

# NHS Ayrshire & Arran



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 6 October 2025</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>South Ayrshire Children's Services Planning Annual Report 2024/25</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Tim Eltringham, Director of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Mark Inglis Head of Children's Health Care and Justice South Ayrshire HSCP</b>

## 1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Annual Operational Plan

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

## 2. Report summary

### 2.1 Situation

Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires a Children's Services Plan be prepared jointly by local authorities and health boards. In 2023, a new, refreshed Children's Services Plan was agreed spanning 2023 to 2026.

The Annual Report is provided to give a progress update on the actions identified in the 23-26 Plan and the report is provided as **Appendix 1**.

This paper provides assurance to members on ongoing progress in the South Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023 – 2026. The Board is asked to reflect upon the work of Children Services in South Ayrshire over the past year and take assurance from the ongoing work.

## 2.2 Background

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 states a requirement for every local authority and relevant health board in Scotland to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan, detailing plans over a three-year period. Part 3 sets out a legal framework for children's services planning with aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring delivery of local services that are integrated, focusing on promotion of child wellbeing and quality preventative approaches.

2.2.1 As set out under section 13(1) of the Act, a local authority and health board must publish a yearly report detailing services provided in accordance with the plan including what the provision has achieved.

2.2.2 The Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 is supported by six thematic workstreams:

1. **The Promise** - South Ayrshire's children and young people with care experience will have a good loving childhood, where their needs are met and outcomes are improved.
2. **Families** - Support is easily accessible through integrated, multi-agency teams who are based in local communities and know it well. Early help for whole families to overcome difficulties and stay together, where children feel loved and are safe.
3. **Included** - Children, young people and families who have diagnosed or undiagnosed additional support needs feel supported and reach their full potential.
4. **Voice** - Children and young people feel involved and listened to in decision-making around their wellbeing through continuous engagement. Compassionate, responsive decision-making for children is embedded into all our priorities.
5. **Healthy** - Reducing harm, promoting health and safety for our children, young people and families.
6. **People** - A training offer to staff in South Ayrshire, allowing them to come together to learn, collaborate and build relationships for the best outcome of the child.

2.2.3 Thematic Group Priority Chairs' represent members of the Children's Services Planning Partnership. Each Priority group is developing a specific action plan based on data and need. The progress of these plans are contained within the Annual Report.

## 2.3 Assessment

Coordination, management and monitoring of the Children's Services Plan is undertaken by a range of partners through the Children's Services Planning Partnership (CSPP). The 2024/25 Annual Report is the Second annual report for the 2023-2026 plan and demonstrates progress against the six thematic priority areas.

The CSPP governance structure supports improved governance and accountability on delivering on the Key Performance Indicators identified through the Quarterly Children Services Planning Partnership. The re-introduction in 2023 of the Joint Improvement

Group, which is made up of the leads for each of the six priorities, supports the operational delivery of the Priority actions and is accountable back to the Children Service Planning Partnership Group. Multi-agency partners meet regularly to review support for infants, children and young people where partnership work is crucial to promote wellbeing or early help.

### **2.3.1 Quality/patient care**

There are no implications on quality/patient care as the paper is reporting on progress of the first year of our Children's Services Plan 2023-2026.

### **2.3.2 Workforce**

There are no workforce implications as the paper is reporting on progress of the first year of our Children's Services Plan 2023-2026.

### **2.3.3 Financial**

There are no financial implications as the paper is reporting on progress of the first year of our Children's Services Plan 2023-2026

### **2.3.4 Risk assessment/management**

A risk assessment has not been carried out at this stage.

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

A full Equality Impact assessment has not been carried out as this paper is reporting progress of the Children's Services Plan 2023-2026.

### **2.3.6 Other impacts**

- **Best value**

#### Vision and Leadership

In South Ayrshire our vision for whole family support, endorsed by local families, is set out in the below statement:

*"We want to go on a journey to ensure families in South Ayrshire are at the heart of everything we do, and where their wellbeing is our top priority. With a focus on prevention and early intervention we will work to empower families living in South Ayrshire. We will work with families in a way that values the unique needs and perspectives of each family member.*

*We will ensure those working in our services have access to the resources, training, and the support they need to achieve our shared goal, and where they can overcome any challenges that come their way. We will help build strong and resilient communities where families are supported to thrive, and where every member is valued and included.*

*This is our whole family approach."*

#### Effective Partnerships

Collaboration is at the heart of children's services planning. The CSP 23-26 addresses the areas where we need to come together as partners to promote wellbeing, preventative and early help for families. This is represented by the cross sector membership on all groups and the multi-agency leadership of our priority areas.

#### Governance and accountability

The Plan is monitored and governed by the Children's Services Planning Partnership which, in turn, is accountable to the Community Planning Partnership. The reintroduction of the CSPP Joint Improvement Group also acts as a further strategic platform for improvement.

#### Use of resources

The Children's Services Planning Partnership is comprised of members from a number of Community Planning Partners who use their own resources to deliver services in their own area and will, at times, deliver services in partnership. An example of this being our Family First model of early and preventative help for families.

#### Performance management

In the last six months a robust CSPP self-evaluation framework has been produced, supported through the Joint Improvement Group. A core wellbeing data set has also been established for each priority group and the performance of the plan is monitored through Pentana.

- **Local outcomes improvement plans, community planning etc**

Partnership working within the context of the CPP is at the heart of the Plan.

Supporting care experienced children and young carers is identified as a LOIP priority and is also a priority of the Children's Services Plan.

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

There has been no public consultation on the contents of this annual report. Public consultation took place regarding the priorities of South Ayrshire Children's Service Plan 2023 – 2026 where we were supported by a Research company to consult with families and the workforce.

Consultation has taken place within the Children's Service Planning Partnership and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

#### **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.

- CSPP and Joint Improvement Group – August 2025
- South Ayrshire Council Cabinet – 23 September 2025
- South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership – scheduled for Early 2026

#### **2.4 Recommendation**

For discussion. The Board is asked to reflect upon the work of Children Services in South Ayrshire over the past year and take assurance from the ongoing work.

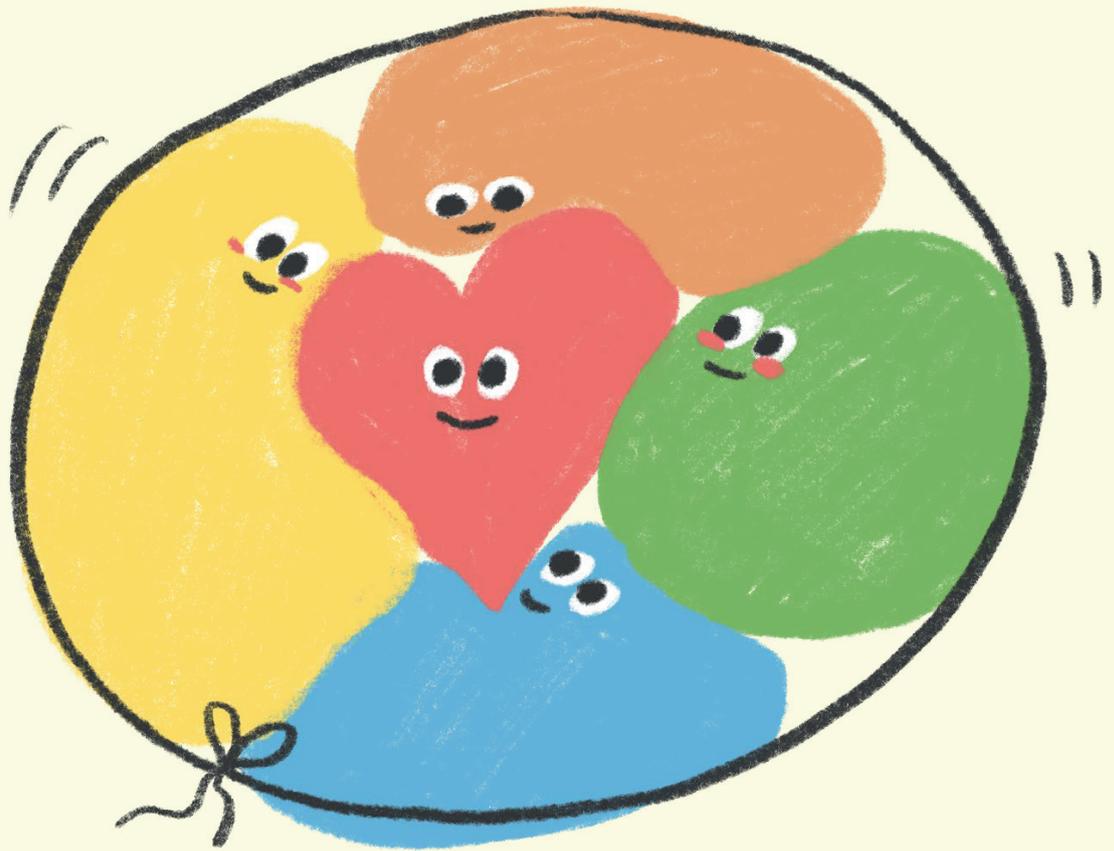
### **3. List of appendices**

The following appendices are included with this report:

Appendix 1 – South Ayrshire Children's Services Planning Partnership – Annual Report 2024/25 (DRAFT).

# South Ayrshire Children and Young People Annual Report **2024-25**

Supporting wellbeing, strong families,  
caring communities



South Ayrshire  
**COMMUNITY  
PLANNING**  
Partnership



# Contents

**Section 1.** Supporting wellbeing, strong families, caring communities - putting “Families First” in South Ayrshire.....3

**Section 2.** Key Multi-Agency Change Work Over Reporting Period 2024/2025.....4

**Section 3.** Turning the Dial Towards Transformational Change in South Ayrshire.....5

**Section 4.** A Focus on: Data and Self-Evaluation Activity in South Ayrshire.....6

**Section 5.** Children’s Rights in South Ayrshire.....8

**Section 6.** Whole Family Wellbeing in South Ayrshire.....11

**Section 7.** Our work through the lens of Child Poverty in South Ayrshire – a focus on our areas most impacted.....15

**Section 8.** Our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Priorities.....18

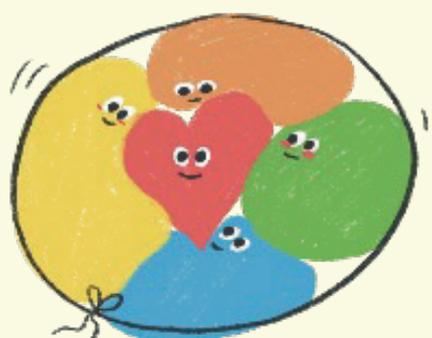
**Section 9.** Thematic Group Progress in 2024/25.....19

**Section 10.** What’s next for South Ayrshire Children’s Services Planning Partnership?.....44

**Appendix 1.** South Ayrshire Children’s Services Planning Partnership (CSPP) Core Wellbeing Indicator Set.....45

**Appendix 2.** SA CSPP Structure.....49

**Getting it**  
**Right**



**for Every Child in South Ayrshire**

# Section 1. Supporting wellbeing, strong families, caring communities - putting “Families First” in South Ayrshire.

As we reflect on reporting year 2024/25 of our Children and Young People’s Services Plan (23-26) in South Ayrshire, this second annual report is intended to demonstrate our continued journey towards transforming how we support infants, children, young people and families at the earliest possible point. Underpinned by Getting it right for every child and at all times led by our unwavering commitment to The Promise, our collective goal is early and preventative help from the right person at the right time to keep children with their families and in our local communities where they feel loved and safe.



**I support South Ayrshire’s Parenting Promise**

Our Children and Young People’s Services Plan 2023-2026 further embeds innovative practice and a transformational commitment to Keeping the Promise in South Ayrshire through a full authority roll out of our multi-agency Family First model. This ambitious work demonstrates influence on the wider system in South Ayrshire with Family First taking our early and preventative improvement work into the heart of all eight of our secondary school clusters. With commitment from Education, Social Work, Thriving Communities, Health, Housing and the Third Sector to improve attendance, attainment and transitions for our South Ayrshire pupils.

In South Ayrshire we have an impactful story to tell. Shifting the balance of care in South Ayrshire drives our work, we have far more children “living at home with parents” than ever. This is done through an assessment process mindful of Children’s Rights, GIRFEC, The Promise, Whole Family Wellbeing, and our application of the Signs of Safety approach.

This Policy Context in South Ayrshire clearly demonstrates The Promise as interwoven, interlinked and at the very heart of all our collaborative work locally. It drives us to work closer than before, to achieve our common aim towards promoting wellbeing, strong families and caring communities.

With that, this report will demonstrate the collaborative, early help work in South Ayrshire which is contributing to and supporting our aim to move upstream towards a place of prevention.

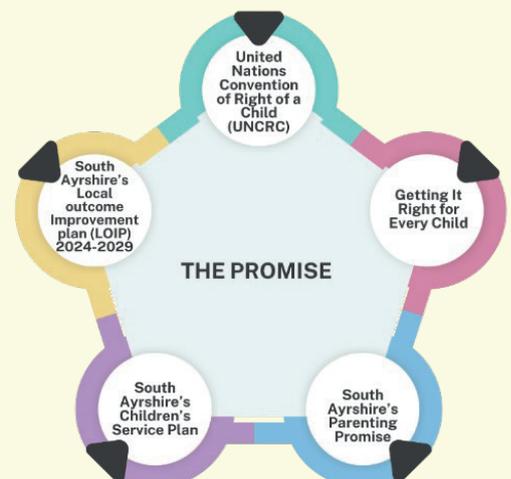
## At our heart – The Promise

The Promise is represented in our Children’s Services Planning Partnership as its own thematic priority area which allows direct routes for reporting and collaboration, however The Promise is front and centre within all our work in the CSPP. This decision was intentional to ensure our Corporate Parenting activity aligns at every stage of Children’s Services Planning, which is held within the Community Planning Partnership. In South Ayrshire there is a real commitment from the Children Services Planning Partnership for the Promise to be woven throughout all elements of the six thematic priorities - it is also reflected in all we do for infants, children, young people, and families in South Ayrshire...collaboratively.

All action plans, aims and performance indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) across all our thematic priority areas are carefully linked, represented and also contribute towards our Promise activity locally. This activity has involved our thematic group leads working alongside our Corporate Parenting Lead Officer to align work, clearly linking our early holistic whole family help journey to the progress of The Promise activity locally.

South Ayrshire’s developed 55 ‘calls to action’ which sets out our approach to implementing The Promise in South Ayrshire. These ‘calls to action’ offered us a clear structure and framework to understand the change required and are a source of motivation to achieve this change. In 2021, we identified Ten Promise improvement areas for 2021-24 from which we established thirty-one associated actions and a further forty-seven benefits (or measurable improvements). Over the past four years, we have focused on whole system change to deliver on the Promise, and through our ten improvement areas we have been able to measure authentic transformation through our benefits tracker.

All the work within this report supports and contributes to our Ten Improvement Areas. As we progress to Plan 25-30 we are beginning to map our work into the new 10 Vision Statements given to us by The Promise to ensure the connectedness of our work continues and deepens.



