

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



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| Meeting: | Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board |
| Meeting date: | Monday 6 October 2025 |
| Title: | North Ayrshire Children's Services Performance Report 2024-25 |
| Responsible Director: | Caroline Cameron, Director North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (NAHSCP) |
| Report Author: | Lauren McMath, Policy Officer NAHSCP |

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- NHS Board/Integration Joint Board Strategy or Direction

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

Every Local Authority and relevant Health Board are required to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority for each three-year period. Plans are developed collaboratively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families at various stages of the development and review of the Plan. We published our Children's Services Plan 2023-26 in June 2023.

Our Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2024-25 is prepared in collaboration with the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) which consists of representatives from our Community Planning Partners. We have a duty under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to produce a Children's Services Plan Performance report at the end of each year.

Our Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2024-25 highlights some of the key achievements and areas of work which impact on Infants, Children, Young People and their families.

2.2 Background

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

Section 13 (1) of the Act requires that as soon as practicable after the end of each one-year period, a local authority and the relevant health board must publish (in such manner as they consider appropriate) a report on the extent to which:

- a) children's and related services have, in that one-year period, been provided in accordance with the Children's Services Plan; and
- b) that the provision of services has achieved –
 - i. the aims of children's services planning (section 9(2)), and
 - ii. such outcomes in relation to the wellbeing of children in the area as the Scottish Ministers may by order prescribe.

The "one-year period" runs from 1 April to 31 March. Each Children's Services Plan must be prepared in relation to a specific "three-year period", so over the course of a Children's Services Plan there will be three annual reports.

Our 2023-26 Children's Services Plan continued our vision 'For all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up'. The Performance Report 2024-25 has been structured in line with our five priorities set out in the Plan. These are –

1. The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected.
2. Acting early to improve what happens next.
3. Making Things Fairer
4. Promoting good mental health and wellbeing
5. Inspiring children and young people to be active

A set of actions were identified to be delivered by CPP partners. Updates on the progress of the actions has been included in Appendix 1 of the report. We have established an initial set of indicators to measure progress, as attached in Appendix 2 of the report.

2.3 Assessment

At the end of April 2024, the Scottish Government provided feedback on our 2023-26 Children's Services Plan. Feedback is intended to support us to consider areas of strength and areas for development. Overall, feedback concluded that the Plan is comprehensive, ambitious and informative. It is well linked to other local and national plans and frameworks, including the National Performance Framework, GIRFEC and Child Poverty Action Plan. Strategic priorities and actions are clear, and there is clear evidence that children, young people and families have contributed to the development of the plan.

Areas for development were to provide information about monitoring and evaluation of progress, including a set of specific and measurable progress indicators linked to each

priority. Partners have identified a set of relevant measures which are included as Appendix 2 to the report. These are intended to act as a baseline and will be reviewed and updated regularly to assist with improvement activity.

A summary version of the report will be produced to ensure it is fully accessible and engaging for our young people.

Some of our key highlights from the 2024-25 Performance Report include:

- 97% of our education establishments were engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools accreditation process (2023-24 academic year).
- St Matthew's Academy, Saltcoats, has become the first secondary school in Scotland to receive a prestigious accolade for digital education - the Digital Schools Endorsement Award.
- The Executive Youth Council has 12 active members from across North Ayrshire, representing the views and voices of our young people across schools and communities. Currently the group are working in partnership with Education staff to design and launch a Pupil Council Toolkit that will give schools the tools and resources to support pupil voice structures.
- 115 children and young people have accessed the Young Carers Fund this year, helping to improve or maintain the young person's physical, emotional mental health and wellbeing or life chances, reduce social isolation, and improve attainment.
- The annual Promise Conference was held in December 2024. 73 Care Experienced young people from across our Secondary Schools joined the conference to learn about The Promise Scotland Plan 24-30, meet local Corporate Parents and connect with each other.
- The Signs of Safety practice model has been implemented across our Children and Families Service from the point of referral to Service Access. The Signs of Safety model works in collaboration with families to identify strengths and family and wider support networks who can assist to support the children's wellbeing or child protection plan that has been established.
- Over 5,000 children aged 0-4 years in North Ayrshire are supported by either a Health Visitor or a Family Nurse
- The Family Centred Wellbeing Service (FCWS) are a team of 14 wellbeing workers who support supported over 170 families, with sessions provided within the family's homes, within our offices, community buildings and schools.
- 96% of our school leavers moved into an initial positive destination, in line with session 2022-23.
- 424 young people engaged with the MCR Pathways Young Talent Programme
- Our Welfare Rights Officers (WROs) provide support and help to identified families regarding possible access to and/ or changes to benefits. This year, Welfare Rights Officers delivered training and provided briefings for education staff, and in 2024-25 the service was expanded to include all Educational Establishments. In total, the financial gains for families since the project began is over £1.8 million, with a further £818,000 coming in financial year 2024-25.
- Whole school approaches to supporting positive relationships and behaviour have been taken forward across the authority with policy and practice being developed on universal, targeted and intensive approaches. Building on positive relationships (BPR) family groups have been extended with 18 groups being run

this session. Active Schools key focus has remained on getting 'More Kids, More Active, More Often'. Extra-curricular provision has been delivered across all primary, secondary and ASN establishments. Over 9,200 young people have attended a variety of sport and physical activity sessions across this year, which is over 52% of the whole young people population.

- There are 1024 active Duke of Edinburgh participants where physical health is part of all participants award.
- The Children and Young Peoples' Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services funding has supported 6527 children and young people and 1212 family members through a range of programmes.

The Children's Services Strategic Partnership also monitors the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund is a £500 million investment over the life of the Scottish Parliament (2022 to 2026).

Appendix 3 of the Report provides a summary of progress to date including updates on the previously agreed proposals and new developments, as well as the current funding position. It also highlights the annual report which is in line with the North Ayrshire Whole Family Wellbeing Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as well as the Scottish Government monitoring requirements.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

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

2.3.2 Workforce

No workforce impact is anticipated.

2.3.3 Financial

No financial impact is anticipated.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

No risks identified.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

Recognising and advocating the rights of our children and young people directly contributes to ensuring equality and equity of opportunity in North Ayrshire.

2.3.6 Other impacts

This report directly supports North Ayrshire Council's vision of creating 'a North Ayrshire that is Fair for All' and the mission of 'Working together to improve the lives our people in North Ayrshire'. It demonstrates how we are contributing to priorities 'Wellbeing', 'Communities and Local Democracy', 'Climate Change' and 'A Sustainable Council' in ensuring children's rights are embedded throughout our services.

This report directly supports the Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan and vision to ensure that 'People who live in North Ayrshire are able to have a safe, healthy and active life'.

This report directly supports the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Plan and three key themes of 'Wellbeing', 'Work' and 'World'.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Contributions from services across our Council and Partners have been included in this report. Services regularly consult with children, young people and families. A Young Person's version of the report will be developed over the summer months to ensure it is fully accessible for our young people. The Annual Report will also be presented to the Children's Services Strategic Partnership, the Integration Joint Board and NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

2.3.8 Route to the meeting

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

- North Ayrshire Council Cabinet – 3 June 2025
- North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board – 19 June 2025
- Submitted to Scottish Government – 23 June 2025

2.4 Recommendation

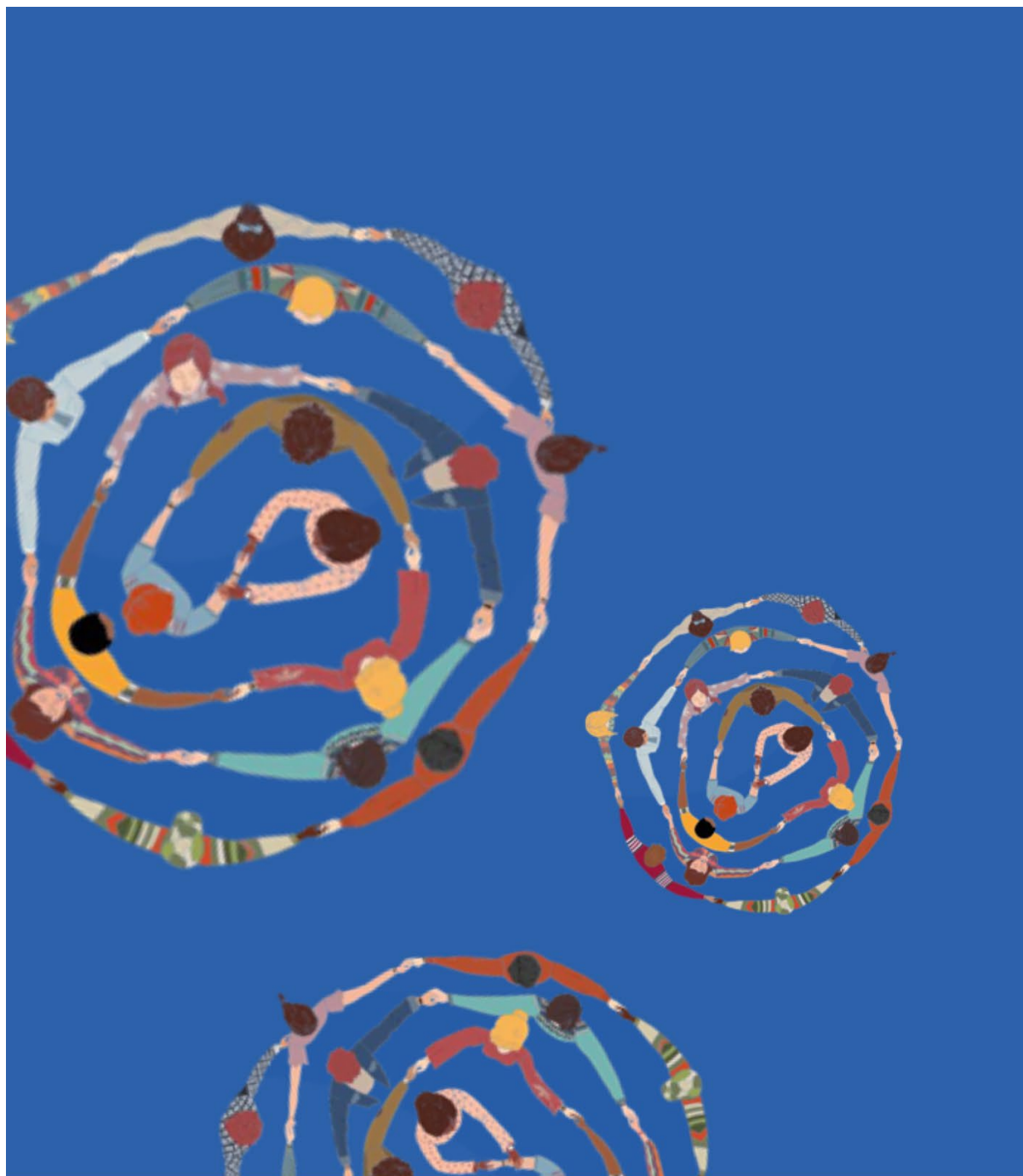
For discussion. The Board is asked to reflect upon the work of Children Services in North Ayrshire over the past year and take assurance from the ongoing work.

3. List of appendices

The following appendix is attached and also available [online](#).

- Appendix 1: North Ayrshire Children's Services Performance Report 2024-25.

Children's Services Plan – Performance Report 2024-25



Welcome

Welcome to our 2024-25 annual report. This report will demonstrate some of the key work of the North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership and shows our progress and achievements over the past year. We have been working towards our shared vision for '*North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up*' and continuing to focus on promoting children and young people's wellbeing, underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

We recognise that our strong partnership foundation in North Ayrshire provides continued commitment to collectively focus on improving outcomes for our infants, children, young people and their families. We will continue to strive to ensure we place them at the very heart of service delivery so we can provide the right support at the right time.

I would like to thank all those who deliver the amazing work every day to ensure our infants, children, young people and their families have the best opportunity to live safe, healthy and active lives and achieve their full potential.

Caroline Cameron Director North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (Chair of North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership)



Introduction

This report focuses on the collaborative working of the partner members over the past year and has been organised around the five Children's Services Plan Priorities.

We are currently reporting on the second year of our Children's Services Plan which covers the period of 2023 to 2026. Our 2023-26 Children's Services Plan has five Strategic Priorities which are shown below.



Our Children's Services Strategic Partnership is the responsible group providing leadership in the delivery of the Children's Services Plan's vision of our children and young people having the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place to grow up. This strategic group includes members from:

- North Ayrshire Council
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
- Care Inspectorate
- Children's Panel
- Third Sector
- Scottish Fire and Rescue
- Ayrshire College
- KA Leisure

Appendix 1 provides detailed updates for the 2023-26 Children's Services Plan Actions
Appendix 2 provides Performance Indicator data

For any further information please contact Lauren McMath, laurenmcmath@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Priority 1: The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected

Key Highlights and Progress

Children's Rights

We have been working to champion the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that all children in North Ayrshire have their rights met, protected and advocated for. In July 2024, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 came into effect. The Act provides protection for the human rights of children and young people in Scotland.



