

3. Making things fairer.

We asked: **How can we make things fairer for our children and young people in North Ayrshire?**

Young people were acutely aware of the impact of poverty and the cost-of-living crisis and expressed their wish for a greater choice over what to spend their money during the school day.

A reduction in the price of school trips, school uniforms, free school bags, meals, sports equipment and clothing were all called for as well as more access to food and toiletries, and swimming lessons.

We are embedding knowledge and understanding of Child Poverty in the curriculum and focusing on learning about managing money and budgeting, help available for families and the cost-of-living crisis and its impact

There was also a call for family learning activities to be available out with school hours so the whole family could benefit and would allow support to be given to the people who may need it.

We will review how family support is delivered out with school hours.

The importance of taking a 'Youth work' approach to education, with a greater focus on those who need the most support including those with additional support needs.

We will explore youth work approaches within mainstream and additional support needs establishments.

'Thinking of aspirations, how to build them for parents to filter down to C&YP. Can't just work in schools to close the poverty gap – got to reach outside the school gates.'

Third sector colleagues mentioned the positive relationship they have with partners that is built on trust. To take community asset-based approaches forward commissioning will need be flexible enough to cater for collaborative workstreams.

4. Promoting good mental health and wellbeing.

We asked: **How can we further improve the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people in North Ayrshire?**

This priority gained the most discussion and interest amongst our children, young people and third sector comments and covered a wide range of areas pertaining to mental health and wellbeing.

There was an overwhelming call for sports to be central to activity around this area for all those who wish to participate. Calls for more time outdoors, more sports clubs, access to better equipment and more funding for sport were all mentioned.

There was also a call for more 'clubs' in schools and in the community to meet the needs of those who had a particular interest in either a particular area or just spending time with their peers.

We will review our Open Space Strategy, Physical activity strategy and our Active Communities strategy to ensure sports and other outdoor activities are meeting the needs of our children, young people, and their families.

There was also no shortage of discussion on how emotional and mental health support could be delivered, including enhancing peer support, quicker access to school counsellors, shorter CAHMS waiting times and more awareness raising and advice in times of need.

We will continue to explore ways to support mental and emotional health within our schools and communities.

5. Inspiring children and young people to be active.

We asked: How can we better inspire children and young people to be active?

Some of this discussion replaced other views expressed especially surrounding mental health and wellbeing. Sports, leisure, accessibility to resources and activities were all mentioned.

There was an acknowledgement that activities were accessible and beneficial, 'Continue to offer opportunities through groups like active schools who offer young people to become positive role models for young children'. There was also a call though to expand the range of opportunities, 'Expand on opportunities outside of Active Schools to allow those from a non-sporting background to get involved in other activities.'

We will explore, with Active schools, KA Leisure and Connected Communities, the scope for providing additional activities, not just for individuals but for family groups.

We were told that this should include fun days, concerts, dedicated areas for different skill and confidence levels, gender separated activities if appropriate and most of all free.

Volunteering was also mentioned as a way to engage with our children and young people, and we should be actively promoting these opportunities in our schools and communities.

Appendix 2b – Aligning our priorities to GIRFEC

Using the principles of GIRFEC and wellbeing approach was identified that identified eight indicators of wellbeing that should be considered when working with children, young people and their families. These eight SHANARRI indicators are:

SAFE – HEALTHY – ACHIEVEING – NURTURED – ACTIVE – RESPECTED – RESPONSIBLE – INCLUDED

How they align to our Children’s Services Plan Priorities are as follows.

CSP Priority	SHANARRI Indicator
The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected	Respected Nurtured
Acting early to improve what happens next	Safe Nurtured Included
Making things fairer	Healthy Respected Included Achieving
Promoting good mental health and wellbeing	Healthy Nurtured Safe Responsible
Inspiring children and young people to be active	Active Included Responsible

Appendix 3 – CPP Structure Description

Provides a description of the CPP Structure image publish on page 9:

Image shows the following structures:

1. Community Planning Board as the primary overarching body (with direct links to Community Justice Ayrshire).
2. Feeding into the Community Planning Board is the CPP Senior Officers Group.
3. Feeding into the CPP Senior Officers Group is the following boards:
 - Children’s Services Strategic Partnership
 - Safer North Ayrshire Partnership
 - Economic Development and Regeneration Board
 - Community Engagement Network
 - Health and Social Care Partnership
4. Feeding into each of those structures are the six CPP Locality Partnership.