## Section 2. Key Multi-Agency Change Work Over Reporting Period 2024/2025

<p>From April 2024 our Family First model of multi-agency early help around schools has been rolled out to in all 8 of our school clusters with involvement from Education, Social Work, Thriving Communities, Health, Third Sector, and Housing.</p>
<p>South Ayrshire are the only local authority in the UK who are actively identifying young carers under the age of 5 (our teeny carers). Funding has been secured to support a two-year post to raise awareness and improve identification of teeny carers with colleagues and families.</p>
<p>The success of our Communication Friendly Environments initiative continues to grow, with particular enthusiasm around our community-based work. 16 local establishments are fully accredited including Ayr Hospital A&amp;E Dept, local restaurants and playgrounds, with another 19 settings either beginning or on the journey to accreditation.</p>
<p>Our South Ayrshire Youth Council launched in August 2024, with the first full Youth Council meeting taking place the following month. The Youth Council is made up of elected candidates from all Secondary School clusters including Special Schools, with members who are young carers and members who have lived experience of care.</p>
<p>Our young people have lead and co-created education materials to support schools to reduce the prevalence of vaping in our secondary schools.</p>
<p>Thriving Communities support in funding recruitment of our Children’s Services Planning Data and Development Officer has significantly enhanced our ability to collate and analyse data, using it to focus our collaborative efforts.</p>
<p>Attendance at South Ayrshire schools continues to increase, suggesting we are on a journey to recovery following the challenges of 2020/21 and our multi-agency focus on school attendance is having an impact.</p>
<p>Multi-agency GIRFEC development sessions for practitioners with a key role in Team with the Family processes have been created to allow practitioners the space to build relationships, reflect and learn together to strengthen practice. These will roll out quarterly, delivered by a multi-agency team of experienced in the named person and lead professional role.</p>
<p>Our breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks after birth continue to rise in South Ayrshire. Investment in a feeding nurse has positively contributed to these figures and work is planned next year to support increases in areas of higher deprivation, utilising antenatal PEEP.</p>
<p>PEEP has been a focus this year in our early and preventative parenting work. Collaboration is taking place between the Third Sector, Social Work, Speech and Language Therapy, Early Years, Health Visiting, Dietetics, and Thriving Communities. Ongoing impact is being assessed. Further collaboration is planned in Year 3 with Teeny Carers, Ayr United, Infant Mental Health, Perinatal Mental Health, Virtual School, Champions Board and Children’s Houses staff supported to attend the next round of training.</p>
<p>Led by our well-embedded Virtual School, our multi-agency educational support provision RISE was created this year. RISE supports our young people who might previously have been educated away from South Ayrshire to access a supportive alternative curriculum tailored to their unique needs, keeping them connected to their communities and wider networks.</p>
<p>Our approach to prevention and early intervention means that 81% of South Ayrshire Social Work caseloads are supported on a non-statutory basis. A change of language in the recording of Social Work files has also been noted in the most recent file audit undertaken at the July 2024. This audit indicated an increased awareness of the impact of the written word on anyone accessing their files.</p>
<p>The Education Promise Award is being rolled out across schools to support the Education workforce understanding of The Promise – this is on track for completion by all schools by June 2025.</p>
<p>Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) are proceeding with a ‘Wee Volunteer Award’. This new award scheme will celebrate volunteers of primary school age (5-11) who do not benefit from existing schemes such as the Saltire Awards.</p>
<p>We continue to connect our Aging Well Strategy work into the Children’s Services Planning Partnership with events such as intergenerational days held in collaboration with VASA, Girvan Academy and Girvan Youth Trust which brings together pupils and older members of the local community.</p>

We are really proud of our achievements this year, but we know there is so much more to do. For example, we must continue to reduce or eliminate exclusions for care experienced pupils and increase school attendance rates amongst pupils who are looked after at home. We will improve! Led by data and a commitment to positively impacting these outcomes, we have accessed CORRA funding to influence change. Guided by engagement and participation of care experienced local pupils, our Supportive School Structure Research work directly resulted in the creation of three Care Experience Curriculum Officer posts to explore and embed alternative curricular approaches.

## Section 3. Turning the Dial Towards Transformational Change in South Ayrshire

To understand the ongoing impact of our early help journey in South Ayrshire we need to look into the rear-view mirror, through the lens of The Promise, to our previous Children’s Services inspection in 2016. We knew then that too many of our children and young people were residing away from home and out with South Ayrshire, away from their families, network and local communities. Culture change was required in South Ayrshire to foster the conditions conducive with true collaboration, to turn the dial towards early and preventative help for our local families at the point when they need it.

A restructure of leadership in Children’s Services, collaboration, an unwavering commitment to improving outcomes for our care experienced population, the introduction of Signs of Safety and being led by ‘what works’ (our award-winning Belmont Family First model of early help wrapping multi-agency support around schools), all in the last five years has seen a shift in the balance of care in South Ayrshire. The data below gives a sense of how we are successfully ‘turning the dial’ to a place of prevention.

Care experienced children and young people are 50% less likely to be to reside out with the authority in 2025 than they were in 2020. This equates to over £3 million pounds saved to invest in earlier help for our local families.

Supporting families at an early stage has also seen a 76% reduction in the number of Children referred to the Children’s Reporter on Non-Offence Grounds and a 88% reduction in referrals to SCRA on Offence Grounds over the past two years.

Our Signs of Safety and Family First approach to prevention and early intervention sees 81.9% of South Ayrshire Social Work caseloads supported on a non-statutory, early intervention and prevention basis. This aligns strongly with the Children Scotland Act’s “No order Principle”, as well as the Christie Commission.

The use of the Promise Benefits tracker has been a key innovation with Family First and Signs of Safety as integral parts. The rigour applied to ensuring that “benefits” can be tracked and evidenced across the Community Planning Partnership, has been transformational and will continue into Promise Plan 25-30.

Restructure of our Children’s Services Planning Partnership in 2023 saw introduction of six clear priority groups, with data lead action plans taken forward by key leaders. This has allowed clearer aims, outcomes and performance measures for scrutiny with all action plans connected and contributing to the aims of The Promise.



## Section 4. A Focus on: Data and Self-Evaluation Activity in South Ayrshire

### What does data received since April 2024 tell us?

In South Ayrshire we understand that family life can at times be complex, and with that the measurement of what we do, what we deliver and the positive contribution this has to local families is also complex. Experiences and relationships are not quantifiable, and data alone cannot tell us everything we need to know about the human experience of navigating our services or the culture change supported by our “Family First” locality approach and embedding Signs of Safety. With that in mind, as you progress through this report you’ll find stories of change, stories of improvement and a focus on ongoing learning to understand the impact of our work within the context of this complexity.

In South Ayrshire our agreed indicator set for each action plan is scrutinised as a standing agenda item at both our Joint Improvement Group and Children’s Services Planning Partnership meetings. We have an incredibly robust self-evaluation framework, regularly revisited and supported by our Data Officer who brings quarterly data to our groups for scrutiny and to inform next steps in South Ayrshire.



### What is going well?

<p>The percentage of our P1, P4 % P7 children achieving expected literacy levels continues to increase, as it has done for the past 4 years with an increase of just under 3% to 79.2% in 23-24.</p>	<p>We continue to identify more young carers locally. In 2024 a total of 776 Young Carers were identified, an increase of 60% from 485 in 2023.</p>	<p>South Ayrshire continue to lead the way for positive destinations with 98.7% of our young people achieving a positive post-school destination.</p>
<p>Our pupil attendance in primary schools increased to 93%, up 1% from session 2022-23 and our pupil attendance in our secondary schools increased to 87%, up from 85% in 2022-23.</p>	<p>Led by our Virtual School, efforts to reduce school exclusion rates (per 1000 looked after pupils) has had great impact with a reduction of 54% from 73.4 to 34.0 as per latest figures.</p>	<p>2023-24 also saw an increase in attendance for our primary school children who are looked after at home, from 82% to 88% attendance rates.</p>
<p>2023-24 also saw a significant increase in attendance for our secondary school children who are looked after at home, from 54% to 67% attendance rates.</p>	<p>The roll out of our Communication Friendly Environment initiative has been very successful with 53 accredited community venues.</p>	<p>The percentage of babies who are exclusively breast fed in the 24 hours prior to their 6-8 week review has from 27.2% in 22/23 to 30.9% in 23/24. Our performance was the highest in Ayrshire and Arran.</p>
<p>73 number of children and young people have been supported through the Family First model in academic year 24/25, increasing from previous years.</p>	<p>The reach of our Small Grants initiative, co-designed by people with lived experience of care continues to grow. 2025 saw 244 applications, an increase from 209 in 2023 and 151 in 2022.</p>	<p>Our dedication to Youth Justice work has resulted in an 88% reduction in referrals to SCRA on offence grounds over the past two years.</p>

From 2021 South Ayrshire has consistently recorded the lowest percentages of expectant mothers reported to be a current smoker in Ayrshire and Arran, with a 4.4% decrease since 2023.

Our S3 girl's uptake of the HPV vaccination increased from 78.4% to 81.3% in this three-year reporting cycle (2020-2023).

97% of staff who have participated in online GIRFEC and Children's Rights training offer in 2024/25 have indicated that they have an improved understanding of GIRFEC roles and processes.

Over 90 qualifications have been achieved by young people involved in the Family First model.



### Where do we need to improve?

Although lower than Scotland (27.1%) South Ayrshire recorded a 14% increase in pregnancy rates of age 15-19 year olds (per 1000), from the previous reporting period of 2019/21.

We continue to focus targeted supports into the Ayr North area as mothers in this area are 12% less likely to breastfeed than the typically more affluent area of Troon.

Expectant mums living in Ayr North are also more likely to smoking during pregnancy than in any other locality area.

Speech, language and communication concerns at 13-15-month check have continued to slightly increase year on year since late 2022.

P1's at risk of becoming overweight increased from 11.4% in 22/23 to 13% in 23/24, however there was no recorded change in the percentage rate of P1's at risk of obesity.

Children at 27-30m living in Ayr North and Girvan / South Carrick are more than twice as likely to have a recorded developmental concern than the locality with the lowest recorded concerns.

We continue to strive to reduce exclusions for our previously looked after young people, supported always by our Virtual School.

Linking our work in the CSPP to our new Integrated Neighbourhood Models team to ensure our work joins up to reduce duplication for families.

Most recent figures demonstrated a slight increase in the percentage of children living in relative poverty from 24.4% to 25%.

Anxiety, family issues and low mood continue to be the main reasons our young people are accessing school counselling.

Early Years Centres rated as good or very good across all 4 themes saw a slight decrease from 90.8% to 87.5%

We need to increase our understanding of how we are using the voices of families to redesign or inform service improvement.

## Where is the data leading us?

Investment in our **CSPP Data and Development Officer** has contributed greatly to significant work over the past 12 months on our data sets across all priority groups, including analysis of data and self-evaluation activity routinely held within our Joint Improvement Group and Children's Services Planning Partnership. This means we are increasingly able to be led by our community intelligence. We will continue to improve our self-evaluation and performance activity, with support from our light touch evaluative partners Horizons Research.

We are currently in the process of repeating the Health and Wellbeing Survey across all **P5-S5 pupils** in South Ayrshire. Analysis will commence in Summer 2025 to support us to continue to improve outcomes locally.

In the third year of our plan we are diving deeper into our performance measures and indicators. All thematic group leads are working alongside the Data Officer and our research partners to support the ongoing development of our Self-evaluation Framework. This includes considering where our gaps lie in truly understanding the impact of our collaborative work.

Our data and feedback from families indicates that we can improve our collaborative efforts to support families from the earliest point in their children's lives. From Spring 2025 we will commence planning to wrap around parents, particularly in areas with the most need, with a focus on early help in those vital early years. A deep dive into the data held for our Eligible 2's is underway to support this work.

Our **care experienced population and our young carers** continue to need our unwavering focus and dedication. Plan 25-30 in South Ayrshire contains actions to consider where young people are both care experienced and young carers, with an emphasis on helping us to really understand (through participation) the dual vulnerabilities or complexities for this group.



# Section 5. Children’s Rights in South Ayrshire.

## Understanding our progress through children and young people’s participation and engagement.

We are committed to our duties within the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), with the core function being infants, children and young people should be heard and a part of decision making. The UNCRC goes hand in hand with Getting it right for every child. Listening to the views, priorities and experiences of children not only strengthens our understanding but ensures our services are meaningful, responsive and grounded in what matters most.

### Our new South Ayrshire Youth Council told us:

*Children and young people should be leading change in South Ayrshire!*

### What did we do?

53 young people standing	2558 young people voted across South Ayrshire	30 Youth Council members elected	3 Youth Council subgroups
Over 600 responses to engagement survey	3 key areas for improvement	£10000 in funding for improvement work	Cost of living crisis a key priority



This year marked a significant and exciting step for youth participation in South Ayrshire, with the creation of our South Ayrshire Youth Council. Our Youth Council are a dynamic and passionate group of 30 young people who represent each Secondary School cluster in South Ayrshire, including Primary 7 pupils, care experienced pupils, young carers, post-16 pupils and pupils from our Special Schools.

Our Youth Council was founded with the clear purpose to ensure that the voices of all children and young people across our communities are not just heard, but truly listened to. Making decisions to positively impact the lives of their peers focused on the issues that children and young people feel are most important to them. With this, it is important to note that our Youth Council is not an isolated group but is designed by the young people to connect into and represent our wide network of local youth voice groups – bringing together insights, ideas and priorities from across South Ayrshire.

In another major achievement this year, highlighting just how important these young decision makers are, the Youth Council successfully secured £10000 from partners to make a positive impact on the lives of local young people. A survey was conducted by the Youth Council to directly inform how this money should be spent, asking their peers what mattered most to them. One message came through loud and clear: the cost-of-living crisis is a top concern for children and young people in South Ayrshire. Young people are particularly engaged around access to affordable, nutritious school meals for all. In response to this, the Youth Council presented their concerns to the Community Planning Board and are now working with partners to explore improvements.

### Young Carers told us:

*We need to keep improving identification of young carers and raising awareness of our experiences!*

Lived experience underpins everything we do for young carers in South Ayrshire. We have representation from young carers in our strategy group to directly engage with decision makers – it is so important that their voice is at the heart of our work! We established Wee Carer and Young Carer Voice Groups who inform our strategies and priorities.

### What did we do?

At the request of our young carers, we created a recognisable ‘brand’. Our logo was designed by young carers and is used on all resources and documents. Our sustainable investment in decals on Council vans and canvas banners will raise awareness across our communities for many years to come.

Listening to our young carers includes supporting them to raise awareness of their experiences. Our new young carer awareness raising film, "Take Care of You". This fictional film is based on the real-life experiences of our wee carers, young carers of primary school age, and tells the story of three children and how their caring roles impact them in different ways. Although each storyline is fictitious, this film is based on experiences and feelings bravely shared by the children involved in this project. They have worked incredibly hard and have created a legacy with Take Care of You.

The film was launched at A Wee Night at the Oscars, with two wee carers hosting the evening. The movie not only stars a number of our wee carers, but was also developed, written and filmed by them. In partnership with The Iris, we commissioned the film to give some of our youngest unpaid carers the opportunity to tell their own stories and share their experiences as part of a project which has been running since Autumn 2023.

We also premiered South Ayrshire’s Young Carers documentary – a showcase of the number and breadth of services and organisations in South Ayrshire that provide support and opportunities for our young carers. The event brought together young carers from throughout South Ayrshire and their families, representatives were in attendance from a variety of organisations who play a role in supporting young carers, and elected members were also in attendance to show their support for the work being done.

Our Young Carers said: "I think making Take Care of You was an amazing experience and I think that it can help other people recognise what a young carer is and what they do for their caring roles".

Another added, "The film was a brilliant experience. I loved making new friends and had so much fun".

- It’s good to know there’s always someone there at school to understand and have someone to talk to”
- “I feel included in the school”
- “The school know about me, they know who I am and what I am”

**Are you under the age of 18?**  
Do you support, or help to support, someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, has trouble communicating, mental health issues, neurodivergent, or has issues with drugs or alcohol?  
No diagnosis is required and it doesn't matter how much or how little you do.

**You are a Young Carer.**

Support is available at [hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/YoungCarers](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/YoungCarers)





**Are you under the age of 18?**  
Do you support, or help to support, someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, has trouble communicating, mental health issues, neurodivergent, or has issues with drugs or alcohol?  
No diagnosis is required and it doesn't matter how much or how little you do.

**You are a Young Carer.**

Support is available at [hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/YoungCarers](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/YoungCarers)







**Young people taking the lead on tackling vaping asked:**

*Vaping is a problem in our schools – we need to be involved to reduce this issue.*

**What did we do?**

Pupils, parents, schools and health colleagues have told us that vaping has become a growing concern in South Ayrshire. Our young people were clear that they want to be part of the solution!

Rooted in partnership and trust - this year, our young people will lead on this issue. They told us that they understand the complexities better than anyone else for example, why young people vape, what the pressures are, what makes messaging around vaping effective, and what simply doesn't land! Our young people know which health warnings are potentially dismissed and which stories make a difference.

Working alongside Education, Health and Thriving Communities colleagues, a group of passionate young people came together to shape work to reduce the prevalence of vaping in South Ayrshire. They co-created engaging educational resources, posters, campaigns and supported the creation of our new vaping policy for schools. This work wasn't a consultation, it is ongoing co-production with our young people leading, designing and creating to positively impact this issue.

Local young people currently are engaged in developing a social media campaign – incorporating key messages with humour on the platforms that young people use.

**Local young people involved in the development of our Children and Young People's Services Plan told us:**

*We need more opportunities to have fun as a family.*

**VASA Children and Families Fun day**

Building on the success of last years' event - Voluntary Action South Ayrshire's Children and Young People Forum delivered a second fun day for all the family. The Forum comprises of key members of the voluntary sector across South Ayrshire, working alongside our CSPP to support our local infants, children, young people and families.

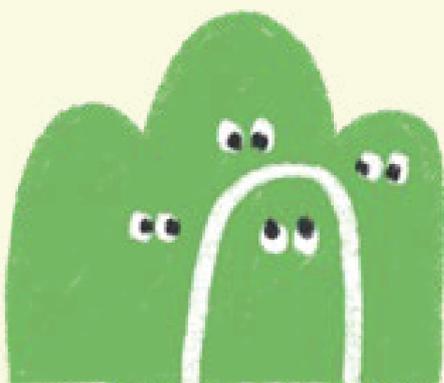


This event responded to family need to understand what supports are available within the Third Sector and allow families to find out more in an engaging environment. To ensure this event was as well attended as possible, the fun day was held during the February school holidays and attracted over 400 people on the day.