Young people have been actioning UNCRC Article 12 (right to be heard) through a host of events, activities and online engagements. Our Executive Youth Council are in the process of designing and developing a Pupil Council Toolkit in partnerships with Education. The incorporation of UNCRC is a key focus of training staff and young people in UNCRC awareness, realising rights and child friendly reporting.

Rights Respecting Schools remained a focus during academic session 2023-24 with 97% of establishments engaged in the accreditation process. This number is significantly higher than the Scottish average of 78%.

LGBT Youth Scotland Charter

North Ayrshire secondary schools are championing equality as they work to maintain their LGBT Youth Scotland Charter of Education status. Guided by the Equality Act 2010 and known in schools as the LGBT Charter, the programme is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Being accredited enables schools to share a positive message championing the LGBT community, with confidence, where all LGBTQ+ staff, parents and learners can be safe, supported and included.

Six North Ayrshire secondary schools have now either achieved or are on their journey to achieving their next level LGBT Charter for Education accreditation.

There are four LGBT Charter award levels offered - Foundation, Bronze, Silver and Gold - with accreditation taking anywhere between 12 and 18 months to complete.

Greenwood Academy currently hold Silver Level accreditation and are working towards the highest accolade of Gold.

Although not a school – the Youth Services team part of the council's Community Learning and Development team and should still be recognised equally for their accomplishments to achieve the Silver Level.



Arran High School, Garnock Community Campus, Largs, Kilwinning, Irvine Royal (pictured above) and Auchenharvie Academies who currently hold Bronze, are the schools working hard this year to level-up to Silver accreditation.

We understand that many young LGBT people can often experience a sense of isolation and unfortunately can face many barriers in life including feeling discriminated against or being socially disconnected from their peers.



The LGBT Charter is just one of the many ways we are working to safeguard young people with protected characteristics so that they can become confident learners and empowered citizens who can be their true, authentic selves.

Examples of recent status work include:

- The Umbrella Group's Purple Friday Bake Sale at Garnock Academy raising £70 for LGBT Youth Scotland
- Irvine Royal's LGBT film screening and LGBT Icons History session
- A series of creative workshops run by North Ayrshire Youth Services to encourage their Modern Apprentices and Joint Youth Forum to create positive poetry and messages to be shared on social media during LGBT History Month



Engagement and Consultation

Our Youth Services Team are central to the engagement and consultation with our young people through various methods including community-based youth forums, executive youth council, thematic youth work groups, Joint Cabinet (pictured below), P7 youth council and various other events. We also actively engage with young people to gather their views and opinions through online methods and social media.

These topics are co designed and produced with young people and provide valuable data to inform policies, plans and service delivery.



We continue to work with a range of partners to ensure young people are given the opportunity to be involved in their local community. Nationally this includes Youth Scotland, Youthlink, Young Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament.

We work with a range of third sector organisations to support youth work delivery including Arran Youth Foundation, Police Scotland, Beith Trust, PRYDE, Irvine Youth Legacy Hub and many more.

Through consistent engagement and consultation, we identify local need, service provision gaps and needs and wants of young people. Fire and rescue, Police Scotland, Education and KA leisure partnered with us to lead a S3 Leadership programme.

Within the 2024-25 academic year, there is an on-going pilot of Education Scotland's Young Leaders of Learning programme across 8 secondary schools, 10 primaries within a single cluster and an early years establishment.

This programme seeks to strengthen learner participation and support improvement through pupil led improvement activities, which ensures pupil voices are heard and views are respected.

The Executive Youth Council has 12 active members from across North Ayrshire. This overarching youth voice structure represents the views of our young people across schools and communities.

Currently the group are working in partnership with Education staff to design and launch a Pupil Council Toolkit that will give schools tools and resources to support pupil voice structures.

The group have recently held their AGM where the board were elected. The group have recently led our Joint Youth Forum that brings all of our youth voice groups together from each locality to work on common aims and receive training.

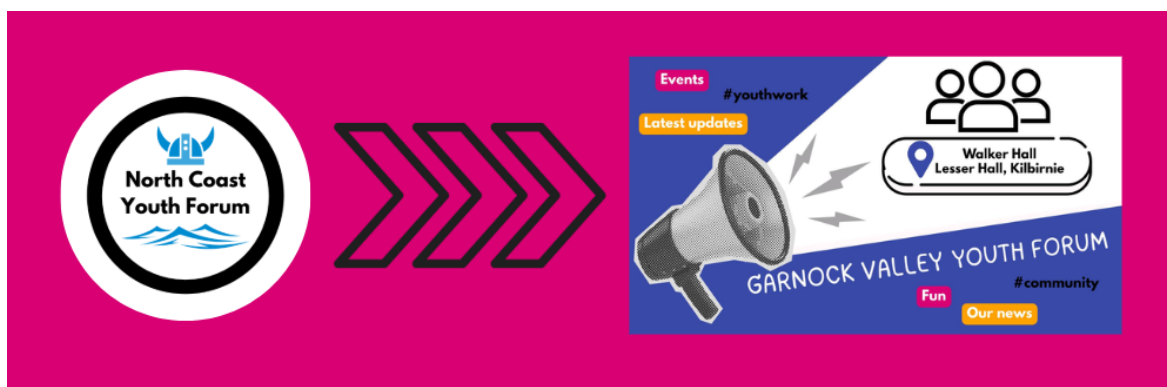
Executive Youth Council is the overarching youth voice structure representing the views of young people across our schools and communities.



The session held in February included an introduction to the Mental Health and Wellbeing pilot of financial literacy and wellbeing, working on the pupil council toolkit and creating poems and literature to support the LGBT work we do locally. Young people also had the opportunity to update us on what UNCRC means to them which will be used to create a comms media plan for the future.

Our MSYPs continue to be the representative voice for young people and have been working to gather views for the Scottish Youth Parliament Manifesto. Furthermore, they are working on their national campaign priorities around access to youth work, mental health and wellbeing and gender-based violence.

Various Youth Forums sit on working groups – Through Our Garnock Valley, MSYPs sit on Irvine Town Board, North Coast Youth Forum are supporting Helter Skelter issue funds through their funding applications.





Digital Learning

St Matthew's Academy, Saltcoats, has become the first secondary school in Scotland to receive a prestigious accolade for digital education - the Digital Schools Endorsement Award. The Digital Schools Awards (DSA) is a national awards scheme that promotes, recognises and encourages a whole-school approach to the use of digital technology.

By June 2024, a total of 22 schools have achieved their Digital Schools Award with almost all schools registered and on their journey towards completion of the Award.

An established network of Digital Coordinators continued to meet termly to develop digital skills and cascade these within their school contexts. To support the development of our learners' digital skills, 26 courses were delivered with over 560 teaching staff involved.



St Matthew's Academy in Saltcoats has become the first secondary school in Scotland to receive a prestigious accolade for digital education.

Sustainability and outdoor learning

We are supporting schools to engage with partner organisations and national programmes that enhance learning for sustainability. Engagement with Keep Scotland Beautiful Climate Action Schools is very positive. During the 2023-24 academic session, 24 primary schools participated in Climate Ready Classrooms.

A further 25 schools hold a current Eco-schools accreditation and 3 schools are participating in the Learning about Forests programme.

Improving teaching and learning outdoors has been supported through the Go Wild professional learning programme that was delivered to two early years settings and nine primary schools during 2023-24 school year.

The Go Wild programme supported early years practitioners and primary teaching staff with a variety of practical activities to support the delivery of literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) activities outdoors. Training was delivered jointly by North Ayrshire Countryside Rangers and the STEM Education Support Officer and focussed on:

- activities for speaking and listening
- outdoor areas as a context for creative writing
- den building
- fire lighting
- activities to deepen understanding of biodiversity

STEM Awareness: British Science Week (7-16 March)

North Ayrshire STEM team also recently raised awareness via social media of biodiversity, renewable energy and conservation during British Science Week (7-16 March).

This year had the theme 'Adapt and Change' and schools across North Ayrshire participated in a range of live lessons, visits from industry professionals and STEM activities delivered by the STEM team and classroom teachers.



Highlights included:

- STEM team visiting 5 primary schools during the week and provided P1 and 2 learners with play experiences to develop understanding of forces and energy changes
- P3 and 4 learners explored energy changes and were able to use equipment purchased with 'Clean Air Day' funding to generate their own carbon free electricity
- P5-7 learners investigated climate change, with a focus on how increased carbon dioxide levels in oceans is causing 'ocean acidification'

British Science Week is an annual event aimed at inspiring the next generation of STEM professionals while challenging existing stereotypes around STEM careers and pathways.

Photo highlights from the schools the STEM team visited are above, including Montgomerie Park, St John's and Loudoun Montgomery Primary Schools.

West Kilbride Primary Wildflower Meadow

Pupils at West Kilbride Primary School have supported the Ayrshire Nectar Network. The Network is a project that is being spearheaded by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, with backing from partners including North and South Ayrshire councils.

North Ayrshire Council has contributed £100,000 to the Network through the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF), which helps local authorities fund projects that help tackle the nature emergency we are currently experiencing.



The number of pollinators – including bees is in severe decline and they need human help to survive. The Network is also seeing the creation and connection of nectar and pollen-rich habitats across North and South Ayrshire, with wildflower meadows and trees being planted to establish pollinator “highways”.

Land – from small pockets of grass to large swathes of fields – is being linked up to create a corridor of flowers that bees, butterflies, moths, bats and birds will benefit from. This will ensure that they don't go hungry and, in turn, help provide the food we eat and the flowers we see, while also boosting biodiversity.

At the school, pupils and volunteers have been working hard to create a wildflower meadow within the grounds to provide shelter and food for important pollinators including bees, forming part of the larger pollinator highway.

Excited P3 and P4 children have been planting wildflower seeds and bulbs for their meadow and they should see the results of their efforts in spring. Children are learning about their rights and Article 29 of the Convention highlights that they have the right to an education, which should develop their respect for the environment.





Headteacher Gemma Carson said:

“The Wildflower Meadow is part of a larger piece of work in developing our outdoor learning programme, with enhance opportunities for planting and growing being offered to pupils across the school in line with the Royal Horticultural Gardening Awards programme. As part of this process, pupils recently grew and harvested their own vegetable product to cook soup, with P7 buddies helping our P1 pupils to learn how to cut and grate. We have also been ambitious in our outdoor learning provision, with pupils learning fire and den building skills outdoors. P1 pupils also recently enjoyed toasting marshmallows for an outdoor snack.”

Young Carers

North Ayrshire Council signed up to the Young Carers Covenant in 2024. The carer Team are supporting primary and secondary schools across North Ayrshire to sign up and to be part of the Young Carers in Schools challenge. It involves a set of outcomes that young people have highlighted as being key to improving their lives. This shows our commitment to identifying young carers at the earliest opportunity, ensuring they feel safe and secure and have choices in their lives.

Each school has a nominated Young Carers Champion who are supported by Young Carer Locality Officers from the Carers Gateway North Ayrshire (CGNA). An agreed CGNA offer has been communicated to all schools with the provision of 1 to 1 support and drop-in sessions, Young Carer Awareness Training and Young Carers Statement Training.

The Young Carers Education Information Pack was launched in October 2024 to provide staff within education with an overall understanding of the duties and approach in North Ayrshire to identifying, working with and supporting young carers.

A programme of engagement and review on the current Young Carers Statement (YCS) has been progressed with final sign off from Social Work Governance Board in April 2025. CGNA Young Carers Team facilitated face to face sessions with 55 young carers aged 6 – 15 across North Ayrshire schools. 36 families also engaged with an online survey. Feedback was also offered from Children and Families Services. The updated YCS was shaped through a range of consultations, activities, and surveys to ensure the voices and lived experiences of young carers were at the heart of its design. The aim was to create a more

meaningful, accessible, and supportive tool that better reflects the needs and aspirations of young carers. As a result, the updated statement is more user-friendly and person-centred, supporting improved identification, planning, and delivery of appropriate support for each young carer.

Since January 2025, Carers Gateway has also been involved in completing and reporting on Young Carers Statements. In addition to collaborating with educational institutions, they place a strong emphasis on supporting young carers who face challenges with school attendance, have left formal education, or are being home educated.

Young carers reported that the YCS is valuable to them. It ensures at least one staff member is informed about their personal circumstances. Young carers reported that their voices had been heard after completing their statement, they feel listened to and supported. They would appreciate the removal of the future/ emergency planning section, language was in places complex and questions repetitive. Overall, young carers wanted a shorter, more accessible YCS would be appropriate to assist in better caring conversations. All participants were happy for the original separate primary and secondary YCS to be condensed into one document.

At 31/03/2025, 549 young carers were recorded on Seemis (education system) and 492 registered with CGNA, crossover information means there is an estimated 650 identified young carers. In the reporting period 1/4/2024 - 31/03/2025 Education staff offered 406 young carers the opportunity to prepare a YCS. To date 366 were accepted and completed via schools and an additional 5 completed by CGNA.

Young Carers have once again benefitted from the Young Carers Education Fund. The fund can be used for anything that will improve or maintain the young person's physical, emotional mental health and wellbeing or life chances, reduce social isolation, and improve attainment. 115 children and young people have accessed the fund this year. Young Carers work with a key adult to complete a young carers statement and co-design any supports. Funds have been used for driving lessons, days out to have a break from caring. A cinema pass was provided to allow a young person to have time away from caring responsibilities each week and one young person asked for cookbooks and utensils so they could pursue their love of cooking.

115 children and young people in North Ayrshire have
accessed the Young Carers Education Fund this year.

The Promise

We continue to welcome the findings of the Independent Care Review and subsequent publication of The Promise and the call to action that lies within. We continue to remain committed to improving outcomes for children, young people and families in our communities and recognise that, whilst progress has been made in the first five years, there are many areas we will continue to develop and improve over the remaining life span of this 10-year ambitious plan.

Plan 24-30 is Scotland's most current strategic roadmap to fulfil the commitments made in The Promise, by 2030. Launched on June 20, 2024, this plan outlines the necessary actions, responsible parties, and timelines to ensure that all children in Scotland grow up loved, safe, and respected.

The plan is structured around five key foundations:

- Voice: Ensuring children and young people are heard
- Family: Supporting families to stay together
- Care: Providing high-quality care when needed. People: Empowering those who work with children and families.
- Scaffolding: Building the systems and structures to support these changes All the conclusions of the Independent Care Review have been organised and grouped under these foundations in a way that makes sense for the work still required.

Plan 24-30 is dynamic website (www.plan2430.scot) rather than a traditional strategy document as Plan 21-24 was. It will be updated to reflect progress and ongoing needs at various points throughout its lifespan. It aims to create a collaborative effort across various sectors, including education, health, housing, justice, and local government.

Champions Board for Care Experienced Children and Young People

North Ayrshire Champions Board are a group of care experienced young people that take part in groups within their local secondary schools during either lunchtimes or within a school period.

The aim of the groups is to allow young people to speak about their experience within a safe space if they choose to do so and to allow them to work or plan projects that may positively impact them.

They act as the youth voice for care experienced young people within North Ayrshire. Currently we have these groups running in all secondary schools. We hosted our latest Primary 7 youth council with 140 young people from across all localities focussing on cyber resilience, physical exercise and wellbeing, positive mindset and child poverty.

Our Care Experienced week celebration event celebrated the work of the Corporate Parenting Team, North Ayrshire wide Corporate Parents and the achievements of our Care Experienced young people over the past year.





We highlighted our Team's development of the Champions Board and Promise Champions Network, we had a feature on employability support, shout outs to North Ayrshire-wide Corporate Parents, an introduction from our Promise Delivery Partner, and an on-stage discussion with Corporate Parents from MCR Pathways, Active Schools, Educational Psychology, Dance Therapy and the ESOL Hub based in Auchenhavrie Academy.

The event was well attended with great engagement from both Corporate Parents and young people. 61 adults and young people attended. Attendees commented on there being a good balance of content between our work, North Ayrshire-wide work and young people's work. There was a mixture of content applicable to a variety of ages.

Young people have taken part in a co-design opportunity with Children's Hearings Scotland, have been planning fundraising events/assembly presentations and creating school-wide charters and will be approving/wording questions for our collaboration with Canmore Children's House around language.



The annual Promise Conference was held in December 2024. 73 Care Experienced young people from across our Secondary Schools joined the conference to learn about The Promise Scotland Plan 24-30, meet local Corporate Parents and connect with each other. Plans are in place for a 2nd Promise Conference to take place later this year for primary aged children.

Launch of new app for Care Experienced Young People

In February 2025, we launched a brand-new mobile app for care experienced young people. The new app has been developed with the help of pupils from local secondary schools over the past 18 months. Called 'CE4U' (Care Experience for You), the mobile app has been designed specifically for care experienced young people. #

Free to download, its aim is to provide a hub of useful information and helpful advice on everyday topics including housing, travel, mental and physical health, recipes, job opportunities and entitlements.

Developed by young people for young people, the app collaboration was made possible due to fortnightly Champions Board meetings that take place in our secondary schools. These drop-ins provide a safe space for care experienced pupils to get advice, plan peer events and access scaffolding and support to help them succeed.



The new app is a brilliant example of how we are adapting the support we provides to meet the needs of our young people.

It also demonstrates our commitment to #Article20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 'Children and young people in care have right to special protection and help if they can't be looked after by their own family.' As Corporate Parents, we are committed to ensuring that everyone who is care experienced feels safe, nurtured and supported.



Promise Champion Staff Network

In March 2024 we launched a Promise Champion network - a supportive, collaborative staff network of Corporate Parents led by our Corporate Parenting Engagement and Participation Lead.

The network encourages sharing of best practice and partnership working.

Promise Champions are enthusiastic about their roles and have been instrumental in raising awareness of The Promise and Corporate Parenting with their colleagues and wider communities.



The Promise Champions staff network has 75 Corporate Parents across North Ayrshire involved (as of March 2025) and continues to grow

The network also met in smaller sector-focused groups in June 2024, where Promise Champions gained an understanding of using trauma-informed language when speaking or writing about care experienced people. They also looked at how to reduce stigma and discrimination for the care experienced community.

Brighter Pathways – remodelling outcomes on the edge of care

Our Brighter Pathways transformation activity commenced in April 2024 with the aspiration of taking collective action to improve outcomes for our care experienced children and young people and those young people on the edge of care. The transformational work required has been addressed through the implementation of various focussed workstreams looking at how services can be delivered differently to ensure that children and young people have access to appropriate supports at the right time.

The work undertaken within the workstreams has strategic oversight from the Brighter Pathways Programme Board. Some key changes to practice and service delivery have already been made, for example, enhancements to our Supported Carer scheme, a new digital approach to Foster Care Recruitment, enhanced collaboration and partnership working with our education colleagues, with further proposals being scoped out and/ or finalised with regards to a range of activity including the development of a new Foster Care scheme and the development of a local, bespoke model of supported care specific to young people who are on the brink of transitioning to adulthood.

Advocacy

Independent, community-based advocacy continues to be provided via Barnardo's Hear 4U service. It provides one to one advocacy to children and young people and priority is given to children and young people who:

- Are involved in the Child Protection process and/or Children's Hearing system
- Are care experienced in Foster Care, Residential Care and/or Kinship Care
- Are on the periphery of Secure Care
- Were previously looked after and accommodated
- Have additional support needs

They continue to support young people to ensure they are aware of their rights. They are committed to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard, in a way which builds their confidence, also ensuring that they are listened to and their rights are appropriately represented, when decisions are made.

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next

Key Highlights and Progress

Additional Support for Learning

Working in partnership with two Ayrshire based parental support groups (ASN Support Ayrshire and ASN Parents and Kids Irvine & 3 Towns), the Education Service has designed and delivered a series of engagement hubs focusing on the key challenges families face when navigating their child's journey through education.

These run monthly and feedback has been 100% positive with a calendar of events being designed for session 2025-26. Updated literature around how needs are supported within early years settings and schools has been refreshed and distributed through this forum.

Our Community Learning and Development Mental Health and Wellbeing work is inclusive of supporting young parents through group work and events.

Our Take Time Families provision brings primary aged young people together with their parents and carers to provide support, training and a safe space to connect and learn vital skills around resilience, wellbeing and building strong family connections.

Support is also given through our Grandparents group that builds connections through an intergenerational group.



The Inclusion Ambassadors programme piloted in almost all secondary schools alongside the Success Looks Different Awards which were publicised to all establishments and support was available for those who wished to apply.

Secondary schools have been linking with the Scottish Government in the codesign of the national measurement framework and dashboard with a specific focus on capturing the successes and achievements of young people who are following different pathways.

Child Protection

A full multiagency approach was taken to the implementation of new Child Protection National Guidance. Briefings were created by the Child Protection Committee (CPC) around all aspects of changes required to implement the guidance in September 2023. Since then, further pathways have been developed and our Child Protection training for social work staff has been updated to reflect the National Child Protection guidance.

The Signs of Safety practice model has been implemented across our entire Children and Families Service from the point of referral to Service Access. Partner briefings have continued to be provided through the Child Protection Committee training calendar to assist all other agencies to understand the practice model. Leaflets have been developed that are shared with both families and partner agencies on what to expect. Assessments and plans have been redesigned and implemented using a Signs of Safety practice approach.

**The Signs of Safety practice model has been
implemented across our entire Children and Families
Service from the point of referral to Service Access.**

The Signs of Safety model works in collaboration with families to identify strengths and family and wider support networks who can assist to support the children's wellbeing or child protection plan that has been established. All Children and families team paperwork identifies family strengths and "what is working well". Equally core partners, including Education have adapted the child protection concern referral to incorporate what is working well in addition to what we are worried about.

Children and Families Health Support

There are over 5,000 children aged 0-4 years in North Ayrshire, all of whom are supported by either a Health Visitor or a Family Nurse. In addition to following the nationally agreed Universal Health Visiting Pathway from the antenatal period through to a child commencing school, children under 5 and their families continue to have access to additional support from the wider, integrated early years team.

During 2024-25 (as at 24 March 25), 914 requests for assistance from the various members of the integrated team were made. This included:

- 546 for Health Visiting Support Workers for areas such as communication, sleep, toileting, infant feeding and behaviour
- 103 for the Perinatal Wellbeing Team, supporting new and expectant mums experiencing low level mental health difficulties
- 91 for Early Years Social Workers supporting with domestic violence, parental mental health difficulties amongst others
- 72 for the Family Nurturers who offer support around bonding and attachment, routines, home conditions and community integration
- 40 for the Healthcare Support Worker who provides additional support to the Perinatal Wellbeing Team as well as baby massage
- 38 for support to dads via our partnership with national charity Dads Rock
- 24 for specialist infant feeding support



Our peer support service has been expanded to all breastfeeding mothers. For the first three quarters of 2024-25:

- 81.3% of breastfeeding mothers in North Ayrshire engaged in peer support
- 83% of breastfeeding mothers in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) area 1 who are discharged engage with peer support
- 81.9% of breastfeeding mothers in SIMD 2 who are discharged engage with peer support



In March 2025, the announcement was made that NHS Ayrshire & Arran and the three Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnerships have retained the UNICEF Baby Friendly Gold Award Accreditation. The top accolade demonstrates our continued high-quality care for families to support breastfeeding.

The Health Visiting service continues to fully implement the national Universal Health Visiting Pathway, with all children under 5 and their families offered a minimum of 11 visits from the ante-natal period through to the child starting school. Developmental assessments are undertaken at 13-15 months; 27-30 months and 4-5 years. Since 2020, the percentage of children with one or more developmental concern at these assessments has increased.

A slight improvement in developmental concerns at the 27-30 month assessment has been observed in the last twelve months but a significant increase in concerns at the 4 year review have also been noted, as well as a slight increase in concerns at the 13-15 month review.

This trend is not unique to North Ayrshire and the Scottish Government has set out actions to attempt to address this nationally within the recently published Enhancing the Delivery of the Health Visiting Service: Scotland's Health Visiting Action Plan 2025-2035 (Scottish Government, 2025). Locally, we have undertaken a review of our Early Years Support Team and have established closer working relationships with early years education colleagues to take forward a programme of work that includes improved information sharing about developmental concerns at an earlier stage; enhanced links between the HV service and early years establishments; a focus on communication needs in children as a priority within our Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Steering Group; and shared work around supporting more children to be toilet ready in the early years.

Our Early Years Support Team works alongside the Health Visiting team to provide support to families when developmental concerns are identified or when a family requests additional support in other areas. During 2024/25, 933 children and their families were supported, an increase of 10.3% from 2023/24, in areas such as communication, sleep, toileting, home conditions, parental mental health and routines.

During 2024/25 we expanded our partnership with national charity Dads Rock to bring a second dads' worker to the area. This has allowed us to offer 1-1 and group support to dads in the Irvine and Kilwinning areas, as well as the original Three Towns area. During 2024/25, 53 dads have been supported with 81 children being positively impacted.

Child healthy weight

Over the last three decades, obesity levels in children have increased, with inequalities observed across our communities. Maintaining a healthy weight throughout childhood is associated with many health benefits both in the short-term and the medium term.

Child healthy weight is monitored throughout the universal Health Visiting pathway but also when a child moves into Primary 1. The most recent data for 2023/24 was released in December 2024. For North Ayrshire:

- 74.8% of P1 children measured were of a healthy weight. This is a reduction of 1.9% on 2022/23 figure; however, it is still the second highest percentage in the last five years.
- 12.4% of P1 children measured were at risk of overweight. This is a 0.3% improvement on the 2022/23 figure and the lowest % since 2008/09.
- 11.9% of P1 children measured were at risk of obesity, a 1.8% increase since 2022/23.