Sixteen local volunteer organisations provided sports, games, activities and crafts for children to enjoy while being able to demonstrate the range support that are available within South Ayrshire.

Local businesses supported the event by providing snacks, drinks and prizes for a free prize draw and the children particularly enjoyed a visit from Alpacas of Scotland.

Two hundred snack bags were distributed throughout the day and a quiz game entertained the crowds and helped to navigate through the information stalls.



## cAyrFest (supported by VASA.)

South Ayrshire's first ever cAyrFest event took place on Saturday 22nd February 2025. The event welcomed over 2000 attendees with over 30 information stalls offering a wide range of free activities for all ages. This intergenerational event celebrated our unpaid carers of all ages, tackling stigma by being open to all local families. cAyrFest spanned five venues: Ayr Town Hall, Grain Exchange, Cutty Sark, Ayr Grammar Primary School, and The Place.



cAyrFest's impact has been incredibly positive, with some individuals reporting they believe themselves to be unpaid carers through cAyrFest's promotion, increasing their awareness and access to support. Event feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and VASA look forward to further opportunities to work collaboratively with partners to ensure that unpaid carers are recognised for the incredible work that they do.

**Health and Wellbeing Survey 2025:** In South Ayrshire we are committed to being led by the voices of our children and young people. In partnership with our schools, including our Virtual School, we are revisiting the Health and Wellbeing Survey with commitment across all our Primary and Secondary Schools from P5-S5. This will provide us with a wealth of information directly from our children and young people. Results will be analysed over summer 2025 and directly impact planning for the coming years.



## Section 6. Whole Family Wellbeing in South Ayrshire.

### Utilising the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to further our transformational whole systems early help work in South Ayrshire.

In South Ayrshire our whole family work is rooted in the Ten Principles of Intensive Family Support.

The Promise tells us there must be more support for families, based in the communities where they live. In South Ayrshire we are whole heartedly committed to our whole family work and its direct contribution to our journey to keeping families together where it is safe to do so. We know family support that is holistic and meaningful requires whole systems change.

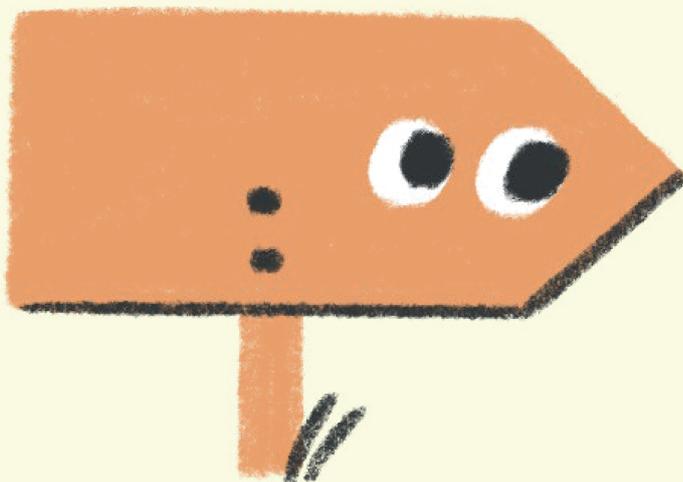
### Supporting Whole Systems Change - Family First and Small Steps to Wellbeing

At the heart of an ongoing commitment to Keeping the Promise in South Ayrshire is 'Family First', a model focused on keeping young people together with their families and in their local communities with support from people who know them best.

Family First commenced as a pilot within the Belmont School locality, placing social work support around this secondary school cluster with an aim to reduce statutory intervention. Belmont Family First supported families at the earliest possible point with the aim to strengthen family relationships and increase family's capacity to thrive. Belmont Family First was successful in achieving these aims, with no young people accommodated by the local authority for the duration of the pilot.

Understanding this success led to an ambitious, authority-wide, support around schools' model across all eight South Ayrshire Secondary school clusters. With a focus on relationships, 'Family First' is the key vehicle for holistic early help locally - collaboratively improving outcomes by bringing together joint resources, funding and planning. The aims of Family First have evolved to focus on improvement in attendance and attainment, however still wrapping around families and schools to move 'upstream' in providing early, joined up help to avoid family crisis. With this, the ambition of Family First to Keep the Promise is embedded within all areas of Children's Services Planning.

Integral to the early help offer within Family First and South Ayrshire is the **Small Steps to Wellbeing Team**. Small Steps are a team focused on the strengths that already exist in local families, promoting whole family wellbeing and strengths-based support. Small Steps to Wellbeing are funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to ensure early responsive Social Work support via a Team Leader, Senior Practitioner and Family Care Workers. The team is directly connected into and scaffolds the Family First offer in South Ayrshire, supporting us to avoid an escalation into and through the care system for our families.



Small Steps are based directly within the heart of our schools, which is invaluable to promoting those key relationships and encouraging positive school interactions, engagement with learning and reducing inequalities for our pupils. Our data indicates that Small Steps are working with families at an earlier stage than before, again demonstrating our journey towards early whole family help.

*“Thank you for all the help you have all given me, I couldn’t have got better without everyone helping and supporting me”*

Further progress and key successes of Family First are detailed within the **Family Priority Section** of this report.



## Supporting Whole Systems Change - RISE

**RISE** is a newly developed provision in South Ayrshire, further embedding our transformational change work and continuing our focus on holistic supports for our young people. Led by our well embedded Virtual School, RISE is designed to support young people who may previously have been educated away from their local area. Established in late 2024, RISE brings together a dedicated team of educational support, social work support, and community-based vocational mentors to offer a tailored, inclusive alternative curriculum for our young people.



**South Ayrshire  
Virtual School**

RISE strengthens our young people’s links with their local communities through a whole-systems approach with wrapped around support to help them to thrive, whilst also continuing to our Promise Improvement Area 10 - our young people will be cherished in education. This work is rooted in the principles of connection, belonging, scaffolding and whole-family support with the primary aim keep our young people within their own communities close to their family and wider networks.

Understanding life is often complex for our young people utilising the RISE provision, a tracking system has been developed to take the ups and downs that occur in life into account. Despite this work being in the early stages, there is clear evidence of improvement in engagement, attainment and attendance for the young people involved. One young person has achieved their Nat 3 History and been supported to attend a college interview. They’ve been offered a place to study after the summer! Everyone at RISE is incredibly proud of them.

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has supported recruitment of the multi-agency team at RISE and more information can be found in WFWF Appendix.

## Supporting Whole System Change - Small Grants

Champions for Change (South Ayrshire's Champions Board) support young people with experience of care to work alongside those who make decisions about the care system. In this way, they are involved in the decisions that affect their own lives. This work sits within the context of [Corporate Parenting](#) and [Children’s Service Planning](#). All of which is underpinned by [the Promise](#).

The Small Grants applications have offered the Champions Board a unique perspective into the experiences of the care experienced community in South Ayrshire. We think that this trust in us comes from putting their voices at the centre of what we do. We put thought and care into the questions that we ask and how we layout the application form. As our experience-led small grants funding continues, it leads us towards a deeper insight into existing services and the support the care community wants and needs.

For the past two years the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has supported the Small Grants initiative. The applications have multiple, layered benefits. The opportunity to give those who apply a tangible output. Money to buy something that they have told us about and then empowering them to get that thing. Offering the Small Grants has proven to be a great way to connect with other care experienced children, young people and adults in South Ayrshire.



## Small Grants Timeline:

Stay Connected #3 Launched (£250 max)	May 2020	100 applications £15,777 total funded
Onwards and Upwards #4 Launched (£250 max)	October 2021	112 applications £16,037 total funded
Onwards and Upwards #5 Launched (£250 max)	January 2023	151 applications £38,936 total funded
Onwards and Upwards #6 Launched (£500 max)	June 2024	209 applications £57,780 total funded

## Impact of the Small Grants fund:



The funding we distribute to young people is far more than a financial transaction. It is a lifeline, a bridge to trust, and a demonstration that their voices and experiences are valued. What sets our approach apart is the lived experience of those on our Champions Board Team. We understand the challenges young people face. This shared understanding allows us to connect on a deeper level, building relationships based on trust, respect, and authenticity.



## Supporting Whole System Change - Aberlour Hearts and Minds

Listening to parents who told us that it can be difficult to get support where children have a neurodevelopmental concern, but do not yet have a diagnosis, Aberlour have been key to driving forward a test of change within South Ayrshire. Hearts and Minds focuses on 3 areas of improvement to positively impact our young people's lives - Family Connections, Community Connections and School Connections. Here, Aberlour play a lead role in developing and embedding a relational approach to supporting families and wider communities where neurodiversity concerns are present. Aberlour build on experience of working closely alongside families and communities whilst demonstrating a strong commitment to supporting a whole system and collaborative approach to continuous improvement.

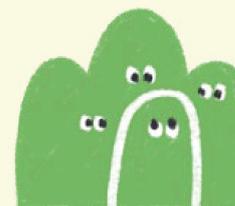
From existing trust and strong relationships with families, communities and partners across Health, Social Work, Education and the Third Sector, Aberlour continue to improve outcomes for our families and communities including:

- Work alongside Senior Lecturer in Neurodevelopment from Glasgow University Jason Lang.
- Ensure the voices and experiences of children, young people, mums, dads and carers are part of all aspects of the new service including establishing a mums, dads and carers Peer Support group.
- Committing to supporting the ambitions of our Neurodevelopmental Pathway Reference group.
- Working with partners to support the excellent work of NEST in South Ayrshire.

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund provides funding to Aberlour to support this work. The work of Aberlour is key in developing whole family early help in South Ayrshire. The three areas for improvement are listed below including the family engagement with the supports.

## Family Connections

Family Connections seeks to support parents and carers of neurodivergent children by co-developing support groups in each South Ayrshire locality with a blend of day and evening sessions. This process of co-production not only offers peer to peer support for parents, but it is also helping to develop networks of support and sustainability into the model. Parents and carers are supported to run these groups independently, with plans for Aberlour to continue to support groups over the next 12 months with two members of the team at each session.



Around 40 parents have engaged with the peer support groups since January 2025.

*'I look forward to the peer groups; I'm not judged or looked upon for my child being different'.*

## School Connections

To wrap Hearts and Minds support around schools, Aberlour have placed key and consistent supports into local schools on a weekly basis. Drop-in sessions, across local secondary schools have been developed for parents and carers and furthers the support offered. Again, this work is designed to empower parents and carers who are navigating neurodevelopmental concerns with their children in a familiar environment, building skills to thrive.

## Community Connections

The final facet of this work seeks to create neuro-welcoming environments for our children and young people through conversations, training and sharing of information. Working closely with the wider community, such as local football clubs, youth groups or uniformed organisations, this community-based approach helps to ensure that our children with neurodevelopmental concerns feel understood, included and supported. Families have told us this important to them.



## Supporting Whole System Change – Whole Family Support from Barnardos



In South Ayrshire Barnardos is an incredibly trusted and utilised support with our families. Barnados offer invaluable support to whole families in particular Five to Thrive, Seasons for Growth, HI5, and parenting supports. Five To Thrive is an attachment-based model which illustrates how connected relationships are fundamental to human wellbeing and to help us build resilient communities. It uses five key activities which are the building blocks to healthy communication and relationship development; talk, play, relaxation, cuddles and respond.

Barnados further our ambitions to embed trauma responsive practice and approaches across the CSPP. Barnados is a proud trauma responsive organization. Work continues with Dr Karen Treisman on becoming which includes consultation and ongoing training for all managers and staff. Staff are also connected to the work of the South Ayrshire CPP Trauma Lead. In this reporting year Barnardos have wrapped support around many local families with 167 families supported and 31 receiving intensive support. 133 children attended therapeutic groups and over 95 parents attended parenting groups.

### Next steps for the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund:

Early help in the earliest years – supporting our families from the earliest point in their children's lives through a whole family, joined up approach to prevention and early intervention. We are in the beginning stages of developing a "Sure Start" model within two key Early Years settings into 25/26.

## Section 7. Our work through the lens of Child Poverty in South Ayrshire – a focus on our areas most impacted.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact on the wellbeing of our local families. Families are facing challenging circumstances, and these are evident in our datasets over the course of this Children and Young People’s Services Plan. Our data, community intelligence and engagement with young people clearly highlights poverty is a crosscutting factor in outcomes for infants, children, young people and families.

As mentioned throughout this report, all our work in South Ayrshire is approached through the lens of The Promise. Linking together our Child Poverty work, South Ayrshire Promise Improvement Area 7 states ‘There must be significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for South Ayrshire children, families and communities’. Child poverty continues to be one of the most significant challenges affecting the wellbeing of life chances of our infants, children, young people and families in our communities. As a CSPP, we recognise poverty not only as an issue within our work but as a cross-cutting concern that underpins many of the barriers children face – impacting their health, education, relationships and overall development. Reducing child poverty and its implications is not solely the responsibility of any one area and similarly to The Promise, it requires a whole system response. This section outlines our local approach to addressing child poverty, highlights key work underway and how we are aligning our efforts with our local Child Poverty Strategy to create lasting change.

South Ayrshire has 7 data zones in the top 5% most deprived vigintile.
South Ayrshire had the 10th highest child poverty rate nationally in 21/22 and was above the Scottish average 24.4% compared to 22.6%.
This is an estimate of 4,807 children in South Ayrshire.
Fuel Poverty is 24.8% compared to 24% nationally.
The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows 19 data zones in South Ayrshire falling within Scotland’s 15% most deprived data zones – affecting an estimated 12,888 people.
Child poverty is the most prevalent in the Ayr North and Girvan and South Carrick Wards at 36% and 29% respectively and lowest in Ayr West where it is at 16%.
12.2% of South Ayrshire population is income deprived which is similar rate to Scotland (12.1%).
In South Ayrshire, 28% of households with children claiming Universal Credit have a child or adult claiming a disabled element.
64.2% of primary school pupils in South Ayrshire registered for free school meals took them up in 2023, lower than the Scottish average (66.7%).
57% of secondary school pupils in South Ayrshire registered for free school meals took them up in 2023, lower than the Scottish average (60.6%).
In South Ayrshire, at September 2023, 152 two-year-old children were taking up the two-year-old entitlement to ELC. These children represent 16% of all two-year-olds in South Ayrshire and 65% of all eligible two-year-olds entitled to that care.

Change work as we strive to reduce child poverty in South Ayrshire looks like...

Our **Child Poverty Strategy** in South Ayrshire, published in April 2024 is an incredibly comprehensive look into how we can positively contribute to supporting families who experience poverty. The work outlined below links into the three priority areas of this strategy and into the wider work of our Children's Services Plan 23-26 by bringing the lived experience of our local families directly into our change work, supporting the voices of local families to guide us to improve.

**Priority Area 1.** A child poverty system that delivers for families and the workforce in South Ayrshire

**Priority Area 2.** Families in South Ayrshire receive the support they need to ensure their money works best for them

**Priority Area 3.** All children and young people in SA receive high quality, flexible, accessible, and affordable education and childcare.

From the outset steps have been taken to ensure partners from representative organisations have been included in the engagement work undertaken in our Child Poverty Strategy. Public Health Scotland have played a key part in leading and facilitating sessions with partners and engaging with those who have lived experience.

Actions for each of these priorities are in the process of being finalised with full alignment to our CSPP actions contributing to the aims.

## Making a difference in Ayr North

As demonstrated in our data, the **Ayr North area of South Ayrshire** is our area most impacted by poverty and inequality. Breastfeeding rates are lower, there are significantly higher numbers of children with developmental concerns or additional support needs, and adults living there are more likely to be on medication for mental health concerns than any other locality area. Alongside this our Child Protection Committee annual report informs that from 1 August 2023- 31 July 2024, 15% of children newly registered on the Child Protection Register live in the Ayr Central and North Locality with 9% of children living in the Wallacetown Area.

## CPAF Round 2 in Ayr North

Our family research and peer engagement within our Insights 2 Report told us:

*"There is a significant theme around parenting where neurodivergence is present and supports required locally."*

In South Ayrshire we were fortunate to be successful in our **Child Poverty Accelerator Fund (CPAF)** bid to explore the interconnection between child poverty and additional support needs and the impact these complexities have on parental wellbeing. Our CPAF bid has supported the recruitment of our Research and Implementation Officer, with a dedicated role to utilise the local data, assess current offers and listen to families to understand how best to positively impact parental and child wellbeing. The post specifically focuses on the Ayr North area of South Ayrshire and through this work we will meaningfully involve individuals with lived experience of poverty and in parenting where additional support needs are present. Through close links to our EYC, Primary and Secondary schools in the Ayr North area we can utilise existing relationships and trusted support staff to link in with families via peer led panels or groups.