Early Learning and Childcare

The funded 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare is now being delivered with flexibility and choice for parents across localities. Our models offer a blend of full year and term time places with various patterns in establishments delivering 8am-6pm and 9am-3pm.

Allocations have taken place for session 2025-26 and 87% of parents have been offered their 1st choice of early years establishment.

The early years team is working in partnership with services to increase the number of funded childminders with particular focus on the islands and the North Coast.

Dental Health

The Childsmile programme is delivered on an Ayrshire wide basis, receiving referrals from multiple sources including health visitors, school nurses and via dental services. We continue to develop the programme to meet the needs of the population and have recently completed a service evaluation of the service provided by the Dental Health Support Workers, which will feed into our strategic plans for the next 3-5 years to ensure a high quality and meaningful service.

Our National Dental Inspection Programme (NDIP) figures indicated a marginal improvement on the previous inspections, but overall improvements have slowed, and careful consideration of next steps to be taken to improve oral health further. In 2025, we will be commencing a new Oral Health Improvement Action Plan- which is designed to set the strategic direction in oral health improvement for the next 10 years.

Speech and Language Therapy

All Early Years establishments have a nominated Communication Champion who links closely with the Children and Young People's Speech & Language Therapy (CYP SLT) Team, receiving accredited Hanen Learning Language and Loving It training for enhancing the environment in early years to be communication friendly. The team also offers training sessions on specific speech, language and communication areas which are open to all early years and primary staff.

The CYP SLT team offers both virtual and in person drop-in slots where any parent or carer with a concern about their child's speech, language and communication can request a half hour slot during which they receive advice, resources or completion of a request for assistance if the child is requiring a SLT assessment. Early Years establishments and Primary schools can also request these drop-ins for children in their care.

CYP SLT are part of a recently created North Ayrshire Early Language Network (created May 2024) with a focus on 0-5 years.

The Network has representatives from Education in the Early years, Psychology, Health Visiting, Speech & Language Therapy, Family Nurse Partnership and the third sector.

The focus of the Network is to look at the pathways for infants and children and their families seeking advice or support for speech, language and communication, map what is working well and where the gaps in these pathways are and co-produce solutions. The Network meets on a regular basis.

CYP SLT work closely with the Ayrshire Neurodevelopmental Empowerment and Strategy Team (NEST) to provide in person workshops on "Supporting your autistic child's communication", providing information and an opportunity for families to discuss their concerns about their autistic child's communication. A virtual drop in (over Attend Anywhere) for families of children with social communication differences is run jointly with our partners in Occupational Therapy.

Speech and Language Therapy assistants link closely with our partners in libraries delivering Bookbug sessions and attending Breastfeeding network sessions to share key messages for developing all children's speech, language and communication.

Two Speech and Language Therapists work as part of a multi-disciplinary team who offer assessment and diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions, mainly Autism for children aged 3-6. This is a pan Ayrshire service.

The CYP SLT Team is working to reduce the Wait Times for SLT assessment and subsequent specialist support through the initiatives already highlighted. An increase in staffing and a more balanced skill mix has supported service improvement plans. As a result the waiting times have steadily reduced. Between February 2024 and February 2025, the Children and Young People waiting times reduced by 64% from 138 weeks to 50 weeks.

ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) and Asylum Seekers and Refugee support

The New Scots ESOL Hub finished its first academic term in June 2024. The 'test of change' for providing education to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Trafficked Young People which ran from late February to June 2024 proved highly successful.





Six of our dedicated young people from the New Scots ESOL Hub were supported to apply for full time ESOL courses and were successful.

Six of our young people were supported to apply for full time ESOL college courses and were successful. A number of these young people were placed in higher level courses than they had initially applied for.

The New Scots ESOL Hub is more than just English lessons, it provides the opportunity for our young people to be part of a community. They also receive ongoing support with any issues and with their wellbeing. Two sessions of sport are provided per week. Recently, there has been a focus on football and basketball.

The students have learned vocabulary relating to football, practised various drills and worked on their team skills. They have developed their ability to communicate during play, and how to pass, shoot and defend correctly. They are also learning how to play basketball. This has proven to be more challenging to play than football but we are all gradually learning the rules and skills required and having fun while doing so.

Whilst supporting our Syrian Families, we identified a need to raise awareness around Oral Health and how to engage with Dental Services. Also to encourage more play within the family home in early child years.



We worked in partnership with the Childsmile Team, Dietetic Health and Improvement Team also a support worker of the health visiting team to promote Health and Wellbeing. We targeted some families and were hosted at the Syrian Hub by service users who regularly meet there every two weeks. One of our service users took part in the planning of the event and volunteered on the day.

The Childsmile Team brought information in Arabic and interactive quizzes for the parents and children. Dental packs were provided for the families to take home to promote good oral hygiene. The team were also able to promote fluoride varnishing programme to the parents through our Bilingual Support as the uptake was very low due to the letters from the school being in English.

The day was well attended, and all the families enjoyed learning about the Childsmile service, playing the sugar game with the Dietetic team, and exploring activities they could play with the children within the home that don't cost anything but support health and wellbeing.





Family Centred Wellbeing - Improving Mental & Physical Health and Wellbeing

The Family Centred Wellbeing Service (FCWS) are a team of 14 wellbeing workers who support families with children between the ages of 5-18. We currently support over 170 families, with sessions provided within the family's homes, within our offices, community buildings and schools.

We seek to build on existing parenting capacity and provide practical support, advice, and guidance that will enhance family wellbeing and relationships. The team use the facilities in Meadowcroft to bake and cook with our families, giving them an opportunity to connect, bond and learn life skills that can have a positive impact on their wellbeing and finances. We use the garden to develop play-based skills and to encourage positive mental health and wellbeing.



Over the summer, the team devised and facilitated a summer programme that ran twice a week for the full summer. They utilised accessible community resources in every area and did free activities with families to help build their confidence and show parents and carers how to access outdoor activities that will have a positive impact on their physical and emotional health. It also encouraged families to access local community resources and build further contacts within the community, reducing the impact of social isolation.

Working in partnership with KA Leisure and their young leaders, our children and families were supported to learn sports skills. We took kites to the local beach and learned how to fly them, we did chalk art with the families on the rocks, we paddled in the water and most of all, we spent time with each other.

The team have a good social media presence (800 followers across both platforms) and they utilise that to share and promote upcoming events, local groups and activities and to promote social inclusion and wellbeing. The team have established a group that meets weekly with the Three Towns Growers, which has allowed our families to learn how to grow and sustain food. Some of this produce also goes to the local Foodbanks and it has been a great way to build a sense of community spirit and capacity.



North Ayrshire
Family Centred
Wellbeing
Service

FCWS 2024 Summer Programme



Firelighting at Ardeer Beach - 9th July

9 children attended

Sports Day at The Circuit - 11th July

16 children attended

Scavenger Hunt/Litter Picking at Fairlie Beach - 16th July

17 children attended

STEM Trail at Eglinton Park - 18th July

12 children attended

Sausage Sizzle at Dalry Park - 23rd July

16 children attended

Come Lunch with Us at Meadowcroft - 25th July

18 children attended

Treasure Hunt at Kilwinning McGavin Park - 30th July

24 children attended

Firelighting at Irvine Beach - 1st August

13 children attended

Football Day at Kilwinning Sports Club - 6th August

8 children attended

Colour Hunt at Eglinton Park - 8th August

Rock Pooling at Saltcoats Beach - 13th August



133 children
have attended
over 9 activities
with their
parents/carers

Feedback from parents/carers:

"I have enjoyed meeting parents with the same struggles and getting help and advice from them"



"Lots of great activities for the kids. Great for the kids to be involved"

"Plenty of choice, something for everyone"



"I can let kids play without feeling judged, we have made a friend and have a play date planned"

Priority 3: Making things fairer

Key Highlights and Progress

Educational Attainment

A new data visualisation tool has been launched with all schools to support the tracking and analysis of progress in learning across the Broad General Education stages. This will support more effective targeting of interventions and raising attainment strategies. Trackers have also been developed for Early Years establishments to track progress across Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing which align more closely with Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

A Data Service Improvement Group has been created in session 2024-25 which consists of senior leaders across Primary and Secondary schools focussing on the use of data to collaboratively support improvements for raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Data clinics have also taken place to offer support in this area. Early Years and Primary senior leaders have worked collaboratively to create consistency of approach and resource in the tracking of Literacy and Numeracy.

The annual leavers attainment and positive destinations statistics were published nationally at the end of February 2025. This follows the annual publication of Curriculum for Excellence attainment data in December 2024. There is a varied picture across a range of measures, with some clear strengths and areas for further improvement.

The latest published achievement figures are for 2023-24. Combined Numeracy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 76%, in line with attainment in the previous year. Similarly, combined Literacy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 69%, again in line with attainment in the previous year.

Performance of all school leavers in attaining Literacy at Level 4 and Level 5 displays a positive 5-year picture. In 2023-24, our school leavers have outperformed all other comparators at level 5, with 93% achieving literacy at level 4 or better and 81% achieving literacy at level 5 or better. The performance of our school leavers in attaining Numeracy at Level 4 and Level 5 also displays a positive 5-year trend. For Level 4, 90% of leavers achieved this and 71% of all leavers achieved Level 5.

The performance of all school leavers with 1 qualification at Level 5 and 1 qualification at Level 6 continues to improve. In session 2023-24, 87% of all school leavers achieved at least one qualification at Level 5 which is broadly in line with the previous year. 68% of school leavers achieved at least one qualification at Level 6 which is almost 2 percentage points higher than in session 2022-23.

In terms of school leaver destinations, an initial positive destination means that a school leaver has gone on to further or higher education, training, skills development or employment immediately after leaving school. At 96%, the proportion of our leavers moving into an initial positive destination is in line with 2022-23.

To maximise the percentage of school leavers entering and sustaining positive destinations, schools continue to work in strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Ayrshire.

The links between Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Ayrshire and our schools continue to be further strengthened and supported by a range of vocational courses and work placements delivered across all secondary schools. In total, 486 young people participated in work placements which allowed them to develop a range of key employability skills such as teamworking, communication and interpersonal skills.

Our schools also held a range of DYW activities to support learners and their next steps such as: careers events; employability workshops; mock interviews and how to write CV/ application forms; site visits; Further and Higher Education engagement and women into STEM events.

Our schools continue to benefit from close partnership working with local businesses to support the development of skills for learning, life and work. In session 2023-24, planning began between NAC and Ayrshire College for piloting the Performing Engineering Operations course. This qualification is a requirement for entering further study of engineering disciplines and will support learners who progress to Further or Higher Education. Connected to this, links have now been formed with a subsea cabling company operating in North Ayrshire which will further support learner pathways as well as graduate apprenticeship and wider employment opportunities in our local authority.

Our Learning Estate

We have an excellent record of continuous improvement across our Learning Estate, and Academic Year 2023-24 saw a number of major projects progressed which strengthen that commitment:

- Completion of new build Montgomerie Park Primary School, Irvine
- Completion of major refurbishment of Marress House, Early Years Centre, Irvine
- Final stages of the new build replacement of Moorpark Primary School, Kilbirnie
- Site works underway for a new Ardrossan Community Campus, which will replace Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary School
- Kitchen and servery works in preparation for the roll out of Universal Free School Meals in Garnock Community Campus, Hayocks Primary School, Corsehill Primary School and Whitehirst Park Primary School
- Significant replacement programme of ICT devices (laptops/PCs/ipads/Smartboards)
- Completion of the internal upgrade works at Kilwinning Academy

Professional Learning

A full professional learning programme is in operation, including programmes for teachers, early years practitioners and pupil support assistants. The Professional Learning Academy (PLA) has a well-regarded in-residence delivery model to ensure training can be adopted, practised and embedded in individual establishments.

The Professional Learning Academy work in partnership with the Educational Psychology Service to deliver a breadth of professional learning opportunities including supporting neurodivergent learners and promoting positive relationships and behaviour which are two of our key priorities within education.

Excellence and Equity Leads (EELs) in early years establishments (allocated to those with higher levels of deprivation) continue to focus on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. More focused training with these Leads has provided ongoing



consistency of delivery and data collection. Work with the EELs and Education Scotland is providing support and frameworks to ensure Early Years establishments can measure the attainment in relation to the poverty related attainment gap.

MCR Pathways Programme



In the 8 mainland Secondary schools, the MCR Pathways Young Talent programme continues to be delivered to care-experienced learners and those at risk of being placed into care. (North Ayrshire's MCR Pathways team pictured at Annual Promise Conference 2024).

During the 2023-24 academic session, the MCR Pathways Young Talent programme supported our young people in, or on the edges of care within 6 secondary schools with a total of 424 young people engaged. This is a significant increase from 229 young people engaged in session 2022-23. There has been collaboration with the Corporate Parenting Team to help support schools with engagement with "Keeping the Promise" award of which 2 Secondary Schools are currently involved.

S1 and S2 learners involved in the programme participated in group work which focussed on building self-esteem and confidence, strengths and interests, teamwork, problem solving and employability skills. MCR Pathways Co-ordinators, who are members of the schools' extended pastoral support teams, provide an enhanced and integrated level of support, liaising with partners and preparing young people for engagement with a Mentor. Using their wealth of experiences and life skills, mentors share the same desire to support a young person in their local community and give something back.

Early Learning and Childcare

Our early years staff are working with our funded providers who contribute to the early childhood development and education of our young people. We have provided training and engagement sessions to ensure the delivery of high-quality experiences for all.

There is ongoing work with other sectors and the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) to encourage North Ayrshire residents to become childminders. This is aimed at a targeted group and support will be provided to encourage people to venture into this career pathway providing more choice for families with regards to their funded childcare options.

Whole Family Approaches

Through the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, grants have been awarded to eight third sector organisations during this financial year with the aim of testing or expanding early intervention projects which support a whole family approach.

Some of these projects include support to kinship families, the use of art therapy in early years, transition support to young people with additional support needs and intensive therapeutic counselling support to children who have been sexually abused or experienced other significant trauma.

Young Parents Group

A Young Parents Group has been established and designed by our Mental Health and Wellbeing Project Delivery Officer. The group splits into activities suitable for the learning and development of babies attending and also parents interacting in sessions.

Using the first hour to focus on the baby/ child development through activities which is led by the lifelong learning team and using the second hour for the development of the parents.

The group is well established and sessions have been created to encourage learning for both parents and their babies, within a range of different topics including Messy Play, What is mental health and how can this be linked between you and your baby, Multiply input, Book Bug, Worry and Fears session for parents (creating a social network), Resilience of a parent, Baby Sensory, Crafting, Relax, Kids Baking, Baby Massage- attachment process and postnatal depression.

The group is designed to be fun and exciting for both parents and their little ones. They provide a great opportunity to try new activities and meet new people, creating lasting memories.

The programme encourages parents to interact with each other and share a variety of good and bad experiences. It creates opportunities to get advice, meet new friends and catch up with peers at each session.

A young mum shared: “The Young Parents Group is a lifeline to me as I don’t get to see anyone anymore since the baby came along. I look forward to it every week, the support from everyone is amazing. I’m sad it will only be lasting ten weeks. We need more of this in our communities!”



“The group always has something on for the kids but also an activity for the parents too. I really hope it can be extended as I have made friends for life and our mental health is just as important as our babies. The impact it has had on myself and the other parents is more than words can say.”

As a result of the programme, the young parent's attending have increased confidence, created a support network within the group and enjoy each session. 15 young parents have joined the group and this increases each week. Attending these sessions allows the children to interact with other babies and their parents, promoting socialisation and interaction. This can help to develop parents and babies' social skills and build confidence in this new chapter of their lives.



Financial Inclusion

A North Ayrshire Financial Inclusion Partnership was established in May 2023 with membership including financial inclusion service providers and key stakeholders.

The Partnership developed and delivered a Community Consultation at the end of 2023, the findings of which will be incorporated into an update of the Financial Inclusion Strategy to be produced late spring 2025, for 2025-30.

The consultation found that advice/financial inclusion services are highly rated by those who had used them, but in response to a question relating to barriers to accessing advice services, there are a number of areas to be addressed in the promotion and development of services:

- The range of platforms available for access services for people who don't like using the phone/internet
- That advice services are available for people in all housing tenures including owner-occupiers
- Stigma/self-stigmatising
- Fear of the situation getting worse
- Services available to island communities
- Improved engagement with gypsy/traveller communities

A Communications sub-group of the Partnership has now been established to address the above.

Another key finding, which reflects wider national research, is that where both debt and welfare rights advice is required, accessing both through one referral/service is preferred. In response, it has now been agreed that to supplement the debt advice service available to council tenants from the HSCP Financial Inclusions service, an additional welfare rights and debt adviser will be recruited for non-council tenants, to provide a service for those who seek welfare rights advice from Money Matters but also require help with debts. This will then eliminate the need to refer on to another service for this support.

Welfare Rights Officers in Schools Project 2024 -25

Following a successful recruitment process we were pleased to expand our Welfare Rights Officers in Schools team to 3. From August 2024 they have been available to all families with children in educational establishments including Early Years. The team received extensive training during August and September and started to engage with families from October.

The team have received a total of 259 referrals this financial year, an increase of 144%, with combined financial gains of £818,636.32, this is an increase of 46% from last financial year. This takes the total financial gains since the inception of the service to over £1.8 million.

They are seeing an increasing number of referrals coming in for families with Primary School age children and are working hard to engage with more families through our Early Years establishments.



Their marketing campaign has been successful with 51% of referrals coming directly from families.

Family members who have engaged with the service have commented that it's not just about the financial gains they have seen a positive impact on family wellbeing due to reduced stress, worry and anxiety over benefit issues and money.



An example of the difference that can be made to a family can be seen by the support provided to a local secondary school parent. Following a benefit check, the Welfare Rights Officer was able to maximise the family income. Benefits were identified, support with claims, redeterminations and mandatory revisions against both DWP and Social Security Scotland were undertaken and the family is now better off by £271.18 a week and has received arrears of benefits totalling £14,122.23

Leadership Opportunities

Our leadership opportunities allow young people to become peer mentors and role models through our youth voice provision (youth forums, junior youth forums, Scottish Youth Parliament and executive youth council). These young people co design service delivery and support the work being delivered.

Our Modern Apprenticeship programme takes young people through and SCQF Level 7 in youth work, participants design, produce and deliver work with young people across North Ayrshire around all areas of CLD and youth work.

This year has seen Active Schools employ our first Modern Apprentice, who will start their journey of SCQF Level 6 in Sports Coaching. The funding for this post has come from ENABLE and sportscotland. As part of the criteria from the funders the candidate had to have a disability. They are working across our team but their role has a particular focus on ASN provision.



Photo caption: Smiles all round at Youth Services Modern Apprenticeship celebration. Since coming on board in August 2023, the team have been a vital part of the council's Community Learning and Development team, delivering over 2,000 youth groups and activities across North Ayrshire's six localities. They leave the programme with a SCQF Level 7 in youthwork.



Elderbanks Primary School Fruit Growing

Colleagues at an Irvine school are growing grapes and tangerines with help from pupils – and a talented parent. Children and staff at Elderbanks Primary, Irvine, have teamed up with dad Yousif Al Ahmed to create a garden inside a polytunnel. The growing area was created a few years ago through the Pupil Equity Fund and it has gone from strength to strength.



The polytunnel gardens was developed by Yousif with support from the children, and they have been growing produce and then using it within the school to cook. Pupils have learned how to grow their own produce and have seen the whole process – from seed to plate.

Pupils Cody Lee (10) and Charlie (11) are among children who enjoy rolling their sleeves up and growing produce in the polytunnel. Cody Lee said: *"We love growing pumpkins, apples and oranges in the garden"* while Charlie said his nan's love of gardening inspired him.

Talented gardener Yousif from Syria, said: "It is good for all children to learn about how fruit and vegetables are grown, and is especially good for children with sensory needs – like my own son who has autism and is an Elderbanks pupil"

Priority 4 Promoting good mental health and wellbeing

Key Highlights and Progress

Counselling support and community wellbeing supports

The School Counselling Service continues to support children aged 10-18. This financial year we have supported 477 children and young people and have offered 152 hours of counselling per week. 99.4% of children and young people reported an improvement in their wellbeing following counselling.

Children and Young People presented with a range of concerns most notably, depression/low mood, anxiety and self-worth.

Younger Primary children have also been able to access counselling through Crisis Counselling with 38 children under 10 years accessing support.

Through the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework grant funding we have supported 6527 children and young people and 1212 family members through a range of programmes. 6283 children and young people have engaged with positive mental health and wellbeing services highlighting the focus on early intervention and prevention. 94% have reported an improved outcome. We have engaged with Third Sector partners through a collaboration with the adult community mental health fund processes.

Examples of projects include the Empower project run by KA Leisure. They have engaged with 126 young people through both group work and 1-1 support. The focus is to use physical activity to promote and maintain positive mental wellbeing. They have made links with Tourette's Scotland and supported this group who are higher risk on poorer mental wellbeing.

Through engaging with some of our Secondary establishments they have also supported those young people struggling with lower attendance.

One teacher has described the impact below.

"This project has been massive for the young people I have referred. One of the pupils I referred had very poor attendance, he only started attending regularly on a Thursday to attend the gym, this allowed him to create a routine with a soft start and develop a better relationship towards school. Since returning from the school holidays, he has only missed one day and is now on a full timetable! He is continuing with gym too and enjoying it very much!

The other pupil we referred was on a reduced timetable and had to be picked up from his house and taken to school, he would not leave the house independently. Since completing the Elevate programme he now leaves home independently to attend 3-4 times per week, this is huge for him and been a massive confidence boost. He is still on a reduced timetable but attends all scheduled classes which is more than before.

We feel like this project offers an olive branch to school and helps pupils build a better relationship with school in a healthy manner and at a steady pace. We would definitely recommend this project."

Additional projects include Dance Therapy with 27 Care Experienced children and young people benefitting from this intervention. The group leader describes the positive impact on wellbeing.

“Dance therapy has been an amazing way to watch all of these children develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically over the weeks, months and some years who have been attending.

Our collaboration with small grass roots Third Sector Partners has continued to provide supports and services which promote positive mental health and wellbeing to children young people and families across the authority. Examples include the Lorretta Doyle Judo Foundation who have worked with Syrian, Afghani and Ukrainian families with 120 children and young people participating this year. *most of the delivery has been, this year, for Syrian, Ukrainian and* New classes were developed for families where there are additional support needs identified including Autism, ADHD, Visual & Hearing Impairment. Elderbank Primary School 36 children, 16 were children with Hearing Impairment and were subsequently supported with “Guide Dogs for the Blind” another 8 Visually Impaired children joined a new series of programmes.

Our Area Inclusion Workers (AIW) continue to support children, young people and families with their wellbeing through a range of 1-1 and group approaches. Interventions include Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM), KitBags and Building on Positive Relationships Family groups. Families and children report positive impacts on their mental health and wellbeing with one AIW reporting

“Due to home visits, check ins and LIAM I was able to build a positive relationship with a family and pupil who hadn't attended school in a year due to severe anxiety. With help and support from myself I was able to arrange an adjusted time table and supported the pupil in class that his attendance did improve slowly and hopefully will get better with time.”

Your Resilience – The Hive – Ayrshire College

Your Resilience supports young people's mental health resilience. The education programme is focused on building resilience through life's transitions for 14 to 20 year-olds, equipping them with the tools and resources to manage their mental health now and in the future.

The HIVE (Hope, Inspiration, Vision in Education) is a facility within Ayrshire college that many of the students arrive with no qualifications, and often no clear idea of what they want to do next.

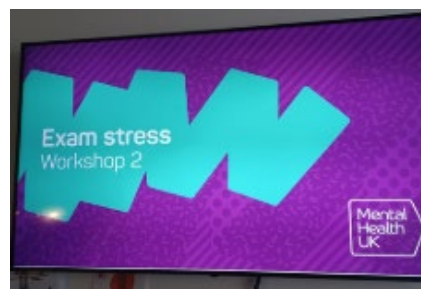


The HIVE aims to help you to achieve next steps and using the Your Resilience programme, we dedicated time to help these young people in their journey towards positive destinations. Strong relationships have been established between the Youth Work Team and Ayrshire College to support the young people that attend in helping them with their mental health and emotional awareness to move onto future courses or employment.

The programme was run weekly in Ayrshire College with current HIVE pupils (Intro to careers and bridge to careers). Sessions are 1–2-hours covering Resilience, Exam Pressure, Friendships/Decision Making, Social Pressures, Managing Studies and Juggling Time.

Along with open conversation work through the appropriate workbook for groups age ensuring the group understand the tasks and the tool kits provided to help them manage their own life scenarios and support their Mental Health and Wellbeing.

At the end of the completed sessions and workbooks the young people have an opportunity to give feedback, they will then receive their certificate.



Your Resilience – The Hive – Ayrshire College

Caroline McCulloch - Employability & Engagement Officer working at The Hive shared: “Working with young people who have previously disengaged from education within the HIVE at Kilwinning Campus, Ayrshire College, our course's aim is to prepare students to enhance their Employability skills, Confidence, Teamwork, Communication, self-esteem, and motivation which will support them into employment or mainstream courses.

“Many of our students are Care experienced, have ASN, ADHD, Behavioural issues, Autism, Anxiety, Depression, Trauma and Mental Health issues. Vicki has been delivering Resilience sessions to over 50 of our students.

“The sessions have been invaluable for our students, through completing the workbook it has provided the students with an opportunity to take part in open discussions with relatable topics.



"Youth Worker Vicki and her staff have been amazing and were able to create a safe environment, build positive, trusting relationships with our young people, equip them with the tools and knowledge to reach out with any concerns and have better resilience which has had a positive effect on their mental wellbeing. I am hoping this partnership can continue, which will enable us to reach out to a lot more young people who will benefit from these sessions."