This work will also draw on the insights and experiences of those our partnership agencies are working with those with lived or living experience within South Ayrshire. We have entered this work looking for data to improve and not to prove what we think we know about additional support needs parenting and poverty. Community insights will be invaluable to shape this work, across the six priority groups identified within our child poverty strategy, and our aim would be to continue to seek engagement from stakeholders throughout the duration of the understanding phase and into the action phase of creating a support model.

Finally, recognising that parental wellbeing is impacted by the complexities we will utilise this relational family work to develop parental wellbeing measures locally and understanding their correlation to poverty, supported by the [Scottish Government Experimental parental wellbeing indicators](#): Mental Wellbeing, Social Networks and Community Cohesion. Understanding parental wellbeing where poverty is present will be crucial to understanding the impact of poverty and parenting where additional needs are present. This work will directly inform ongoing development of our Solihull Parenting Strategy in South Ayrshire.

## Barnardo's Young Persons Grants

Aligning again with our ambitions to keep The Promise and impact child poverty – this fund is specifically designed as a barrier and stigma free means to enhance the lives of our local young people. There are a number of areas that can be funded from education and training, leaving care, holiday and adventure, opportunity, sea training, poverty and hardship and disability. Anything our young people could need. This money goes directly to our local families, when they need it.

## Improving outcomes in Ayr North through collaboration in Children's Services

We know that our families in Ayr North need a bit of extra help to thrive and that parental wellbeing is impacted by the complexities they experience. Our Health Visiting teams, Speech and Language Teams and Early Years Centres are working together to positively impact the areas that families (and our data) are telling us are important, with a particular focus on promoting infant mental health. This includes collaboration around:

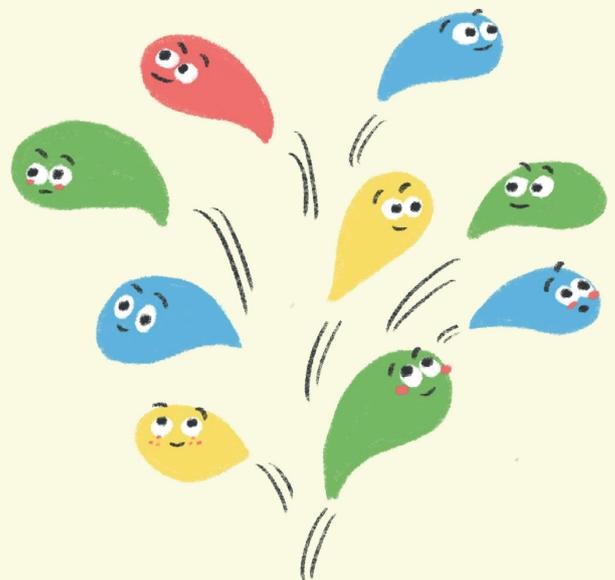
- Health Visiting Teams and Ayr North Early Years to promote toileting for our children in the centres, to increase the rate of children entering P1 who able to independently use the toilet.
- Health Visiting colleagues are supporting development of a pathway from antenatal contact onwards. Supporting new mums to increase breastfeeding, responsive feeding and positively impact infant mental health in Ayr North. In South Ayrshire we have an Infant Feeding Nurse who is driving the positive increase in breastfeeding across the authority
- Antenatal PEEP collaboration between Health Visiting and Speech and Language Teams to support the common thread of language and communication to come through in our early parenting supports. Alongside, this collaborative work includes support for Health Visitors to deliver early intervention for speech language and communication following 13-15m contact. This is now happening across all SA, not just Ayr.
- Magic Breakfast initiative, supported by Thriving Communities Employability staff and the Information Advice Hub have placed supports in two school breakfast clubs within the Ayr North Area. The aim is to engage with families to connect them into these services through drop offs and Magic Breakfast sessions.

## Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (Ayr North)

Furthering our CPP and CSPP approach to whole family, relational support our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams model is a whole system, place based approach to delivering health and social care services. This reporting year has seen much engagement, planning and development of the teams committed to supporting this in Ayr North as a Radical Leadership Approach to public service delivery.

The development of this team and way of working will be focussed in Ayr North initially, with robust support from University of the West of Scotland and Mutual Ventures (who have supported work to date and are experienced in working alongside areas in England who have adopted this approach). The learning from work in Ayr North will then be considered and used as a blueprint for South Ayrshire.

This is a radical, relationship-based way of working – aiming to reduce duplication in families lives in terms of the “services” who are present to support them. This work is incredibly ambitious, spanning children's and adults' services across the CPP to work closer than we have before for the best outcomes of families. Our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will begin during reporting year 25/26 and we are currently ensuring alignment across all our cross cutting agendas.

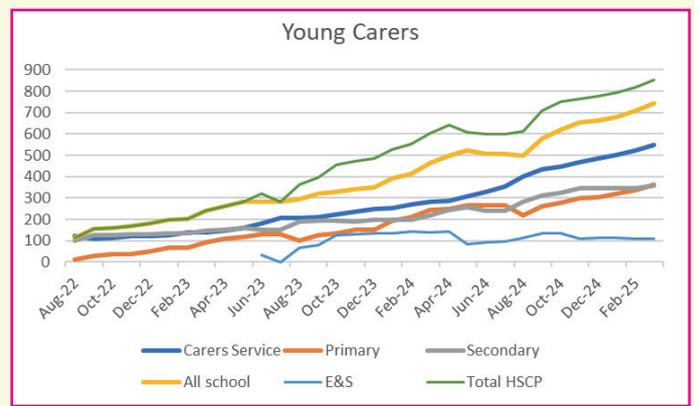
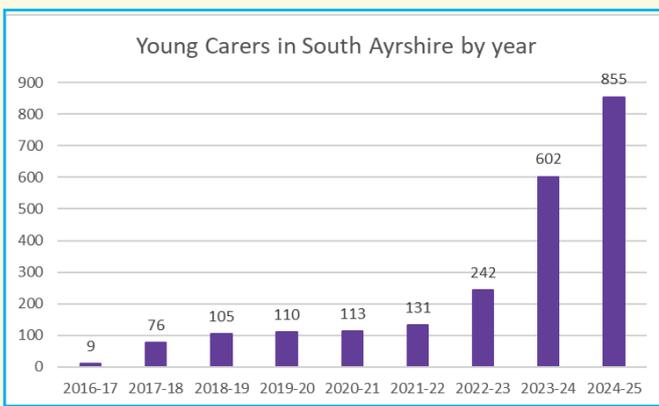


# Section 8: Our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Priorities

In South Ayrshire, our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) sets out our shared priorities across the Community Planning Partnership to improve outcomes for our local communities, particularly those who experience inequality. Similarly to our Children’s Services Plan, it provides us with a strategic framework to ensure collaborative working where it is needed most. In South Ayrshire our Children’s Services Plan aligns closely with the LOIP to ensure the needs of our infants, children and young people are central to wider priorities.

In South Ayrshire, the Children’s Services Planning Partnership identified Young Carers and The Promise as two key LOIP Priorities. This reflects our continued commitment as a Community Planning Partnership as a whole to fundamentally change how we understand, care for and support our families in line with the vision of The Promise.

## Young Carers



Identification and support for our young carers is one of two priorities within our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. We want to increase opportunities and support available for our young carers to thrive, working with families, partners and local services to improve our collaborative offer to young carers in South Ayrshire.

## Care Experienced Young Carers

Due to an improvement in data collection, we identified a growing cohort of children and young people who are both care-experienced and young carers (108 young people, aged 3-25). We secured external funding to work with this group to better understand their needs and any gaps in support, as no previous research (nationally & locally) exists. Both groups have poor educational outcomes and risk experiencing even poorer outcomes due to dual vulnerabilities. We will work with them to co-produce services that can be provided at the earliest opportunity, helping them achieve equity with their peers and realise their potential. There's a commonality in the isolation and stigma our care-experienced young people and young carers experience which we'll challenge by building a strong, visible community and collective voice. This innovative work has been recognised as national best practice.



**Key achievements in this reporting year include:**

Funding agreed for a specific role in South Ayrshire to support identification of our Teeny Carers, ensuring the earliest identification possible through awareness raising particularly within Early Years and Health Visiting services.

Annual Young Carer training is now mandatory within our Education establishments in South Ayrshire, including training within our newly qualified teacher program.

Increased awareness in schools including identification of a Young Carer Champion in each school, young carer policies, lanyards and attendance of the Young Carers Lead Officer at school events.

All schools in South Ayrshire have achieved the Young Carers in Schools Challenge (Carers Trust Scotland/ Education Scotland), plus two Early Childhood Centres. We are the only local authority across the UK to have all schools achieve this.

Increased partnership working to benefit our young carers such as experiences supported through Gaitey Theatre, Ayr United Football Club, Scottish Rowing, The Iris and Honeypot.

Development by our young carers of the new awareness raising film, "Take Care of You". This fictional film is based on the real-life experiences of our wee carers, young carers of primary school age, and tells the story of three children and how their caring roles impact them in different ways.

The theme for Young Carers Action Day this year was 'Give me a break!'. Following a tour of Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, our young carers met with Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes and had the opportunity to sit down and talk to her about what it means to be a young carer.

Last but not least – **cAyrFest!** We partnered with Voluntary Action South Ayrshire to host cAyrFest to raise awareness and bring together a range of services and organisations who can provide support to carers and families across South Ayrshire. The free event was a celebration of unpaid carers of all ages but was open to everyone to attend with activities including a silent disco, escape rooms, drumming sessions, face painting, a petting zoo. Free ice cream and refreshments were included, as was free transport to ensure those from all areas across South Ayrshire could join in on the fun.



## Section 9: Thematic Group Progress in 2024/25.

This action is completed or on track for completion.
Progress this reporting year is on target and being monitored.
Action has not progressed in Year 1 or 2, a plan is in place for Year 3.

### The Promise - Our commitment to improve wellbeing and life chances of our care experienced population in South Ayrshire.

This section should be read alongside our [Embedding-The-Promise-in-Practice-2021-24](#) report. This report describes the story of the journey that we have been on until now, and the changes made across a range of areas. It also emphasises how children and young people with experience of care have been at the heart of what we do, and how we do it. To see the full Benefit Tracker, aims and improvement activity please see the full **Embedding The Promise in Practice** report.

Promise Improvement Area	Progress Rating	How is it going?
1: South Ayrshire’s workforce and commissioned services will have a comprehensive understanding of the promise including how to embed the promise values in their approach.		<p>Five benefits have been realised these are:</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Lived experience is at the heart of increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise across SA workforce.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Elected members are engaged and have a wide understanding of the promise.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise across SA workforce.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise using public facing platforms.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> The promise’ is embedded in local strategy and all SAC staff have an increased awareness of the promise and improved access to South Ayrshires parenting promise.</p>
2: Services and provision will be designed on the basis of need and with clear data, rather than on an acceptance of how the system has always operated.		<p>Three benefits have been identified.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Establishment of a quantitative and qualitative reporting system which is fit for purpose giving a standard format for reporting.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Data gathered gives a clear picture of care-experience across the service.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> Real life experiences are understood by decision makers.</p>
3. Decisions made across South Ayrshire are underpinned by Children’s rights and there will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children’s rights and reflects equal protection legislation.		<p>Three benefits have been identified.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Upskilled and inspection ready workforce (small test of change)</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> – Young people and their families feel optimistic and have a positive outlook towards the future.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> – Young people and their families benefit from stronger nurturing relationships that place their individual rights at the centre.</p>

Promise Improvement Area	Progress Rating	How is it going?
<p>4. Trauma informed and nurture approaches are standard and widespread practice across South Ayrshire.</p>		<p>Of the six associated benefits 1 benefit has been realised 3 benefits are on track and 2 benefits are amber.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Children young people and families are more engaged in their care planning.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Better planning and impact assessing - based on improved understanding of trauma.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> Upskilled workforce and elected members.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> Reduction in staff absence rates.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> Improved health &amp; well-being for staff.</p> <p><b>Benefit 6</b> Building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council by becoming a relationship and strengths-based organisation and providing more compassionate and responsive services.</p>
<p>5. South Ayrshire recognises that 'language creates realities' those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their own lives.</p>		<p>One benefit has been realised on the basis of the activity outlined under improvement area 5 and 4 benefits are currently amber.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Children and young people will know their own story and will feel more nurtured and included.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Services understand that they exist to serve children and young people.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> All children's hearing reports will reflect care-based language and be understandable for children and their families.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> Young people feel included, nurtured and that they belong.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> Children and young people will know their own story and will understand their childhood.</p>

Promise Improvement Area	Progress Rating	How is it going?
<p>6: 10 principles of intensive family support are embedded into the practice (planning, commissioning and delivery) across all of South Ayrshire’s directorates and commissioned services.</p>		<p>Of the five actions that sit under area 6, 2 have been realised and 1 is on target and 2 are amber and will be carried forward to plan 24-30.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Improved engagement and participation resulting in better outcomes for those who use services.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Commissioned services better reflect the needs of the community.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> Children are supported to live at home or with family or in family type care.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> Community based: relational support is available through a Family First approach.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> The collaboration between South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs partnership (ADP) and children’s service planning in South Ayrshire will deliver a more aligned service which provides consistency for young people and their families.</p>
<p>7: There must be significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for South Ayrshires children, families and communities</p>		<p>Of the six benefits identified under improvement area seven. 1 has been realised, three are amber and on track as their associated action has been superseded by a new action which incorporates care as a protected characteristic. One is red despite the associated action 7.3 being partially achieved.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Workforce and elected members upskilled in equality impact assessment and the impact of care experience.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Better planning and impact assessing - based on improved understanding of equalities and care experience.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> Building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership by becoming an equalities-focused organisation.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> Increase in participation and access to range of services and activities by providing free bus transport to care leavers aged 22-30.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> The digital participation of young people with care experience and their families will improve through better Wi-Fi access across South Ayrshire action achieved benefit was not realised within the time despite the completion of the associated action (7.3)</p> <p><b>Benefit 6</b> – Children’s Health Care and Justice services will proactively engage in addressing Child Poverty in South Ayrshire</p>

Promise Improvement Area	Progress Rating	How is it going?
<p>8: South Ayrshire must support the workforce to contribute to a broader understanding of risk. South Ayrshire must understand, through its people and structures, the risk of children not having loving supportive relationships and regular childhood and teenage experiences</p>		<p>Of the 5 benefits associated with improvement area eight, 1 is green, 3 are amber and 1 is red as outlined below.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> South Ayrshires “whole System” understands and reflects the need for children to have loving and supportive relationships.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> South Ayrshire will develop a better understanding of child protection activity and process including how practitioners manage risk to allow children and young people to remain at home safely.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> South Ayrshire will understand non-familial harm and how this is addressed through a contextual safeguarding approach.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> Children and Young People will not be restricted by processes which impact upon their ability to have meaningful relationships with key adults.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> Children will be able to maintain relationships with caring staff who are important to them.</p>
<p>9: A framework of support will be in place to ensure people involved in the care of care experienced children and young people feel valued, encouraged, and have supportive relationships for reflection with high quality supervision and environmental conditions.</p>		<p>The two associated benefits are amber.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> An improved quality of supervision to develop a more confident competent and upskilled workforce.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> Improved staff wellbeing which could also maximise attendance and retention of staff by 5%</p>
<p>10: Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.</p>		<p>Of the seven benefits associated with improvement area 10, one is realised, one is red and five are amber.</p> <p><b>Benefit 1</b> Every school in South Ayrshire will have a clear understanding of relationship-based practice.</p> <p><b>Benefit 2</b> All school and service improvement plans, and Pupil Equity Plans will reflect the range of activity underway to improve outcomes for all children and young people, including those who are care experienced.</p> <p><b>Benefit 3</b> Robust and tracking monitoring systems will be embedded to support improved outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p><b>Benefit 4</b> All care experienced young people will leave school with an appropriate level of SCQF literacy and numeracy qualifications.</p> <p><b>Benefit 5</b> The number of care experienced children and young people accessing extra-curricular opportunities offered by schools and partners will increase.</p> <p><b>Benefit 6</b> A reduction in exclusions supported by early and effective multi-agency intervention.</p> <p><b>Benefit 7</b> All care experienced young people will achieve a positive and sustained destination</p>

## Change work in The Promise Priority: A Supportive School Structure

In 2024 we developed our new Supportive School Structure which ensures all care experienced children and young people receive support, opportunities, and a sense of belonging to allow them to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils. While according to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework South Ayrshire had a lower exclusion rate for our Looked After Pupils than our comparators or Scottish Average in 2022/23 (33 per 1,000 compared to comparator authorities of 80.1 and Scotland of 96.9 per 1,000). We still believed that exclusion rates were still high amongst our previously looked after young people and absences were also increasing in line with national trends.