I liked this course because I learned more about mental health. My favourite part was the friendship session because it made me think about who I spend my time with." HIVE student age 18

Building on positive relationships and whole school nurture

Whole school nurture was delivered across the whole education service at the close of last session to ensure all staff in our provisions have the necessary skills and experience to offer a nurturing environment for all children and young people. In order to build on this work and respond to the Scottish Governments Action Plan on Improving relationships and behaviour in schools a collaborative event took place to set the wider context and gather practitioners views. Following this we have established 3 working groups to update our LA policy on relationships and behaviour; develop a professional learning guide and update our professional learning offer in this area as well as establishing a clear process for developing planning and risk assessments. Extensive stakeholder consultation has also taken place with feedback indicating the need for greater consistency around expectations and consequences and practical support. Professional learning in this area and is being shared with establishments.



In parallel to embedding a whole school nurturing approach, we have continued to develop our building on positive relationships approach (which is based on the principles of non-violent resistance). As well as the principles in this approach forming part of our overall offer to educational establishments, we have expanded our offer to parents and carers with 18 groups taking place this session including one specifically to target attendance issues. We have also run facilitators sessions for BPR so that we can build capacity for staff to deliver the parent groups with these being positively evaluated by all that attended. Analysis of surveys completed before and after the Building on Positive Relationships parent groups has demonstrated a significant impact on the understanding and knowledge of our parents in terms of applying this approach to strengthen positive outcomes for their children.

Feedback from parents included:

- “The way we were made to feel included and listened to. We weren't alone In our struggles and felt a part of something that would help. The difference in thinking before we react to challenging behaviour has changed to involve different ways of coping and positive strategies of dealing with it as a family.”
- “Realising others are going through similar things. That situations can be worse. That things can improve. Techniques to help and support each other.”

Attendance

We have continued to focus on school attendance as a priority in education with small improvements being seen in both our overall attendance figures and a reduction in our persistent absence figures. Work has included an update of policy and guidance on Seemis codes; key messaging being made available to promote positive attendance across the authority and the development of supports for early intervention and targeted support for those experiencing difficulties with attendance including those experiencing emotionally based school non-attendance.

Other health and wellbeing supports

Over this year other health and wellbeing work had focussed on supporting schools by delivering our Bounceback mental health and wellbeing programme. The Take Times Families Group work with 15 parents/ carers and children looking at anxiety, emotions, and resilience in fun understandable ways. Both Joint Youth Forum and Primary 7 youth council featured mental health and wellbeing workshops for young people to look at resilience, wellbeing and positive mindset.





Our Cyber Explorers programme supports young people gaining a cyber resilience qualification and supports wellbeing and online safety with 755 registered on the system, 129 young people achieving SCQF Level 4 and 57 young people achieving SCQF Level 5.

There are 1024 active DofE participants where mental and physical health and wellbeing questions are regularly answered by participants on their DofE app showing improving their mental/ physical health whilst taking part in the Award.



Our Community Learning and Development Team supports and leads on initiatives such as Our Scottish Sports Future, Community Schools for non-attenders, New Scots Girls football, adventure group and volleyball. Park Lives – Dalry Community Sports Club Taboo Topics Group – which focusses on wellbeing podcasts and North Coast Media Studio with. Our games group supports young people with additional support needs with wellbeing and resilience through gaming.

All Active Schools activity supports positive mental health for all participating children and young people. Our extra-curricular provision, events and leadership programmes across the year all help to reduce stress, boost mood and enhance self-esteem. In addition, our staff have developed a guide for schools to raise awareness on how the work of Active Schools contributes to positive mental health. Furthermore, the coaches and volunteers have been part of a robust training programme around mental health and how to support young people during their weekly sessions.

School Nursing Service

Mental and emotional wellbeing is one of the ten priority pathways in the school nursing service. During 2024-25 we have undertaken work within the school nursing service to clearly define what support is able to be offered in relation to mental health and wellbeing and agreed across Ayrshire that the following areas can be supported: low level anxiety, low mood, bereavement support, self-harm and low self-esteem. Staff have received additional training in relation to bereavement support whilst continuing to deliver Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) where capacity allows.

North Ayrshire's Children and Young People's Neurodevelopmental Implementation Group

All North Ayrshire family supports for children with neurodevelopmental differences (NDD) have been mapped and uploaded onto the NEST (Neurodevelopmental Empowerment & Strategy Team) website.

A third phase of engagement work was undertaken with parents/carers around their experiences of NDD support and services, following on from the focus groups undertaken in 2023-24. A summary report of the findings has been developed and will be shared with those who attended. The focus groups have been a helpful reference point to sense-check progress to date, to get feedback and to consider and respond to this.

Following the 2023-24 training needs analysis of the children's services workforce, an agreement to create a NDD Learning and Development Adviser post (fixed term) was made. This post will support building capacity and capability of all agencies working with children and young people in relation to NDD. Due to delays in processes, this post will be recruited in the next financial year and will be funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.

A test of change involving the creation of a multi-agency panel (MAP) to review all children and young people who had been referred to CAMHS since August 2023 but who no longer met the CAMHS criteria. In addition, pan-Ayrshire discussions regarding what a potential ND service would look like have been ongoing, with a draft business case being completed currently.

North Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance

KA Leisure continues to work with partners to establish the strategic priorities of the North Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance. The aim is to bring key partners together and coordinate efforts to support individual, family, and community health and wellbeing.

One of our current priorities is the co-design and delivery of a pilot project in Kilwinning. A diverse mix of partners from across North Ayrshire came together at the recent workshop to help shape the early development of the Kilwinning Pilot.

This included representatives from health, employability, education, community organisations, and local services- all with a shared commitment to improving access to employment, training, volunteering, and wellbeing opportunities within the community. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity to align around a shared ambition: strengthening community wellbeing through more connected and accessible support. There was strong consensus that beginning with a series of informal, community-based events would be the right approach which would help to build relationships, foster trust, and create a welcoming introduction to the wider offer.

Priority 5 Inspiring children and young people to be active

Key Highlights and Progress

Active Schools

We have continued to support more young people to be active both within a school and community settings. We have worked in partnership to make sure there are school to community links in all six localities. Across this year we have also worked together to fill any gaps in provision to ensure all localities have an equitable number of opportunities for all young people to take part in. Our pathways between school to club/ community sport has been strengthened to allow a better transition for our young people.

Active Schools have continued to focus on those who most need our support to access sporting opportunities. The Active Schools and Communities Partnership Officers have played a crucial role in this and have removed any barriers to participation for those that are care-experienced, living in poverty, non-attenders or other targeted reasons.



We are working to remove barriers for the young people and families with care experience to take part in Sport and Physical Activity using a Whole Systems Approach to lead a healthier Lifestyle. This last year has seen the delivery of 31 different experiential opportunities to 273 young people. The opportunities are wide and varied and range from water sports, climbing, sailing to residential and fun days. On completion of their experiential activity the young people are then supported into more frequent activity within their own school and/ or community of which 59% currently have taken this opportunity on.

Active Schools key focus has remained on getting 'More Kids, More Active, More Often'. Extra-curricular provision has been delivered across ALL primary, secondary and ASN establishments. Over 9,200 young people have attended a variety of sport and physical activity sessions across this year, which is over 52% of the whole young people population. There were 10,420 sessions delivered across the year with 217,225 visits in total taking place (if 10 young people attended 10 times it is counted as 100 visits). We had 663 deliverers of which 98% of them are volunteers, the highest recorded in Scotland.

Our Active Schools Calendar of events this year has seen over 5,300 young people take part in a variety of sports across 63 events. The events calendars run in clusters, localities as well as North Ayrshire wide. In addition to these events, we have supported our ASN pupils



to attend the Ayrshire Sports Ability and Scottish Disability calendar of events to make sure ALL young people have the opportunity to perform and compete at the appropriate level.

St Matthews Academy Residential Trip

We also partnered with the team at Sport Scotland's National Sports Training Centre in Inverclyde to provide a residential trip for young people. Supporting twelve S1 pupils from St Matthews Academy, the overnight residential trip took place in early November 2024. Staying for two days, the experience offered an opportunity for the pupils to meet new friends, discover ways to lead healthier lives and consider coping strategies to improve their mental health.

It was also a chance to find out what sports they enjoy via the sports centre's nationally renowned facilities and professional coaches. The trip was organised by the Active Schools community partnership team, a dedicated service working closely with schools and communities to develop sporting opportunities in school and beyond. A highlight of the recent residential was exclusive use of the impressive gymnastics facility.



The pupils also had the chance to try out archery, boccia (a kind of lawn bowls for the ASN community), pickleball, the climbing wall and many more activities. Our young people thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities this experience presented. However, the true success of this work with Active Schools is the increased sense of belonging, self-confidence and self-esteem evident in the pupils who participated.

Strong friendship groups have been established and the S1 pupils involved feel more settled and secure in the school as a result. It is hoped that the St Matthews pupils from the latest residential will now participate in sports within their own school and community too.

Leadership Pathway

Active School have a sector leading leadership pathway from P6-S6 and beyond. The P6 Move and Improve programme has seen 1003 young people trained as leaders. Their role is to deliver quality sports and physical activity lunchtime session to their peers. We have also had 36 teaching staff members trained through this programme to support the delivery. Our S1-S6 Young Ambassador programme has 148 representatives. Their role is to promote sport and encourage others to be more Active. Our S5-S6 North Ayrshire Sports Academy



programme has 168 young people engaged. Each participant will have gained a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 qualifications. These range from their Saltire Awards, National Governing Body Qualifications all the way through to and SQA in Higher Leadership. This programme has seen the young people volunteer over 5500 hours within their local schools and communities.



KA Leisure

KA Leisure offers a diverse range of programmes that include sport and general physical activity. We collaborate with communities and partners to provide term-time activities and holiday programmes. Our term time programme is spread across all localities with over 100 classes per week.

KA Leisure continues to deliver innovative marketing campaigns to encourage participation across the general public. We also collaborate with partners to provide targeted approaches to encourage harder to reach young people to participate in our programmes.

KA Leisure promotes the INSPIRE programme by offering a comprehensive membership that provides children and young people with access to a wide range of activities, including arts, drama, dance, and music. We ensure visibility through community engagement, partnerships, and targeted marketing. The programme includes term-time activities and holiday programmes.

Outdoor Activities

There are 1024 active DofE participants where physical health is part of all participants award. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) has four core sections: Volunteering, Skills, Physical, and Expedition, with a Residential section added at the Gold level.



Our outdoors for wellbeing programme gave 30 primary aged young people a weeklong programme of outdoor activities that supported wellness which included yoga, tree planting, nature walks and more.



We work in partnership with Scottish Ports Futures to provide the Twilight Basketball programme that incorporates physical health with youth work issue-based programmes throughout the year. Working with our New Scots girls group we also support the Swans Girls Football Team.

Community Sports Hub

Our North Ayrshire Community Sport Hubs are flourishing. We have been supporting clubs with training, venues and one to one development sessions. In collaboration with selected affiliated clubs, we have been supporting the delivery of satellite clubs to encourage more localised participation. In addition, we have supported the development of additional ASN sessions at North Ayrshire Athletics club. Badminton has also been a focus this year with the employment of a racket sports officer who sits within the KA Leisure team to develop school to community clubs in targeted localities.

Early Learning and Childcare

All early year's establishments have access to outdoors at all times of the year. All early year's establishments provide learning environments which provide opportunities for physical play both indoors and outdoors. All staff are aware of the importance of developing gross motor skills and ensure experiences offered support development of core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

JumpStart Child Healthy Weight Programme

The Child Healthy Weight team continue to support children and their families to achieve a healthy weight via the Jumpstart programme. The programme works with families of children aged 5 to 17 years old. Programmes provided are:

- Jumpstart Junior: Aged 5 – 9
- Jumpstart Senior: Aged 10 – 13
- Jumpstart Teens: Aged 14 – 17



There were 85 group based physical activity and health education sessions were delivered along with attendance at 7 promotional events over the last year. The Child Healthy Weight Team continue to partner with the Trinity Active Travel hub and education colleagues to support events and initiatives aimed at promoting active lifestyles and healthy habits. Participating families also make use of a free leisure pass to access amenities such as the KA Leisure Centres which would normally not be within their financial ability.

Other activity focused on three Fun with Food groups at two early years centres and engaged with approximately 25 families. Further groups are planned for summer 2025.

North Ayrshire Athletics Club - Funding success

The North Ayrshire Athletics Club successfully secured a funding bid from North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVT). The local group will receive £27,000 over three years to help support an additional member of staff who will help to promote the sport to young people. As well as building on the work already being carried out, the post will help provide athletics opportunities for people living in the most deprived areas and for people living in poverty. They also hope to provide training, volunteering and employment opportunities with a particular focus on young people.

The club, along with North Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Active Schools, KA Leisure and Scottish Athletics, has been working hard to expand provision and reach more young people than ever before.

A significant expansion of all programmes: pre-school, 5 to 8-year-old programme, additional support needs sessions, holiday provision and a range of curricular and extra-curricular athletics sessions has seen over 1,000 young people given the opportunity to participate. Since the programmes started, 250 young people are now taking part on a regular basis.



Appendix 1 – Children’s Services Plan Action Updates 2024-25

Priority 1: The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected

| No. | Action | Update 2024-25 |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | Implement the North Ayrshire UNCRC Plan actions, ensuring the rights of all children and young people are protected. | We continue to champion the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that all children in North Ayrshire have their rights met, protected and advocated for. In July 2024, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 came into effect. The Act provides protection for the human rights of children and young people in Scotland. Following implementation of the Act, a working group has been set up with officers from across North Ayrshire Council services to deliver improvements. This group is currently developing a workplan that aims to ensure children's voices are considered in decisions that impact them; there are enhanced approaches to children friendly reporting and procedures for potential children rights breaches; our communities and workforce have increased awareness of children's rights; and children can further benefit from education on their rights. |
| 2 | Ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the work of the Community Planning Partnership. | <p>The Executive Youth Council (Exec) has 12 active members from across North Ayrshire. This overarching youth voice structure represents the views of our young people across schools and communities. Currently the group are working in partnership with Education to design and launch a Pupil Council Toolkit that will give schools tools and resources to support pupil voice structures. The group have recently held their AGM where the board were elected. The group have recently led our Joint Youth Forum that brings all of our youth voice groups together from each locality to work on common aims and receive training. February session included an introduction into MHWB pilot of financial literacy and wellbeing, working on the pupil council toolkit and creating poems and literature to support the LGBT work we do locally. Young people also had the opportunity to update us on what UNCRC means to them living in North Ayrshire which will create a comms media plan for the future.</p> <p>Our MSYPs continue to be the representative voice for young people and have been working to gather their views for the Scottish Youth Parliament Manifesto. Furthermore, they are working on their national campaign priorities around access to youth work, mental health and wellbeing and gender-based violence.</p> <p>The North Ayrshire Champions Board are a group of care experienced young people that take part in groups within their local secondary schools during either lunchtimes or within a school period. The aim of the groups is to allow young people to speak about their experienced within a safe space if they choose to do so and to allow them to work or plan projects that may positively impact them. They act as the youth voice for care experienced young people within North Ayrshire. Currently we have these groups running in all secondary schools. We hosted our latest Primary 7 youth council with 140 young people from across all localities focussing on cyber resilience, physical exercise and wellbeing, positive mindset and child poverty.</p> <p>Various Youth Forums sit on working groups – Through Our Garnock Valley, MSYPs sit on Irvine Town Board, North Coast Youth Forum are supporting Helter Skelter issue funds through their funding applications.</p> |
| 3 | Provide opportunities for children and young people to develop their citizenship skills, including active democratic participation opportunities. | See Action no 2 above. In addition, we hosted our latest Primary 7 youth council with 140 young people from across all localities focussing on cyber resilience, physical exercise and wellbeing, positive mindset and child poverty. Young people are supported in achieving the Personal Development Award, involvement in PB through shortlisting applications to the public vote and locality based for example the design of STEM at Bourtnehill Park. |

| No. | Action | Update 2024-25 |
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| 4 | Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) will be carried out on all new policies that affect the lives of our children and young people. | <p>The United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are embedded in our Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) process. Our impact assessment tool matches the rights against the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Wellbeing indicators to help narrow and define the children's rights that could be affected by any proposal or development. Each of the Rights are matched against the wellbeing indicators of Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. Some rights can be matched against more than one indicator.</p> <p>During 2024/25, 14 full assessments and 15 pre-assessment screening forms were completed, each of which asks about potential impact on Children's Rights. In addition, the equality and diversity part of the impact assessment process, has age as a protected characteristic, to which young people would be a sub-category within this. Across the completed full impact assessments, 11 indicated an impact to some degree on children's rights and these were considered in detail as part of the assessment process.</p> <p>The Council has an online ECRIA training programme and we are aiming to supplement that in the future with face-to-face awareness sessions on Children's Rights and the impact assessment process.</p> |
| 5 | Through the engagement workstream of the care experienced task force, work proactively with Children and Young People. | <p>The North Ayrshire Champions Board are a group of care experienced young people that take part in groups within their local secondary schools during either lunchtimes or within a school period. The aim of the groups is to allow young people to speak about their experienced within a safe space if they choose to do so and to allow them to work or plan projects that may positively impact them. They act as the youth voice for care experienced young people within North Ayrshire. Currently we have these groups running in all secondary schools. We have hosted our Care Day Event bringing care experienced young people, parents, carers and invited guests to an evening of connection, dinner and activities that support our work around care experience.</p> <p>Our North Ayrshire Champions Board relaunched a Care Experienced App named "CE4U". The app has lots of tips, advice, and information that we believe will help Care Experienced young people throughout their journey and beyond. The app has a little bit about everything from housing support, learning how to cook using recipes, tips on how to look after yourself physically and mentally, travel support as well as key contacts and events happening in our area. North Ayrshire Champions Board used their own experiences and journeys to produce the idea for an app and is the only app of its kind in Scotland</p> <p>We support the Auchenharvie Hub for unaccompanied young people and groups and support is given to our New Scots unaccompanied adults through individual and group work sessions.</p> |
| 6 | Co-create with children and young people new, systematic mechanisms for maximising learner participation and voice and create a new Learner Participation Policy. | <p>The new Learner Participation policy and procedure (POP) by the Council's Service Improvement Group (SIG), has now been fully launched across all establishments. An audit will be carried out across the service to evaluate the impact of this if part of the Establishment Improvement Plan 2024-25. This will include The Young Leaders of Learning programme which is currently being piloted with up to 11 Early Years centres and schools. This pilot should enhance opportunities to maximise learner participation and learner voice across the pilot establishments. A sharing practice event will be planned for later in the year.</p> |
| 7 | Ongoing consultation with children and their families on service design and delivery. | <p>We are central to the engagement and consultation with our young people through various different methods including community-based youth forums, executive youth council, thematic youth work groups, Joint Cabinet, P7 youth council and various events. We also actively engage with young people to gather their views and opinions through online</p> |

| No. | Action | Update 2024-25 |
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| | | <p>methods and social media. These topics are co designed and produced with young people and provide valuable data to inform polices, plans and service delivery.</p> <p>Within the 2024-25 academic year, there is an on-going pilot of Education Scotland's Young Leaders of Learning programme across 8 secondary schools, 10 primaries within a single cluster and an early years establishment. This programme seeks to strengthen learner participation and support improvement through pupil led improvement activities, which ensures pupil voice are heard and views are respected. While the focus of the programme varies across establishments, initial engagement suggests this may have a focus on tackling this area of the equality duty in some establishments through an emphasised focus on protecting children's rights.</p> |
| 8 | Ensure that Children's engagement forums focus on rights, helping children and families understand UNCRC and what this means. | A key focus for engagement and consultation has been based around UNCRC. Young people have been actively actioning Article 12 through a host of events, activities and online engagements. Our Executive Youth Council are in the process of designing and developing a Pupil Council Toolkit in partnerships with Education. The incorporation of UNCRC is a focal point focusing on training staff and young people in UNCRC awareness, realising rights, child friendly reporting. |
| 9 | Work with local partners/members to identify opportunities for children and young people to become involved locally. | We work with a range of partners to ensure young people are given opportunity to be involved in local community. Nationally this includes Youth Scotland, Youthlink, Young Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament. We work with a range of third sector organisations to support youth work delivery including Arran Youth Foundation, Police Scotland, Beith Trust, PRYDE, Irvine Youth Legacy Hub and many more. Through consistent engagement and consultation, we identify local need, service provision gaps and needs and wants of young people. Fire and rescue, Police Scotland, Education and KA leisure partnered with us to lead a S3 Leadership programme. |
| 10 | Through our Advocacy Strategy prioritise community-based advocacy to children and young people ensuring they are aware of their rights and are appropriately represented. | <p>Independent, community based, advocacy continues to be provided via Barnardo's Hear 4U service. It provides one to one advocacy to children and young people from North Ayrshire and priority is given to children and young people, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are involved in the Child Protection process and/or Children's Hearing system • Are care experienced in Foster Care, Residential Care and/or Kinship Care • Are on the periphery of Secure Care • Were previously looked after and accommodated • Have additional support needs <p>They continue to support young people to ensure they are aware of their rights, as defined within the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC). They are committed to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard, in a way which builds their confidence, also ensuring that they are listened to and their rights are appropriately represented, when decisions are made.</p> |
| 11 | Implement learning and improvements identified through the HSCP SDS Learning Review Board for the Children with a Disabilities Team. | Ongoing. Phase 2 work nearing completion in relation to policy, information and training. |
| 12 | Include young carers in the planning and shaping of their services. | Young Carers have once again benefitted from the Young Carers Education Fund. The fund can be used for anything that will improve or maintain the young person's physical, emotional mental health and wellbeing or life chances, reduce social isolation, and improve attainment. 115 children and young people have accessed the fund this year. Young Carers work with a key adult to complete a young carers statement and co-design any supports. Funds have been used for driving |

| No. | Action | Update 2024-25 |
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| | | lessons, days out to have a break from caring, a cinema pass to allow the young person set time away from caring responsibilities each week and one young person asked for cookbooks and utensils so they could pursue their love of cooking. |
| 13 | Develop a young people users forum for KA Leisure and ensure their views and opinions are considered when developing programmes and initiatives. | We have worked with groups to develop our programme and also delivered surveys within specific communities and target groups. However, a specific forum is yet to be established but is a priority for 2025-26. |

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next

| No. | Action | Update 2024-25 |
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| 14 | Work with our partners to keep all children and young people safe, with the robust implementation of the new National Guidance for Child Protection. | <p>A full multiagency approach was taken to implementation of Child Protection National Guidance. Governance of this was from the Child Protection Committee (CPC) and preparation was done to create briefings around all aspects of changes required to implement in September 2023. Since then, further pathways have been developed with oversight from and ratified by the CPC. This includes the pathway for 16–18-year-olds with the various legislative routes that may be appropriate but with recognition that National CP guidance and UNCRC identify this group as children. There are Pan Ayrshire revision of Child Protection procedures that have been undertaken by the CPC Lead officers and will be progressed to CPC in each respective LA by June 2025.</p> <p>IRD Strategic oversight group oversees the changes to IRD in line with National CP guidance. Child Protection training for social work staff has been updated to reflect the National CP guidance.</p> <p>Within the Education Service all staff receive annual Child Protection training. Child Protection co-ordinators attend termly meetings where national safeguarding and child protection updates are shared. The CPC training calendar is shared and staff are encouraged to attend course particularly those around the implementation of Signs of Safety.</p> |
| 15 | Support families with children aged 0-5 through our integrated universal early years' service. | <p>There are over 5000 children aged 0-4 years in North Ayrshire, all of whom are supported by either a Health Visitor or a Family Nurse. In addition to following the nationally agreed Universal Health Visiting Pathway from the antenatal period through to a child commencing school, within North Ayrshire, children under 5 and their families continue to have access to additional support from the wider, integrated early years team. During 2024/25 (as at 24 March 25), 914 requests for assistance from the various members of the integrated team were made. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 546 for Health Visiting Support Workers for areas such as communication, sleep, toileting, infant feeding and behaviour • 103 for the Perinatal Wellbeing Team, supporting new and expectant mums experiencing low level mental health difficulties • 91 for Early Years Social Workers supporting with domestic violence, parental mental health difficulties amongst others • 72 for the Family Nurturers who offer support around bonding and attachment, routines, home conditions and community integration |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 for the Healthcare Support Worker who provides additional support to the Perinatal Wellbeing Team as well as baby massage • 38 for support to dads via our partnership with national charity Dads Rock • 24 for specialist infant feeding support |
| 16 | Increase access to early learning and childcare. | <p>The 1140 funded hours is now being delivered with flexibility and choice for parents across localities. Our models offer a blend of full year and term time places with various patterns in establishments delivering 8am-6pm and 9am – 3pm. Allocations have taken place for session 25-26 and 87% of parents have been offered their 1st choice for establishment. Work is ongoing to increase the uptake of eligible 2s and this will continue into next year.</p> <p>The early years team is also working with services to increase the number of funded childminders in partnership with NAC with particular focus on the islands and the North Coast.</p> |
| 17 | Work together with parents or carers to provide support to their children. | <p>Working in partnership with two Ayrshire based parental support groups (ASN Support Ayrshire and ASN Parents and Kids Irvine & 3 Towns), the Education Service has designed and delivered a series of engagement hubs focusing on key challenges families face when navigating their child's journey through education. These run monthly and feedback has been 100% positive with a calendar of events being designed for session 2025/26. Updated literature around how needs are supported within early years settings and schools have been refreshed and distributed through this forum.</p> <p>Our work around mental health and wellbeing is inclusive of supporting young parents through group work and events. Our Take Time Families provision brings primary aged young people together with their parents and carers to provide support, training and a safe space to connect and learn vital skills around resilience, wellbeing and building strong family connections. Support is also given through our Grandparents group that builds connections through an intergenerational group. Support is given to ASN parents and carers to provide provision of transport. Fullerton Hub is supported to look at holistic therapies for ASN Young people. Support is given to BABAC and Minds of Recovery to establish a community cafe for families in recovery.</p> |
| 18 | Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people. | <p>A transformation programme to improve outcomes and opportunities for care experienced children and young people has been progressing since April 2024 with the establishment of a Programme Board which provides strategic leadership to the Programme Manager. Position papers for each workstream were presented at the programme board with recommendations and strategic direction. The transformation and service developments were delivered through focussed workstreams on the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing and Throughcare 2. Fostering and Kinship 3. Education including Residential School Placements 4. Internal Children's Houses – Model of Care 5. Early Intervention & Intensive Family Support 6. Strategic Needs Assessment/Data/Workforce 7. Best Practice Models and Research <p>The Brighter Pathways work has involved all corporate parents which has assisted in a shared awareness of the challenges and opportunities to improve the provision of services for families, looked after children and care experienced young people. It can be evidenced through the workstreams and programme board that there is increased joint working, improved relationships and collaboration between agencies at all levels and a move away from silo working relating to care experienced young people.</p> |