**A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL STRUCTURE**

**DISCOVERY**

**JOURNEY**

**LEARNING**

**Why it matters**  
All care experienced children and young people will receive support, opportunities, and a sense of belonging which allows them to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils (The Promise)  
Our data in South Ayrshire told us that exclusion rates are high amongst our previously looked after young people and, absences are also increasing in line with national trends. Young people are often lost in the complexity of the system that surrounds them and do not always feel that they participate meaningfully in planning their education.

**The Promise**  
In December 2022 South Ayrshire secured £229,937 Corra funding to #keepthepromise across our school community to increase the participation of children young people and their families in education, leading to a co-produced curriculum offer.  
Year one funded research across the whole school community to better understand what supports help best and some of the things that were getting in the way for south Ayrshires care experienced learners.

**We heard from: The Workforce, Young People and Families**  
In total 108 surveys were completed, with an additional 12 face to face interviews and 2 focus groups. 5 shared themes emerged across each group.  
1. Choosing your key person  
2. Trauma Informed approach  
3. Benefits of positive relationships  
4. People – too many/ consistency  
5. Safe space

**The research produced 6 recommendations:**  
1. Routinely identify all South Ayrshire Care Experienced pupils who are Looked after "Home", "Away" or "Previously" and through care setting type across all clusters.  
2. Develop a clear alignment to the existing pathways that support young people's voice within and beyond education and lived experience groups such as pupil voice, South Ayrshire Champions Board and South Ayrshires Youth Council.  
3. Develop lived experience led opportunities and groups where all pupils with care experience can use their lived experience to raise awareness and influence school policy and practice.  
4. Explore "Communities That Care" and similar whole system approaches to further increase both empathy and understanding towards care experienced pupils across South Ayrshire.  
5. Ensure consistent direction and support for care experience leads across all secondary schools including opportunities to share practice, reflect and learn through joint training.  
6. Explore the development of a resource/team linked to South Ayrshires cluster and Family First approach that supports young people and their families to co-produce their curriculum. This should involve creative approaches that provide alternatives to traditional class-based learning and include outdoor learning.

**What is changing?**  
3 posts have been established to co-produce an alternative curriculum with care experienced pupils. The posts, which have been created based on the research findings, will work with young people their families and schools to explore creative ways to connect with learning.

Find out more and read our Supportive School Structure Report here: <https://hsc.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ThePromiseStorySoFar>  
Get in touch: [Sheena.Christie2@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sheena.Christie2@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Logos: south ayrshire health & social care partnership, south AYRSHIRE COUNCIL, Making a Difference Every Day

This work began in December 2022 when South Ayrshire secured £229,937 Corra funding to #keepthepromise across our school community to increase the participation of children young people and their families in education, leading to a co-produced curriculum offer. The Year 1 funded research across the whole school community to better understand what supports help best and some of the things that were getting in the way for South Ayrshire’s care experienced learners.

A further £425,019 was secured from Promise partnership Corra Foundation, £229,937 under supportive school structure, and South Ayrshire has employed a Research Assistant as part of the Champions Board to work with young people and families to develop a co-produced curriculum. The Research Assistant spoke to the workforce, families, and young people and produced six recommendations.

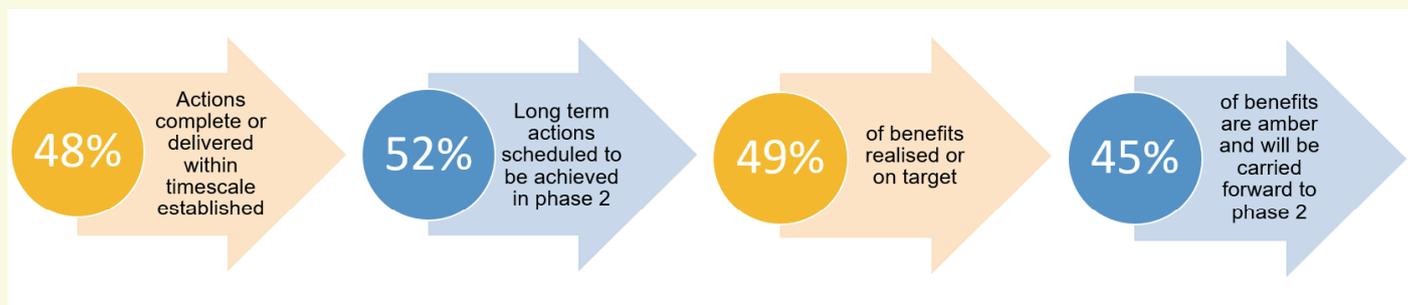
All 6 research recommendations will be incorporated into South Ayrshire’s promise improvement areas 2024-30. There will be an evaluation of the impact on young people and families who take part in the co-produced curriculum.

<b>Key activity in our Promise work:</b>
In 2024, South Ayrshire Champions Board received additional funding from Whole Family Wellbeing fund which allowed the funding of 209 applications totalling £57,780 which distributed in partnership with South Ayrshire Thriving Communities admin team.
Young people with care experience are actively involved in the youth council and have contributed to setting priorities that they would like addressed across South Ayrshire.
A change of language in the recording of Social Work files has also been noted in the most recent file audit undertaken at the July 2024. This audit indicated an increased awareness of the impact of the written word on anyone accessing their files.
South Ayrshire's Play Therapy Service is a new support available to our Kinship families and children. This service is made up of two part time qualified play therapists, overseen by a team leader.
Our Youth diversion work is delivered by Young Persons Support and Transition Team (YPST) and in the period of March 2023 to April 2024 there were 36 referrals for diversion from prosecution.
Strategically the Virtual School has taken responsibility for South Ayrshire's Skills Academy (SASKA) this year (2024), where all young people who attend have experience of care. The young people who have attended have <b>all gained qualifications</b> at level 3, 4, 5 and almost all have achieved 1 level 6 qualification.
Supported by the Virtual School Head Teacher the Education Promise Award is being rolled out across schools to support the Education workforce understanding of The Promise and has an aim to be completed by all schools by June 2025.
We have been successful in gaining CORRA funding to support us better understand experiences of our young people who are care experienced young carers.

**Next steps for The Promise Priority:**



Of the **thirty-one** promise actions identified in 2021-24:



Fifteen (48%) are now complete a further sixteen (52%) are on target and will be carried onto plan 24-30. Over the course of 21-24 one action was superseded by a new action and two actions required an extension to the due date to accurately measure their impact.

There is still more work to do to keep the promise by 2030. As we look ahead to the next phase of local activity, we will use national tools to help us understand our progress, such as [Plan 24-30](#) which sets out WHO needs to do WHAT by WHEN to #KeepThePromise by 2030. We will also use the National Promise Progress Framework developed at the end of 2024 (see 10 vision statements below) and align this with our corporate parenting reporting to help us tell our story.

**Family Priority** - Our commitment to families in South Ayrshire that support is easily accessible through integrated, multi-agency teams who are based in their local community and know it well.

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
1: We will develop plans, alongside the third sector, around a series of online and offline market-place events for families and the workforce in South Ayrshire (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Improved access</b> to information via introduction of Care Connects app, our school nursing app and links to Connect South Ayrshire.</p> <p><b>Improving trend</b> of knowledge and understanding of other services in Family First model with 96% agreeing understanding had improved.</p> <p><b>Improved linkage</b> between local family events to increase reach for families, for example priority group's work connecting with CAyrFest or the Communities Fun Day.</p>
2: We will create a 'services map' and service directory to ensure all routes to additional or specialist support are clear (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Increasing opportunity</b> for collaborative marketplace events to be led by family needs with families identifying more information is required around financial support, after-school activities and mental health.</p>
3. We will develop the idea of 'Community Connectors' around whole family support (Year 3)		<p>This work is in its early stages with collaboration happening across the Community Planning Partnership to support this aim.</p> <p><b>Improving trend</b> in the number of children and young people supported through the Family First model with a 21% increase in referrals and 74 children/young people supported this year.</p>
4. We will invest in locality-based Family First tests of change, bringing services together in multi-agency teams to support whole families and improve longer-term aims in Education (Year 1/2)		<p><b>Improving trend</b> in participation and engagement of pupils supported with 93 qualifications achieved this session and an increase in attendance by 50% for some pupils.</p> <p><b>Improving trend</b> in positive relationships and understanding of roles between services involved in Family First Forums with 96% of those surveyed.</p> <p><b>Declining trend</b> in Secondary School exclusions 6.7 per 1000.</p>
5. We will engage with families within each cluster to ensure the support is effective and meets the needs of children and families. Our families with care experience and young carers are a focus (Year 1-3)		<p>Exclusions of young people in decile 1 has <b>decreased</b> by 16.1 per 1000. Exclusions of previously looked after young people has also had a <b>significant decrease</b> of 41.7 per 1000.</p> <p>Education staff reporting <b>increasing opportunity</b> for collaboration with other supports to benefit families with £12500 allocated to each cluster for direct cash-first support.</p> <p><b>Stable trend</b> of young carers supported through Family First - 18% of those supported.</p>

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
		<p><b>Reducing trend</b> of the number of children and young people in temporary accommodation from 110 to 98.</p> <p><b>Increasing % trend</b> in school attendance (92%) but <b>a continuing gap between</b> this and attendance for those looked after at home (88%)</p> <p><b>Stable trend</b> in attendance for Primary School children previously looked after at 89%.</p> <p><b>Reducing trend</b> of the number of children and young people in temporary accommodation from 110 to 98.</p> <p><b>Increasing trend</b> of percentage of all school leavers in positive destinations at 9-month follow-up from 98.6% to 98.7% and most successful figures in Scotland.</p> <p><b>Declining trend</b> in children looked after or educated away from South Ayrshire over the last 5 years by 50%.</p> <p><b>Declining trend</b> in local costs for children and young people in residential based services by 27% over past 5 years.</p> <p><b>Declining trend</b> of 76% of Children referred to the Children's Report on Non-Offence Grounds and a 88% reduction in referrals to SCRA on offence grounds over the past two years.</p> <p><b>Improving trend</b> - 81.9% of South Ayrshire Social Work caseloads are supported on a non-statutory basis.</p>

## Story of change – Family First

Our Families Priority Group is at the heart of our ongoing commitment to GIRFEC and Keeping the Promise in South Ayrshire. The Family Group takes forward our 'Family First' model focused on early help – supporting The Promise by keeping young people together with their families and in their local communities with support from people who know them best at the time they need it. As with much of our work, Family First touches and contributes to many of our overarching aims in South Ayrshire around transformational, whole systems work to ensure our children and young people have the best possible start in life.

The journey of Family First commenced as a pilot within the Belmont School locality in 2020, placing social work support around this secondary school cluster with an aim to reduce statutory intervention. Belmont Family First supported families at the earliest possible point with the aim to strengthen family relationships and increase family's capacity to thrive. Belmont Family First was successful in achieving these aims, with no young people accommodated by the local authority for the duration of the pilot.

Understanding this success led to an ambitious, authority-wide, support around schools' model across all eight Secondary School clusters, funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. With a focus on relationships, 'Family First' is the key vehicle for holistic early help locally - collaboratively improving outcomes through bringing together joint resources, funding and planning. The aims of Family First has evolved to focus on improvement in attendance and attainment, however still wrapping around families and schools to move 'upstream' in providing early, joined up help to avoid crisis. With this, the ambition of Family First to Keep the Promise remains, embedded within all areas of Children's Services Planning.

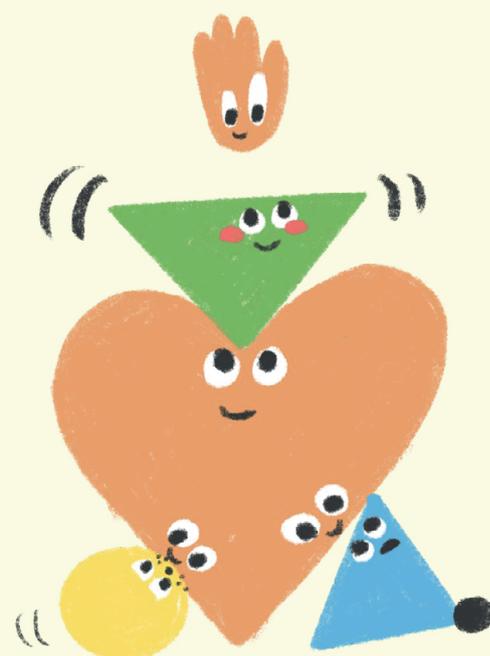
Family First collaboration has led to the creation of multi-agency personalised plans to support individual families based on what families and young people tell us they need. Successful plans include a range of partners supporting wellbeing and alternative curriculums tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils. Typically, these include support from Thriving Communities, Small Steps to Wellbeing (HSCP), educational support through our Family First teachers both onsite and off-site learning and Health. Our supporting partners have also been extended to Housing this session.

<b>Key activity in Family First:</b>
Successful roll out into all 8 of our secondary school clusters with collaboration and commitment to Family First by a range of services.
Inclusion of South Ayrshire Housing within forums where families have identified their living circumstances as impacting family wellbeing.
Increasing support for pupils at key transition points with referrals increasing around late Primary and mid-Secondary stages.
Family First has seen an increase in attainment of national qualifications for young people who were at risk of leaving school with no qualifications. Over 90 qualifications have been achieved by our young people from Nat 3 to Nat 5.
The community planning aspect of Family First forums has led to key themes for collaboration across our 8 localities to provide support in targeting key issues including vaping, work placement opportunities for S3s, and provision of youth activities.
Thriving Communities (Employability and Skills) have worked in partnership with Family First to provide work experience for Parents through the PAVE (Pathways to Adults Volunteering in Education) programme, with a number of parents securing posts in South Ayrshire schools following the programme. This success has encouraged more schools to sign up!
Allocation of £12500 per cluster has supported a has allowed one cluster to collaborate with the Campus Officer and a local gym to promote positive behaviours with weekly sessions on key issues including personal safety and the one punch programme.
Development of a data set around Family First to improve and support understanding of impact, gaps and next steps.
But the true success is in the relationships that are being built with our young people within Family First!

### A young person’s story of change with Family First support.

Family First supports many pupils and families who struggle with school attendance for a variety of reasons. This story of change focuses on an S3 pupil who told us that they were physically harmed in their local community which caused fear when leaving the house and impacted significantly on their mental health. At the time of support being requested by Family First, our young person was rarely leaving the family home and had a school attendance level of 0% wh. Family First ensured a consistent person, one of our Family First teachers, built a relationship with this pupil and over a period of four months the pupils was successful in achieving National 3 English, Maths and National 4 Maths. Our pupil has worked so hard and is now attending the South Ayrshire Skills Academy education provision with 100% attendance. They tell us they feel much more confident and are now heading back out into the community with friends with mum telling us she “has her boy back”.

*These stories of change are common for young people engaged within Family First – we are so proud of them all!*



**Included Priority** - Our recognition that we can do more for our children, young people and families who have diagnosed or undiagnosed additional support needs to help them reach their full potential.

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
1. By 2026 all educational establishments will be on their journey to achieving CFE accreditation (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Improving trend</b> in the number of educational establishments on their Communication Friendly Environment journey, including early years establishments.</p> <p><b>Improving trend</b> in Communication Champions attending Communication Network meetings with Champions surveyed informing that support from the South Ayrshire Communication Friendly Environment team is having a positive impact on speech, language and communication in their setting.</p>
2. Communication friendly environments to be expanded to Community settings by March 2025 (Year 1/2)		<p><b>Improving trend</b> in community settings who are Communication Friendly Environment accredited with 16 settings now fully accredited and 7 accreditations pending.</p>
3. Establishments will all receive their SACFE launch by June 2024 (Year 1)		<p><b>Increased knowledge and confidence</b> in staff following open training sessions on the importance of speech language and communication with participants rating confidence at 100%, an increase from 10%.</p> <p><b>Improving trend</b> in the percentage of P1, P4, P7 children achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence literacy levels (reading, writing, listening and talking) to almost 80%.</p>
4. Establishments will receive SACFE launch in SAR launch session in academic year 24/25 (Year 2)		<p><b>Stable trend</b> in the number of educational establishments enrolled in the South Ayrshire Reads strategy with <b>increase forecast</b> for 25/26 when all Secondary Schools will be enrolled.</p>
5. A SACFE logo will be created in partnership with South Ayrshire's young people to increase awareness of SACFE and to represent the programme (Year 1)		<p><b>Improving trend</b> in the attainment gap in all literacy measures across Primary 1, 4 and 7 pupils.</p> <p><b>Increasing</b> practitioner assessment scores following Talk Boost sessions showing improvement against all learning areas.</p>
6. A Communication Champion network will be established for peer support and practice sharing (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Increasing</b> practitioner awareness of the importance of speech, language and communication following training sessions at Biggart Hospital with all sessions resulting in 100% knowledge.</p>
7. A training calendar which supports SACFE practice will be established to develop understanding of the pedagogy which underpins the development of reading skills. (Year 1)		
Develop a well-established literacy team and wider Reading Leader network to support the development of reading in children and young people in South Ayrshire. (Year 1-3)		

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
9. Develop an inclusive, diverse, engaging and supportive South Ayrshire Reading Curriculum. (Year 1-3)		
10. All Early Years Practitioners in South Ayrshire will have completed Teacher Talk training by June 2025. (Year 2)		<p>Increasing trend in non-EYC staff trained in Antenatal and Learning Together PEEP to support messaging around speech, language, communication and play.</p> <p>Increase in awareness of screen time across the authority with inclusion of Screens Awareness Week in Public Health calendar and development of resources.</p>
11. Screens awareness week will be developed in 2024, and embedded in public health across South HSCP by March 2025 (Year 2)		<p>Increasing trend in percentage of Early Years pupils achieving 8 or more milestones in each domain, by 5.6% in language and communication alone.</p>
12. Development of public health resources (Year 2)		
13. Training delivered to foster carers across South Ayrshire. (Year 3)		
14. Development of a DLD strategy across South Ayrshire (Year 3)		<p>Acknowledgement that staffing and capacity issues have affected this work in reporting year 24/25 with plans to progress in 25/26.</p>
15. Working group set up to develop work (Year 3)		
16. DLD Awareness raising training rolled out (Year 3)		

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
17. DLD – Practical Strategies training rolled out (Year 3)		
18. DLD resources produced and targeted approaches to supporting children will be developed (Year 3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> in overall percentage of pupils recorded as having one or more additional support need in 23/24, with a <b>slight decrease</b> in Primary school from 39.9% to 38.8%.</p> <p><b>Development</b> of South Ayrshire Neuro-Screening group in this reporting year saw 85 young people highlighted for discussion, with the main concern being potential ADHD at 38%, then Autism at 28%.</p>
19. Support provided at transition stages in child's life (Year 3)		<p><b>Development</b> of Neuro Hearts and Minds service including peer support groups.</p> <p><b>Recognition</b> that a diagnostic pathway is still required for all children.</p>
20. All children with neurodevelopmental concern in South Ayrshire will receive appropriate support (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> in the proportion of children meeting developmental milestones from 82% to 85%.</p> <p><b>Increasing numbers</b> of Antenatal PEEP sessions delivered in collaboration with Speech &amp; Language (SLT) and Health Visiting (HV) Teams.</p>
21. All children in South Ayrshire with neurodevelopmental concern in South Ayrshire will access diagnosis if appropriate. (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Increased early universal supports</b> has seen the Speech and Language Team wait list numbers continue to <b>decline</b> meaning support can be accessed timeously.</p> <p><b>Slight increase</b> in percentage of children at 13-15 months with a speech, language or communication concern to 6% which might be attributed to increased awareness, recording and supports available.</p>
22. SPARK parent programmes rolled out wider (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Slight increase</b> in percentage of children at 27-30 months with a speech language or communication concern to 11.9%, although lower than national and comparator authority averages.</p> <p><b>Gap</b> in percentage concerns between most and least deprived areas in South Ayrshire.</p>
23. SLT Joint working with Health visiting team. (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Increasing opportunities</b> for collaboration in early years particularly between SLT and HV.</p> <p>Although a new indicator, we have <b>increased identification</b> to 22 teeny carers this reporting year.</p> <p>Looking forward to 25/26 we expect a <b>further increase in identification</b> of Teeny Carers due to a introduction of a dedicated role to promote and support this work.</p>
24. Universal and targeted initiatives to roll out key messages as early as possible (Year 1-3)		
25. Reduce risk at 27-30 month check by 10% (Year 1-3)		
26. We will identify young carers under the age of 5 to support their transition to school and access to supports. (Year 2-3)		

## Change work in our Included Priority:

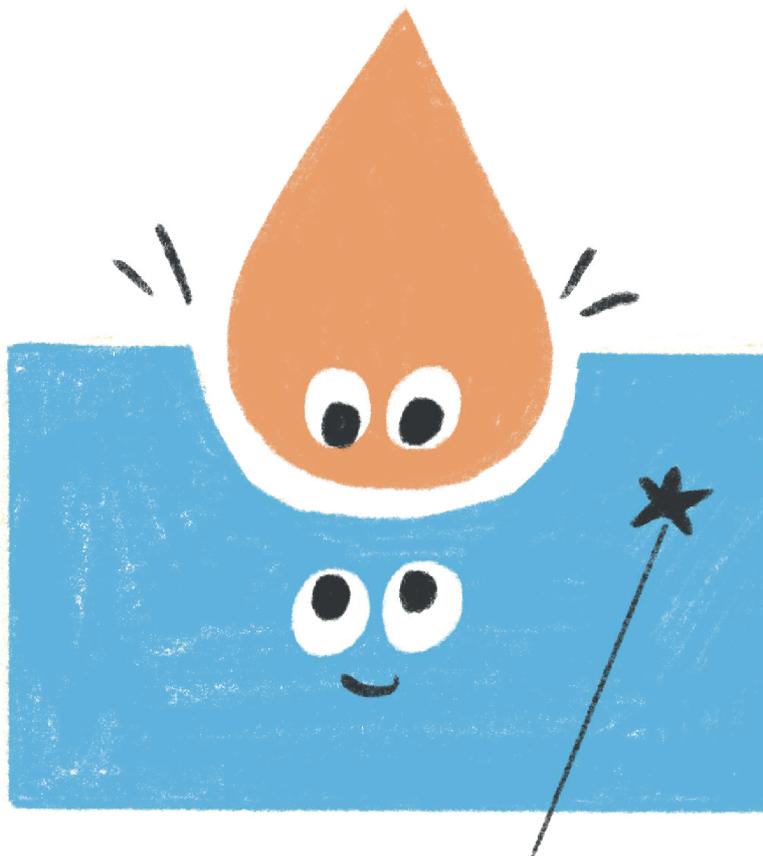
Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do in South Ayrshire. Through our Included Priority Group, we recognise that there are many barriers to inclusion we need to positively address, and families have told us the right help at the right time is vital. Feeling included is fundamental to our infant, children and young people's wellbeing and capacity to thrive. Young people have told us that when they feel understood, they are more likely to feel valued and supported. They belong!

Our Included Priority group focuses on the collaboration needed across our services to foster environments, support practitioners and create meaningful initiatives, both educational and community, where every child can realise their potential. Through joint efforts including initiatives such as Antenatal PEEP focusing on our most deprived areas, we are seeing families creating the conditions to lead this change. Antenatal PEEP has been the vehicle for further collaboration in early communication skills between Speech and Language, Health Visiting, Thriving Communities and Early Years teams. Bringing these professionals together alongside families to support communication, connection and responsive parenting from the earliest point.

PEEP session feedback from parents:

**“I can see her confidence develop”**

**“I enjoy seeing my child communicate with other children”**



**Key activity in the Included Priority Group:**

Our Communication Friendly Environment (CFE) community work in South Ayrshire, led by the Speech and Language Team, is incredibly exciting and successful work. Many local soft plays, restaurants, toddler groups, swimming pools and services such as Housing Aid or our A&E Department have received full CFE accreditation.

Over 30 large Communication Friendly communication boards have been installed in our local outdoor areas, supporting communication for families playing outdoors.

Our Screens Awareness week has been developed along with the Be Screen Smart programme which is being piloted in South Ayrshire Primary Schools. Our local Secondary schools are supporting in testing screen free days and Screens Awareness week now features in our Public Health Calendar.

The Neurodevelopmental Newsletter has been incredibly well received by families and practitioners alike. This quarterly newsletter detailed available supports, groups, websites and information for families who are looking for further information all in one place.

As part of the collaborative aim to improve speech and communication development by 27-30 months, health visiting teams have incorporated the use of the Speech and Language Team developed flow chart to identify children at risk of not achieving, or currently not achieving, in the communication domain at 13-15 months. Health visiting support workers provide early intervention and key messages to families to support progressing this area of development. This has been rolled out across the three teams in South Ayrshire.

Antenatal Peep is ongoing with a targeted group from our North Ayr area, which statistically has higher levels of deprivation and poorer outcomes. The “golden thread” of speech and communication being a focus throughout the sessions.

The development of our Neurodevelopmental Pathway Multi-Agency Screening Group rolled out in this reporting year. We are also working alongside Helios to progress assessments for Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Pan-Ayrshire Diagnostic Group meets frequently to continue to progress this work.

Our South Ayrshire Reads team are now engaged with all Primary Schools and the majority of our Secondary Schools, with early data indicating we are progressing towards our long term aim to raise literacy attainment and reduce the literacy attainment gap.

The organic collaboration within this group has made many initiatives and improvement work possible to ensure that our infants, children and young people face less barriers to inclusion.

**Story of Change: Teeny carers work.**

Young carers are identified at school, with the average age of identification being 12 years old. We know that by this point our young carers have usually been caring for a significant period of time and identification came be as a result of reaching ‘crisis point’ (e.g., attendance, attainment or behavioural issues). A young carer from our Wee Carer Voice Group said recently, “I was a young carer for ages before anyone told me.”

In South Ayrshire we currently have identified 22 teeny carers. To support this work to grow we are in the process of recruiting a two-year post to raise awareness of teeny carers with colleagues and families. Our Teeny Carer work will ensure all pre-5 staff are trained in identification of young carers to reduce young carers being missed and ensure early support can be provided, if required, particularly around achievement of developmental milestones. South Ayrshire are the only local authority in the UK who are actively identifying young carers under the age of 5 (teeny carers), meaning developmentally appropriate early support and intervention can be provided to ensure these children keep pace with their peers who are not caring.

Our developing Teeny Carer work has been recognised as national best practice by Scottish Government and Carers Trust.



**Healthy Priority** - Our dedication to promoting health, wellbeing and keeping our infants, children, young people and families in South Ayrshire safe.

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
1. Develop a local policy based on National guidance (Smoke free schools) (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Increased opportunity</b> to understand prevalence of smoking and vaping across age groups and localities via the HWB survey underway in May / June 2025.</p> <p><b>Co-created development</b> of policy and resources to tackle vaping led by young people.</p>
2. Survey the number of children and young people who have used vapes/e cigarettes (baseline measure) (Year 3)		<p>Introduction of Pan-Ayrshire Vaping Task Force.</p> <p><b>Decreasing trend</b> since 2021 of expectant mums reported to be a currently smoker.</p>
3. Identify educational materials for delivery across a variety of settings including schools and children's residential settings. (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> in expectant mums smoking in Ayr North (28.2%) compared to the South Ayrshire average (15.2%) and areas such as Troon (9.4%).</p> <p><b>Increasing trend</b> of children and young people accessing school counselling – up 13.7% since the previous year.</p>
4. Roll out education and awareness to identified age groups across South Ayrshire schools utilising a multiagency approach (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Significantly less</b> males (33%) accessing school counselling than females (65%).</p> <p><b>Increased opportunity</b> for consistent messaging utilising PEEP with Infant Mental Health, Family Nurse Partnership, Health Visiting, Social Work, Early Years, Perinatal Mental Health Team and Thriving Communities training and exploring collaboration.</p>
5. Identify support services for children and young people who require additional support to stop. (Year 2/3)		<p><b>Increased whole family partnership</b> working with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.</p> <p><b>Planning commenced</b> to re-embed Solihull as key early parenting approach in South Ayrshire.</p>
6. Reducing children's exposure to second-hand smoke (Year 1-3)		
7. Develop a consistent approach, understanding and use of language across Pre-5 services through a coordinated approach to support attachment (Year 1-3)		
8. Ensure consistency and availability of training for identified services (EY workforce) on areas of child development such as attachment, trauma, ACEs, FASD, Relationships, routines, boundaries. (Year 1-3)		

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
9. Improve young people's understanding of the impact of parental wellbeing on infant mental health through targeted support S4, S5, S6 age groups utilising a multiagency approach (Year 3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> of pregnancies at 15-19 years old in South Ayrshire but lower than our family group authorities. This is an increasing trend across Scotland.</p> <p><b>Higher rate</b> of pregnancy at 15-19 years in Ayr North than the NHS Ayrshire and Arran average.</p>
10. Identify support networks in place for parents within each South Ayrshire Locality such as peer support, support for young single parents, safe space and place, support to tackle loneliness and those experiencing poverty (Year 3)		<p><b>Development and communication</b> of our School Nursing App, increasing information sharing with young people and families.</p> <p><b>Increasing trend</b> in the uptake of the HPV Vaccine in S3 girls by 7.8% to 81.3%. Highest rate in Maybole and Carrick (83.1%) and lowest in Ayr North (71.7%).</p>
11. Improve mental health support for families during the perinatal period (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Decreasing trend</b> this year of young people undertaking physical activities with Active Communities.</p> <p><b>Increasing trend</b> of percentage of babies exclusively breastfed in the 24 hours prior to their 6-8 week review from 25.6% to 30.9%. Troon recorded the highest rates at 30.1% and Ayr North the lowest at 17.2%.</p>
12. Introduce a consistent approach to education on sexual health and healthy relationships with support from partner agencies within secondary schools.		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> this year of 5.5% of children who are a healthy weight at Primary 1, increasing to 77.7%.</p> <p><b>Highest percentage</b> of P1 children of healthy weight is Girvan and South Carrick at 77.4%. and <b>Lowest percentage</b> is Maybole and North Carrick at 65.2%.</p>
13. Implement Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Early Years Scheme across South Ayrshire (Year 3)		<p>South Ayrshire <b>recorded an increase</b> of P1's at risk of becoming overweight from 11.4% in 2022/23 to 13% in 2023/24, however there was <b>no recorded change</b> in the percentage rate of P1's at risk of obesity which remained at 9.8% from the year prior.</p>
14. Continue to deliver Jumpstart Tots and Jumpstart programmes for children and young people who are above a healthy weight (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Stable trend</b> of children and young people actively travelling to school at 60%.</p>
15. Increase the number of children and young people who actively travel to and from school and further/higher education settings. (Year 1-3)		
16. Promote the benefits of an active lifestyle to children and young people within schools and further/higher education setting (Year 1-3)		

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
17. ADP will promote the “No Alcohol, No Risk” message to women of childbearing age, partners and families, and embed the FASD awareness raising, training and activities (Year 3)		<p>Decreasing trend in the rate of Child Protection registration involving parental drug use, to 1.6 per 10,000 in 2024.</p> <p>Decreasing trend in the rate of Child Protection registration involving parental alcohol use, to 1.6 per 10,000 in 2024.</p>
18. ADP will support the implementation of the new national programme of alcohol and drug education in schools and the provision of education-based resources in non-traditional settings (Year 3)		<p>Increasing opportunities for whole family supports for children and young people via ADP Connexions.</p> <p><b>The Connexions team use Outcome star as the outcome measurement tool.</b></p> <p>53% of young people who have completed a review within this reporting period reported improved knowledge in relation to alcohol and drugs, to make safer choices.</p>
19. ADP will roll out the support for young people test of change across all secondary schools in South Ayrshire removing barriers to accessing support - Connexions (Year 1-3)		<p>48% of families completing a review within this period have improved outcomes.</p> <p>62% of young people reviewed have improved outcomes overall.</p> <p>From April 2024 – March 2025 89 young people or family members were supported within the Connexions service.</p>

## Story of change: ConneXions

In South Ayrshire our Alcohol and Drugs Partnership are closely aligned with our CSPP. The ADP are committed to the wellbeing of whole families in South Ayrshire and are responding to local need indicating that where an adult in their life has drug or alcohol worries – our young people might also need support.



Our Connexions Team offers a single point of access in South Ayrshire for young people looking for support with their own alcohol or drug use and whole family support for anyone affected by someone else’s alcohol and drug use. Connexions is a collaborative model bringing together our Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Barnados, We Are With You, Ayrshire Council on Alcohol, Recovery Ayr and the Health and Social Care Partnership. This collaboration sees a range of support and activities available based on the needs and aspirations of our young people including: individual support, group work, peer support, interactive information, advice and support to stay safe with access to wider specialist services. Connexions offers support at the right time and place for our young people and families.

Connexions offer support to young people in South Ayrshire where they or a family member are affected by the drug or alcohol use of someone in their network, or if a young person under the age of 26 is affected by their own drug or alcohol use. In South Ayrshire 46 families (72 children and 55 adults) currently being supported via the Barnados element of Connexions Team. Alongside this, group work based in local schools has been incredibly impactful, with other work in schools including raising awareness of young people who might be young carers due to supporting a family member with drug or alcohol use and PHSE lessons to over 100 pupils.

<b>Key activity in our Healthy Priority:</b>
Our Vaping work in South Ayrshire is now aligned with the Pan-Ayrshire Smoking and Vaping Taskforce to strengthen our abilities to tackle this issue. In South Ayrshire all our vaping work has taken place in partnership with local school pupils who have led on identifying issues, and creating resources to reduce the prevalence of vaping locally.
We are developing our “Fun with Food” work. This is a collaborative partnership approach with early years and dietetics to use the established PEEP parenting programme to support families with nutrition and food behaviours to contribute to child healthy weight.
Our breastfeeding work continues to be very successful locally with NHS Ayrshire and Arran achieving UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative Gold Award in March 2024. Investment in a breastfeeding nurse also continues.
South Ayrshire School Nursing APP, developed to share information went live in January 2025. The app includes a Sexual Health Tile to promote positive sexual health.
The Emergency Department referral pathway between Crosshouse Hospital and ConneXions is now in place and opportunities to role this pathway out to Ayr Hospital are being explored.
Revisiting our Health and Wellbeing Survey will provide us with a wealth of information into the next reporting year to understand and make sense of the impact of this group and the other thematic areas. The survey includes additional questions to support us to understand needs around vaping, and healthy relationships.
Our Infant and Perinatal Mental Health teams are linked into our PEEP training, as are our Maternity Care Assistants in South Ayrshire. Training has also rolled out in the use of the “Red Flags” attachment tool from the Lanarkshire Infant Mental Health Observational Indicator Set, and links established with the NHS Mini Minds Matters psychology service, for advice and guidance, where concerns are identified.
We have established a pan Ayrshire Young Person’s Sexual Health working group which includes representation from Education wellbeing leads, school nursing, Public Health, Sexual Health, community pharmacy, and staff working with care experienced young people. New developments include a postal condom service, young people’s pages on the SHAYR website, and free pregnancy tests and the minipill at most community pharmacies.



**Voice Priority** - Our commitment to listen to infants, children, young people, carers and parents and meaningfully involve them in decision-making around matters that affect them.

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
1. South Ayrshire Council will implement integrated impact assessments that will ensure the rights of children and young people are at the heart of key decision-making processes. (Year 2-3)		<p>Although a new indicator the roll out of the integrated impact assessment took place in this reporting year - <b>less than 25%</b> of the IIAs have a completed CRWIA within.</p> <p><b>Increasing trend by 17%</b> of community-based youth provision in South Ayrshire (specifically detached and diversionary youth work).</p>
2. CSP will support young people to develop a new Youth Voice Charter for South Ayrshire Community Planning Partners (Year 2-3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> from 15182 learners engaged in Thriving Communities community-based youth work to 19484.</p> <p><b>93% of young people</b> engaged with our Youth Work offer reported they have the opportunity to express their voice.</p>
3. We will develop a programme of events where young people's rights are promoted and discussed with key decision makers. (Year 1-3)		<p>Annual Youth Voice Awards <b>recognises and promotes achievements</b> of local young people.</p> <p><b>Increasing representation</b> of local young people in our Youth Council with the inclusion of Primary 7 reps. There are now 30 members of the Youth Council in total, representing all Secondary Schools, Virtual School, Special Schools, Over 16's post school, young carers and P7's.</p>
4. Ensure people with lived experience are consulted and have the opportunity to share their views on matters that affect them. (Year 1-3)		<p>Our <b>Youth Council consultation captured 613 local youth voices</b> on Cost of Living (an area they identified for improvement) this will help the young people decide how they spend the <b>£10,000</b> that they were awarded from SAC.</p>
5. We will create opportunities through the Community Planning, Participation and Engagement Group (CPPEG) for young people, parents and carers to participate in consultations. (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Co-created Child Friendly Complaints Policy</b> and resources created with Secondary Pupils, with the young person leading an introduction of "level 0" complaints.</p> <p>Roll out of full authority <b>Health and Wellbeing Survey</b> in May 2025 with results to be utilised to inform next steps both in the CSPP and CPP.</p>
6. We will refresh and develop the new pupil and parents surveys to seek the views of pupils and parents (Year 2-3)		<p><b>Development and roll out</b> of UNCRC and Children's Rights online training across SAC from June 2025.</p>
7. Create and roll out a Youth Council in South Ayrshire; including young people from each school cluster, our special schools, young carers and care experienced young people (Year 1-2)		<p><b>Co-creation</b> of our South Ayrshire Council Youth Voice and Participation Strategy</p>
8. We will work with young people to develop a new youth engagement and participation strategy that ensures young people have opportunities to engage with services. (Year 3)		

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
9. To ensure we consult with young carers to design and deliver a co-ordinated, young carers support service that is fit for the future. (Year 1-3)		
10. Young people will co-design and develop our youth work offer in South Ayrshire (Year 1-3)		

### Change work in our Voice Priority:

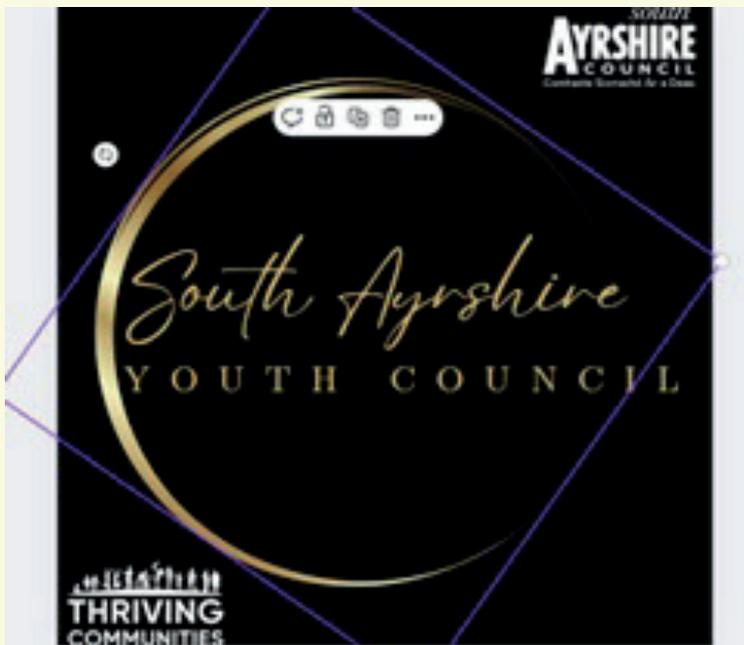
Through a consultation with approximately 700 young people on the future of Youth Voice, this year saw the successful introduction of our South Ayrshire Youth Council.

The Youth Council are an elected body of young people from across our secondary schools, as well as elected pupils from primary schools across the authority. The members were elected through a democratic process that saw over 700 young people casting their votes, ensuring broad representation and genuine engagement. The Youth Council has been established not only as a platform for young voices but as an active partner in supporting young people to be part of key decisions

The Youth Council has chosen to focus its efforts this year on key systemic issues, with a particular emphasis on the cost of living crisis. One of their main priorities has been addressing challenges

around access to affordable and adequate school meals. Members of the Youth Council have attending CPP meetings to seek support and are working alongside our Facilities Department and wider partners to seek solutions to ensure all young people can eat well and regularly. In addition to this work, the Youth Council will serve as a vital consultative group for services seeking the views of young people and moving forward, South Ayrshire will continue to embed youth voice into local decision-making and explore practical initiatives to support their peers during these challenging economic times.

In the coming year the Youth Council will continue to evolve as youth-led, with members working on the priorities they've set and the issues that matter most to our young people. A key focus for the coming year will be deciding how to spend and allocate the £10000 given to the Youth Council by the local authority to address these issues. The group will continue to engage with their peers and explore ways to make the best use of this funding with the greatest impact for young people locally. This approach reflects our continued commitment to empowering young voices and given them genuine influence over the decisions that affect them.



**Key successes in our Voice Priority:**

Our Youth Council consultation on Cost of Living will help the young people decide how they spend the £10,000 that they were awarded from SAC. Partners are working together to support the Youth Council to address inequalities in relation to school meals.

We continue to engage our young people into the work of the CSPP and CPP with Young people involved in our CPP Childrens Service Session this year. This lead to improvement actions due to young people requesting support from key people in the room to address the cost of living crisis.

Local young people have co-created our Child Friendly Complaints Guidance and Youth Voice Strategy with over 700 young people being part of this work.

South Ayrshire Youth Awards were held on 3rd April 2025 in Ayr Town Hall. Young people organised and hosted the awards ceremony that recognised the achievement of young people aged 11-25 years.

Our Health and Wellbeing survey – completed by Primary and Secondary School pupils across South Ayrshire provides us with direct engagement with young people on the issues that are affecting them. This also allows us to have a clear picture of where we have improved and where the gaps continue to be.

Young people from Thriving Communities are working with youth work staff to plan the summer holiday programme including the annual Bounce Festival.

Our young people are creating a Youth Voice Pledge and supporting creation of our Participation and Engagement Strategy.

Six members of the Youth Council met the First Minister and asked questions at Scottish Government ‘Traveling Cabinet’ – giving our young people the opportunity to have their voices heard.

Young people in North Ayr and Carrick are being consulted on how spaces and places across South Ayrshire can be improved or enhanced. In North Carrick a children’s version of the ‘Place Standards Toolkit’ is being piloted in a local Academy. Young people in North Ayr are being consulted on how spaces such as the Domain Youth Centre can be enhanced.



**People Priority** - Our training offer to staff in South Ayrshire, allowing them to come together to learn, collaborate and build relationships for the best outcome of the child.

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
1. A series of multi-agency development sessions, informed by areas of practice need (GIRFEC, Whole Family Support and UNCRC) (Year 2-3)		<p><b>Development and roll out</b> of in-person GIRFEC training to roll out from May 2025.</p> <p><b>Increasing trend</b> in practitioners attending online GIRFEC and Children's Rights training who report increased knowledge in processes and procedures following GIRFEC training to over 90%.</p>
2. Develop a programme of events to bring to-gether staff from the wider partnership for op-portunities for collaboration around sharing practice, information about their roles and areas of development. (Year 1-3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> in staff new to South Ayrshire in the last 12 months who report increased knowledge in processes and procedures following online GIRFEC training to over 90%.</p>
3. Conduct a training needs analysis with multi-agency early career workforce. (Year 3)		<p><b>Development</b> of GIRFEC and Children's Rights Learning and Development strategy for roll out Summer 2025.</p> <p><b>Development</b> of UNCRC training with roll out planned for June 2025.</p>
4. A series of multi-agency early career work-force development sessions, informed by a training needs analysis of where practice could be targeted, improved and better aligned. (Year 2-3)		<p><b>Increasing trend</b> in the number of SAC and HSCP staff who have undertaken the Pan-Ayrshire GIRFEC training.</p> <p><b>Increasing availability</b> of staff wellbeing supports.</p>
5. Develop a multi-agency GIRFEC training calendar including a yearly GIRFEC practitioner event. (Year 2-3)		<p><b>Multi-agency group set up to develop</b> a parenting strategy co-created by families and utilising lived experience CPAF work.</p> <p><b>Increased focus</b> on early years collaboration in year 3 through Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.</p>
6. Develop and roll out quarterly GIRFEC and Children's Rights Awareness training to all part-ners (Year 1)		<p><b>Ongoing QI projects</b> to be utilised in development of strategy.</p> <p><b>Development of resources</b> utilising family feedback to support understanding of GIRFEC roles and processes.</p>
7. Development and roll out of South Ayrshire Parenting Strategy (Year 3)		<p><b>Further work</b> required to involve infants, children, young people and families in communication.</p> <p><b>Development of GIRFEC websites</b> on South Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire HSCP sites to promote supports, learning tools and resources.</p>
8. Develop and promote a 'South Ayrshire Lan-guage Guide' alongside care experienced young people with co-produced information to sup-port the workforce to reframe language and use terms that children and young people find to be more positive and inclusive. (Year 3)		

Action	Progress Rating	How's it going?
9. South Ayrshire GIRFEC Guidance and communications revisited to ensure inclusion of positive, inclusive, care-based language. (Year 1)		<p>Increasing number of schools achieving The Promise award.</p> <p>Signs of Safety audits demonstrate our <b>children and young people feel supported</b> by their Team With the Family, in particular their social worker.</p>
10. Multi-agency GIRFEC development sessions include and promote work to implement local care-based language, support the work of The Promise and support staff to identify Young Carers. (Year 1)		<p><b>Supportive, inclusive language a focus</b> on all new GIRFEC documentation and training with a move to "Team with the Family" meetings, "My Plan" and our looked after meetings now personalised to the infant, child or young person's name.</p>
11. Develop new local GIRFEC Communication Plan for staff to roll our GIRFEC Guidance and materials. (Year 1)		
12. Work with children and young people, and parents or carers to develop communication plan taking account of national GIRFEC Refresh and local new guidance. (Year 3)		
13. Conduct a local multi-agency GIRFEC self-evaluation (Year 3) with workforce, children, young people and families focusing on our Team with the Family meetings and processes.		<p><b>Roll out</b> of family and young person survey to support next steps in Year 3.</p>



## Story of change: Building relationships through GIRFEC training



Following consultation with our practitioners across Children’s Services Planning a clear message emerged: staff across agencies want more opportunities to come together, to build stronger relationships with colleagues in other services, and to deepen their confidence in applying the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach. Practitioners told us they needed more than policy knowledge, they needed practical, relationship-based training that supports real-life implementation and strengthens multi-agency working. To support this our in-person GIRFEC training programme was developed, designed alongside practitioners, placing relationships at the heart of every session. GIRFEC is a shared language and an approach of early help that relies on meaningful connection and trust between professionals to deliver the best possible outcomes for infants, children and young people.

To ensure authenticity and relevance, the training has been both co-developed and co-delivered by key members of staff who take on the named person and lead professional roles. These individuals bring experience, expertise, and credibility to the programme, which focuses heavily on relational practice, collaborative decision-making, and shared responsibility. The first training session has already taken place and was met with enthusiasm and positive feedback, with professionals expressing the value of being in the same room with colleagues from other services. The in-person format was intentionally chosen to foster deeper discussion, relationship-building, and collective learning—qualities that cannot be replicated in isolation or through digital formats alone.

Building on this foundation, the next phase of our GIRFEC programme will include targeted sessions for newly qualified staff across agencies—including teachers, social workers, and health visitors within their first years of practice. These bespoke training events will bring together new professionals at the start of their careers to learn not only about GIRFEC principles, but also about each other’s roles, responsibilities, and pressures. By participating in the same sessions and remaining as a group across the full training journey, these practitioners will build relationships early on that can form the basis of future collaboration. This shared experience will help break down silos, promote a shared understanding of GIRFEC, and embed a culture of joint working from the very beginning of their professional journeys.

The programme will continue to be shaped by practitioner feedback, ensuring it remains responsive, relevant, and rooted in the real needs of those delivering services on the ground.

### Key successes in our People Priority:

Our Multi-agency GIRFEC practitioner sessions are informed by consultation with those within the Team with the Family, from named person to lead professional roles and including third sector partners. GIRFEC is the vehicle to bring our multi-agency partners together with the focus of sessions being around building and maintaining those strong relationships across services for the best outcome of our local families.

A consultation underway to support us to understand the experiences of our young people and also parents or carers within our Team with the Family meetings and processes. We will use this as our initial steps to lead into our GIRFEC evaluation in 2025/26.

Closer links have been established between our wellbeing training and our Child Protection training with the inclusion of the Lead Officer of Child Protection within our GIRFEC training evaluation team.

Online GIRFEC training continues to be co-delivered by Children’s Services Planning Lead Officer and partners in Aberlour – continuing close links with the Third Sector.

Quarterly online GIRFEC training continues to take place and is evaluated as improving knowledge and confidence of GIRFEC processes, roles and procedures.

UNCRC training has been developed and will be rolling out in the coming months across all services in South Ayrshire.

## Section 10: What’s next for South Ayrshire Children’s Services Planning Partnership?

In early 2023, South Ayrshire Children’s Services Planning Partnership (CSPP) published its Children and Young People’s Service Plan, covering the period 2023-2026. Over the life of the Plan, we have set out to achieve our vision that:

*‘With a focus on prevention and early intervention we will work to empower families living in South Ayrshire. We will work with families in a way that values the unique needs and perspectives of each family member. We will ensure those working in our services have access to the resources, training, and the support they need to achieve our shared goal, and where they can overcome any challenges that come their way. We will help build strong and resilient communities where families are supported to thrive, and where every member is valued and included. This is our whole family approach.’*

We know that we are making great strides towards achieving a “system” in South Ayrshire where families can experience early help at the point where it is needed. Our Promise work, Family First, Signs of Safety and whole family wellbeing work have been so strongly connected in everything that we do and with that we have emerging evidence that our work is having an impact. Families are beginning to tell us they are experiencing our help in a different way. With that, the coming year will be focused on deepening our understanding of the impact of this work and addressing any remaining gaps in our evaluation to support us to move forward with families in a meaningful way.

Next steps for Evaluation	Next steps for Early Years	Next steps for Parenting
<p>All priority groups within our Children’s Services Planning Partnership are supported by a robust evaluation management framework, strategically wrapping around our work to enhance planning processes.</p> <p>This ongoing journey of work will continue to evolve in 2025/26, as we revisit all our indicators to develop an even deeper understanding of our local communities to identify our areas of strength or areas for improvement.</p> <p>In this reporting year there has been an extensive amount of data collation and analysis undertaken, attributed to investment in a Data and Development Officer for Children’s Services Planning. As we progress into the third year of this plan, a need is evidence to dive deeper into locality level data given the variation in outcomes for our children in more deprived localities.</p>	<p>Child poverty is a cross cutting issue and has a significant impact on the wellbeing of infants, children, young people and wider families. We know in South Ayrshire that children living in our more deprived areas are more likely to experience the impact of family affluence, particularly our under 5s.</p> <p>All our data in South Ayrshire CSPP is telling us to move our collaborative and ambitious efforts towards our Early Years, ensuring the right help at the right time, with prevention as our aim.</p> <p>There is a need for us to think carefully about how best to support those living in SIMD 1 in order to address this. Locality data available indicates a requirement to focus attention to the Ayr North area, where work is now commencing to develop an ambitious collaborative model of early help within the early years. This work will include supports such as early years, health visiting, and speech and language via a “sure start” type model of early help.</p>	<p>Work has commenced in South Ayrshire to develop our Solihull Parenting Strategy, reflecting what families are telling us they need. This strategy will focus on providing consistent, clear messaging for parents, carers and the practitioners supporting our families.</p> <p>The strategy will seek to address parenting help needed for parents where additional support needs are present and taking into account the complex impact of poverty on parental wellbeing and therefore family life.</p> <p>Central to this work is the ambition to drive forward the Solihull Approach across the authority, embedding a relational, attachment-informed way of working that supports the emotional health and wellbeing of children and their caregivers. As part of this, we are in the process of establishing a dedicated Solihull training team, who will wrap training around our Early Years Centres in areas of highest deprivation. This team will work across both children’s and adult services, promoting a whole-family approach to wellbeing and parenting support. By bringing services together around families, we aim to strengthen early intervention, improve outcomes, and build lasting, trusted relationships with our communities.</p>

# Appendix 1: South Ayrshire Children’s Services Planning Partnership (CSPP) Core Wellbeing Indicator Set

Utilising the Scottish Government’s [Children, Young People and Families Outcome Framework](#), the Joint Improvement Group (JIG) have developed a Core Wellbeing Indicator Set for South Ayrshire. This core set of high-level indicators compliments [the National Performance Framework](#) and [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#), and is designed to support the work of the JIG by providing a holistic overview of wellbeing for infants, children, young people and families in South Ayrshire.

Consisting of 22 over-arching indicators this South Ayrshire indicator set covers key aspects of wellbeing and is holistic, reflecting all eight GIRFEC Wellbeing Outcomes and the three sides of the My World Triangle (How I Grow and Develop, My Wider World, What I Need from People Who Look After Me). Analysis will highlight if desired long-term outcomes are being achieved and will support us to identify where improvements are required.

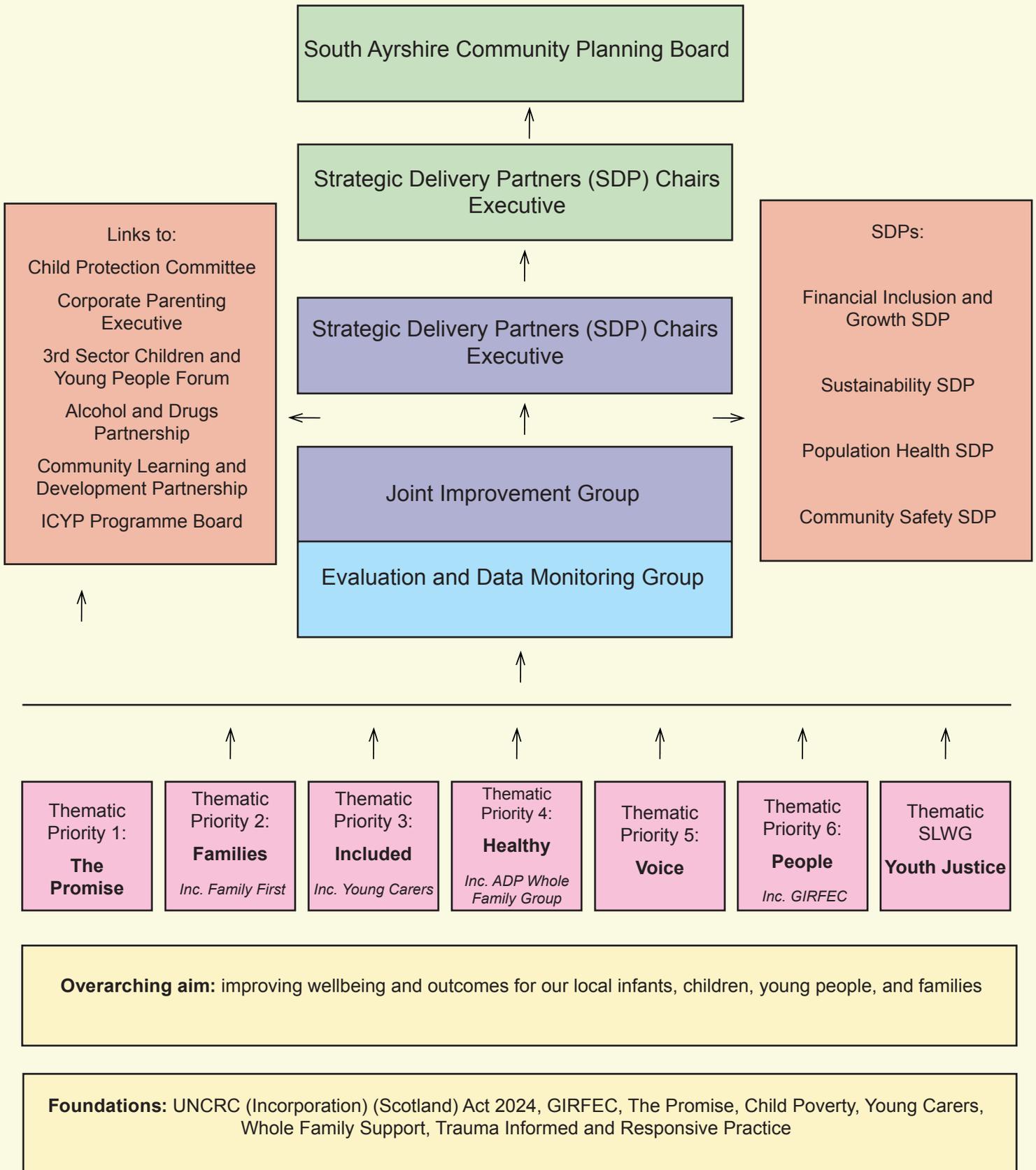
Priority Areas and overarching themes	Links with National Performance Framework and National Core Wellbeing ‘Topic of Indicators’ Set	Local Indicator and Source	2020/21 RCS Census	2021/22 Health and Wellbeing Census conducted	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Trend from previous years	Relevant Information
Healthy Priority	Child Social and Physical Development  Physical Activity 	% P5-S6 children that had at least 1 hour of exercise the day before the survey.  (HWB Census)	Not available	60.4%	47.3%	46.6%	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are re-peating the survey from April-July 2025
Healthy Priority  Voice Priority	Child Social and Physical Development  Play & Leisure Activities 	% of S1-S3 children participating in positive leisure activities  (HWB Census)	Not available	72.1%	Not available	Not available	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are re-peating the survey from April-July 2025
Healthy Priority	Child Wellbeing and Happiness  Bullying 	% P5-S3 children who say they were bullied in the last year.  (HWB Census)	Primary 31%  Secondary (S1-4) 45%	Primary 27% (35.6%)  Secondary 18% (24.5%)	Not available	Not available	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are repeating the survey from April-July 2025
Healthy Priority	Child Wellbeing and Happiness  Peer Relationships 	Percentage P5-S3 children who agree that their friends treat them well.  (HWB Census)	Primary 31%  Secondary (S1-4) 45%  Bullied in the last month	Primary 69% (84.7%)  Secondary 67% (80.5%)	Not available	Not available	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		Data includes S4  HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are repeating the survey from April-July 2025
Healthy Priority	Child Social and Physical Development  Diet and pre-school development 	Proportion of P1s at risk of obesity  (PHS)	15.8%	12.5%	9.8%	9.7%	Not yet available		Children at risk of obesity is declining as a trend but at risk of becoming overweight is slightly increasing at P1.
Healthy Priority	Child Social and Physical Development   Diet and pre-school development	% of Primary 1 children with healthy weight	69.4%	72.2%	77.7%	Not yet available	Not yet available		Target: No target set
Healthy Priority  Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Social and Physical Development   Diet and pre-school development	% of babies exclusively breastfed in the 24 hours prior to their 6-8 week review  (PHS)	22.9%	24.5%	27.4%	30.9%	Not yet available		Target: 25% Status: Exceeded target QI work linked: Ayr North PEEP and Responsive Feeding Project

Priority Areas and overarching themes	Links with National Performance Framework and National Core Wellbeing 'Topic of Indicators' Set	Local Indicator and Source	2020/21 RCS Census	2021/22 Health and Wellbeing Census conducted	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Trend from previous years	Relevant Information
The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships. Protection from Harm 	Number of children subject to Interagency Referral Discussions (Local CPC Dataset)	81 (Covid)	245	267	221	Not yet available		This data indicator is scrutinised by the CPC quarterly but remains here as a high-level indicator of our early work.
The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships. Protection from harm 	Number of children named on the child protection register (Local CPC Dataset)	19 newly registered	22 newly registered	43 newly registered	Not yet available	Not yet available		This data indicator is scrutinised by the CPC quarterly but remains here as a high-level indicator of our early work.
The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Material Deprivation Housing 	Number of children in temp accommodation at 31st March (Homelessness in Scotland)	Average: 67.5	Average: 82.5	Average: 110	Average: 98.7	Not yet available		
The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships. Protection from Harm	Number of looked after children. (Local Data)	300	229	183	189	Not yet available		Target: No target set
The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships. Protection from Harm 	Number of children looked after at home. (Local Data)	44	34	38	46	Not yet available	Not yet available	Target: Reduce those looked after away from home  Status: Increase this year following a decline since 2021
Included Priority	Educational Attainment Literacy 	% of P1, P4 % P7 children achieving expected CfE literacy levels (ACEL, IS LGBF)	68%	71%	76.6%	79.2%	Not yet available		Target: to increase  Status: Steady increase year on year.
Included Priority Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Social, Physical Development and Healthy Start Pre-school development 	% children with a concern at their 27-30 month review (as a percentage of children reviewed) (PHS)	15%	18.8%	16.1%	18.2%	Not yet available		Target: To reduce  QI Work: Whole Family Early Years Early Help / Eligible 2s Data work
Included Priority Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Social, Physical Development and Healthy Start Pre-school development	% children with a concern at their 13-15-month review (as a percentage of children reviewed) Source: SCOTPHO	10.8%	10.9%	10.7%	14.1%	Not yet available		Target: To reduce  QI Work: Whole Family Early Years Early Help / Eligible 2s Data work
Included Priority Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Social, Physical Development and Healthy Start Pre-school development	Proportion of children meeting developmental milestones at 27 month review. (IS LGBF)	74.8%	77.6%	78.1%	Not yet available	Not yet available		Target: 85%  Status: on track  QI work linked: Eligible 2s data

Priority Areas and overarching themes	Links with National Performance Framework and National Core Wellbeing 'Topic of Indicators' Set	Local Indicator and Source	2020/21 RCS Census	2021/22 Health and Wellbeing Census conducted	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Trend from previous years	Relevant Information
Included Priority The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships. Protection from Harm	Number of young carers identified in South Ayrshire  (Local Data)	113	131	242	602	855		Target: Increase number of young carers and reduce hidden population Status: Meeting target QI Work: Teeny Carers
Included Priority Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Social Development and Healthy Start  Easy access to good quality universal provision	% of pupils recorded as having one or more additional support need (EY, Primary and Secondary as a % of all pupils) (Local Data)	EY 12.8% Primary 32.4% Secondary 30.1%	EY 18.4% Primary 37.4% Secondary 36.4%	EY 22% Primary 41% Secondary 44.3%	Not yet available			Improvement in identification and reporting processes contributing to understanding who our children with additional needs are.
Voice Priority The Promise	Children's Voices and Participation  Trusted Adult	% P5-S6 children always have an adult in their life they can trust and talk to. (HWB Census)	Primary 44% Secondary 60%	Overall (P5-S6) 57% (66.9%)	Not available	Not available	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are repeating the survey from April-July 2025
Voice Priority The Promise Trauma Responsive Practice	Children's Voices, Participation and they have positive relationships  Involvement in decision making	% of P5-S6 children who agree adults are good at taking what they say into account. (HWB Census)	Not available	Primary 93% Secondary 74%	Not available	Not available	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		HWB Survey data is P4-S6  HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are repeating the survey from April-July 2025
Voice Priority Whole Family Wellbeing	Perception of local area  Neighbourhood Satisfaction	% P5-S6 children who agree their local area is a good place to live. (HWB Census)	Primary 58% Secondary (S1-S4) 40% Said they liked the area a lot	Overall (P5-S6) 55% (65.5%) Primary 60% (69%) Secondary 52% (61.7%)	Not available	Not available	HWB Census April 2025 onwards		HWB Census 21/22, South Ayrshire are repeating the survey from April-July 2025
Family Priority Included Priority Whole Family Wellbeing	Child Social, Physical Development and Healthy Start  Pre-school development	% settings providing funded ELC achieving grades of good or better across all 4 themes. (IS LGBF)	95.7%	95.5%	90.8%	87.5%	Not yet available		3% decrease
Family Priority	Positive Destinations, Workplace learning and Participation  Positive Destinations	Percentage of all school leavers in positive destinations at 9-month follow-up. (SG Stats, Local Data)	98.4%	98.3%	98.6%	98.7%	Not yet available		
Family Priority The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Education attainment, Participation and relationships.  Easy access to good quality universal provision	Attendance at Primary School for children who are care experienced.  (Local Data – SQR)	Home 92% Away 97% Previously 89%	Home 91% Away 95% Previously 89%	Home 82% Away 95% Previously 89%	Home 88% Away 94% Previously 89%	Not yet available		23/24, our attendance in primary schools was 93%, up 1% from session 2022-23. There was also a significant increase of 6% for children looked after at home.

Priority Areas and overarching themes	Links with National Performance Framework and National Core Wellbeing 'Topic of Indicators' Set	Local Indicator and Source	2020/21 RCS Census	2021/22 Health and Wellbeing Census conducted	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Trend from previous years	Relevant Information
Family Priority The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing	Education attainment, Participation and relationships.  Easy access to good quality universal provision	Attendance at Secondary School for children who are care experienced.  (Local Data - SQR)	Home 82% Away 93% Previously 84%	Home 71% Away 89% Previously 78%	Home 54% Away 87% Previously 75%	Home 67% Away 87% Previously 76%	Not yet available		23/24 our secondary schools increased by 2%, up from 85% in 2022-23 to 87%. Significant increases of 3 and 13% for young people living in quintile 1 and those looked after at home respectively.
Family Priority The Promise Included Priority	Child Social Development and Healthy Start  Easy access to good quality universal provision	School exclusion rates (per 1000 looked after pupils)	73.4	Not available	34.0	Not available	Not yet available		54% reduction
People Priority The Promise	Children having Positive Relationships and Quality of Children's Services  Quality Services	Staff engaged in SAC online GIRFEC training offer who have increased knowledge of GIRFEC following training.  (Local Data)	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	New indicator	94.7%		Target: 85%  Status: Exceeded target  QI work linked: Ongoing assessment of in-person training in 25/26
People Priority The Promise	Children having Positive Relationships and Quality of Children's Services  Quality Services	Number of staff engaging in the Pan-Ayrshire GIRFEC training	New indicator	New indicator	315	452	Not yet available		
Youth Justice The Promise	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships.  Protection from Harm	Number of children referred to the reporter on offence grounds.  (SCRA)	54	34	59	64	Not yet available		No target set.  This year slightly above median.
Youth Justice The Promise	Quality of Care Experience and Children have positive relationships.  Protection from Harm	Number of young people referred to youth diversion.  (Local data)	28	28	37	14	Not yet available	Data Only	
Cross cutting all priorities and themes	Child Material Deprivation  Child poverty	Relative child poverty rate (after housing costs)  (Scottish Government, End Child Poverty, DWP)	20.6%	24.4%	25%	Not yet available	Not yet available		

## Appendix 2: SA CSPP Structure.





I support South Ayrshire's  
Parenting Promise

Getting it  
**Right**

for Every Child in South Ayrshire



South Ayrshire  
COMMUNITY  
PLANNING  
Partnership