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| | | Our Care Experienced learners are among our most disadvantaged learners, whilst there remains a gap between them and our non-care experienced learners. Care experienced school leavers in North Ayrshire are continuing a positive 5-year trend of attainment. In 2022-23, 87% of North Ayrshire's care experienced school leavers attained at least 1 qualification at SCQF Level 4 or better, the second highest performance in the last five years. |
| 19 | We continue to develop and implement the Childsmile programme, focussing on early referral and preventive advice for all families. | The Childsmile programme is delivered on an Ayrshire wide basis, receiving referrals from multiple sources including health visitors, school nurses and via dental services. We continue to develop the programme to meet the needs of the population and have recently completed a service evaluation of the service provided by the Dental Health Support Workers, which will feed into our strategic plans for the next 3-5 years to ensure a high quality and meaningful service. Nationally, there are some anticipated changes to the Childsmile programme, which we have commenced local planning to address and will communicate with partners in due course. Our National Dental Inspection Programme (NDIP) figures indicated a marginal improvement on the previous inspections, but overall improvements have slowed, and careful consideration of next steps to be taken to improve oral health further. In 2025, we will be commencing a new Oral Health Improvement Action Plan- which is designed to set the strategic direction in oral health improvement for the next 10 years. |
| 20 | We will continue to deliver Jumpstart, a family centred healthy lifestyle programme for children aged 2-17, who are above a healthy weight. | <p>The Child Healthy Weight team continue to support children and their families to achieve a healthy weight via the Jumpstart programme. The programme works with families of children aged 5 to 17 years old. Programmes provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumpstart Junior: Aged 5 – 9 • Jumpstart Senior: Aged 10 – 13 • JumpStart Teens: Aged 14 – 17 <p>There were 85 group based physical activity and health education sessions were delivered along with attendance at 7 promotional events over the last year. The Child Healthy Weight Team continue to partner with the Trinity Active Travel hub and education colleagues to support events and initiatives aimed at promoting active lifestyles and healthy habits. Participating families also make use of a free leisure pass to access amenities such as the KA Leisure Centres which would normally not be within their financial ability. Moving forward early years child healthy weight work will focus on developing the universal, Tier 1 group approach 'Fun with Food'. This is a collaborative partnership approach with early years and Peeple to use the established peep parenting programme to support families with nutrition and food behaviours and contribute to child healthy weight. Three Fun with Food groups at two early years centres engaged with approx. 25 families. Further groups within North Ayrshire planned summer 2025.</p> |
| 21 | Expand our peer support service to all breastfeeding mothers as part of our integrated infant feeding service working alongside the Breastfeeding Network. | <p>Peer support service has been expanded to all breastfeeding mothers. Following a tender process, NCT will become the new provider of the peer support service from July 2025. A 3-month contract extension for the Breastfeeding Network has been offered until the end of June 2025.</p> <p>For the first three quarters of 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81.3% of breastfeeding mothers in North Ayrshire engaged in peer support • 83% of breastfeeding mothers in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) area 1 who are discharged engage with peer support • 81.9% of breastfeeding mothers in SIMD 2 who are discharged engage with peer support |
| 22 | Continue working with whole families, whole systems and whole communities to provide | Through our work with wellbeing, early intervention is key to all areas of this. Through work like Take Time Families, school-based provision in primaries and secondaries and youth work provisions we focus on wellbeing, early intervention, resilience |

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| | early intervention support to all of North Ayrshires Children. | and confidence building with young people and their networks. School holiday provision across all of our localities provides activities and access to free holiday meals in partnership with community associations and local organisations. The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has now been in implementation for 3 years. A separate report on progress in relation to WFWF is in the process of being compiled and will sit alongside the Children's Services Plan. |
| 23 | Providing training/guidance to families, schools, partners and communities that enhances the understanding of early intervention and provides skills needed for families to feel confident and equipped to manage family life. | Please see response to Action 15. This session we have continued to roll out our Building on Positive Relationships parenting approach. We have trained education staff including Area Inclusion Workers, and worked alongside the Family Centred Wellbeing Support team to deliver 33 family groups. Across the multi-agency we now have 77 members of staff trained to deliver the programme. Feedback is positive and families feel better equipped to manage family life. |
| 24 | We will implement the Signs of Safety approach to social work practice. | Signs of Safety has been implemented across Children and Families service from the point of referral to Service Access. Partner briefings have continued to be provided through the CPC training calendar to assist all other agencies to understand the practice model and contribute. Leaflets have been developed that are shared with both families and partner agencies on what to expect. A signs of Safety Steering group was developed for HSCP implementation and in the latter half of 2025 we will be establishing a bi yearly multiagency Steering group. The Signs of Safety baseline assessment undertaken with 10% of families and children open to social work support has been completed and findings will be presented to the Child Protection Committee by June 2025. Child protection and Children and Family Assessment and plans have been redesigned utilising a Signs of Safety practice approach and implemented. |
| 25 | Improve planning for transitions of care to ensure children and young people are able to thrive moving into adulthood. | Prior to commencing an active role with the children with a disability team, a baseline of current functioning was obtained. The qualitative data for baseline was obtained through staff caseload reviews this included reviewing assessments and care plans, in addition to case notes. This evidenced that current supports available to children, young people and their families is not sufficient in providing adequate support. The supports available are mainly social supports and residential respite. Although these supports offer families a short break from their caring responsibility, it is not fully addressing issues in relation to daily management of personal care and behaviours that challenge, leading to carer burnout and young people reaching crisis. Further findings of the service review found that current factors impacting transition planning include late referrals to Transition Planning Group (TPG) and an inability to screen/allocate staff in adult social work teams to screen referrals and/or allocate workers for assessments. This approach ultimately has a negative impact on a young person's transition, with often late and/or rushed assessment and resource allocation. Current processes were not undertaken in a person-centred manner. In order for young people to thrive as they transition to adulthood, the following improvements were identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and case note training for staff. • Outcome and Goal Setting training for staff. • Review eligibility criteria for children and adult social work. • Collaborative work with our partner agencies to promote skill generalisation between school, community supports and respite for better outcomes for young people. • Personal Care needs to be addressed to support families in the day-to-day care of children and young people with disabilities, through a Care at Home type service. This is multifaceted in relation to relieving carer burnout and also developing and promoting independent life skills in young people, which will support their transition to adulthood. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive use of legislative measures to ensure children and young people are protected. • Review TPG and its Terms of Reference to return to a person-centred decision-making forum. • Referral screening processes to be developed. • Increased joint working from the age of 14-years from adult social work to provide advice and guidance. • Review age restrictions in children and adult social work to allow transitions to happen at the right time, between ages 16-years and 21-years. • Review of resource allocation processes for a more standardised approach. <p>It was agreed, March 2025, that in order to make such significant changes, a report will be submitted to Social Work Governance Board and Partnership Senior Management Team.</p> |
| 26 | Invest in premises infrastructure to support children and young people experiencing distress in appropriate environments. | <p>Bairns' Hoose is a European concept with Nordic inspired roots. It is a care, justice and recovery model for children and young people who -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have been victims or witnesses of abuse • are under the age of criminal responsibility • whose behaviour may have caused harm <p>Bairns' Hoose aspires to have all the specialist services co-located in one building to put the child at the centre of any intervention or treatment, meaning child protection, health, holistic services, court and third sector all in the one shared space. The model is trauma informed, holistic and nurturing to ensure children are supported in the aftermath of their experience and get the expertise input and support they require.</p> <p>In March 2024 a Pan Ayrshire application for Bairns' Hoose was made, resulting in an initial funding stream to upgrade the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) room at Meadowcroft and develop a second room. The rooms were previously typical office style, basic and functional. To begin to subscribe to the principles of the Bairns' Hoose model we needed to create a safe, nurturing and trauma informed environment that would allow children to share their experience of abuse, or crime either as a victim, witness or if the child has committed a serious offence under the age of criminal responsibility.</p> <p>The SCIM model joint investigative interview room is used by specially trained Police Officers and Social Workers to gather forensic video evidence to establish if there has been a crime committed against the child and, if so, submit the video evidence to Court in a bid to prevent children giving evidence at Court. The Ayrshire Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) confirmed earlier this year (March 2025) that evidence from SCIM interviews has continued to improve and over the past year there was no need to call children to Court as witnesses as the defence was accepting of the quality of evidence recordings of the children's interviews. Therefore, we are beginning to see tangible evidence of Bairns' Hoose standards being implemented. The second room provides a space for wellbeing and comfort and is used before and after the child's video evidence. It's a homely, comfortable, and holistic space to support the child having their voice heard. The room includes an array of sensory equipment such as weighted blankets, toys and fidgets. There is also a sensory garden to allow children to go outside. Outdoor space and nature are important to enhance the child's wellbeing and resilience as they recall traumatic events. Children First are key partners in devising and implementing the Bairns' Hoose concept. They sit across all the strategical working groups and deliver a care, support and recovery service which any child being referred for a SCIM joint investigative interview can access. The support begins at the referral stage, the team offer practical and emotional support with the process, interview and court proceedings.</p> |

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| | | <p>We have also opened a new centre to change the way the residents of Ayrshire and Arran receive mental health care has. The West Road Centre in Irvine acts as a base for outpatient services for the all-age Community Eating Disorder Service (CEDS) and the Neuro-CAMHS team (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), providing a modern space for individuals to receive the support they need. As the lead partnership for mental health in Ayrshire, this investment shows our commitment to improving the experiences of those using our mental health services, allowing us to provide crucial support in a more welcoming and familiar space.</p> |
| 27 | <p>Work across partners to develop robust pathways of support for infants, children and young people and their families seeking support for speech, language and communication development support.</p> | <p>All Early Years establishments have a nominated Communication Champion who links closely with the Children and Young People's Speech & Language Therapy (CYP SLT) team receiving accredited Hanen Learning Language and Loving It training for enhancing the environment in early years to be communication friendly. The Communication Champions are invited to 3 monthly meetings where they receive updates from the CYP SLT team, access a bitesize learning session on a speech, language or communication theme and share good practice with each other. The team also offers training sessions on specific speech, language and communication which are open to all early years and primary staff.</p> <p>The CYP SLT team offers both virtual and person drop-in slots where any parent/carer with a concern about their child's speech, language and communication can request a half hour slot during which they receive advice, resources or completion of a request for assistance if the child is requiring an SLT assessment. Early Years establishments and Primary schools can also request these drop-ins for children in their care and they host the sessions.</p> <p>CYP SLT are part of a recently created North Ayrshire Early Language Network (created May 24) with a focus on 0-5 years. The Network has representatives from Education in the Early years, Psychology, Health Visiting, Speech & Language Therapy, Family Nurse Partnership and the third sector. The focus of the Network is to look at the pathways for infants and children and their families seeking advice or support for speech, language and communication, map what is working well and where the gaps in these pathways are and co-produce solutions. The Network meets on a regular basis.</p> <p>CYP Speech and language therapy work closely with NEST to provide in person workshops on "Supporting your autistic child's communication", providing information and an opportunity for families to discuss their concerns about their autistic child's communication.</p> <p>A virtual drop in (over Attend Anywhere) for families of children with social communication differences is run jointly with our partners in Occupational therapy.</p> <p>SLT assistants link closely with our partners in libraries delivering Bookbug and attending Breastfeeding network sessions to share key messages for developing all children's speech, language and communication. Two SLTs work as part of a multi-disciplinary team who offer assessment and diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions, mainly Autism for children aged 3-6. This is a pan Ayrshire service.</p> |
| 28 | <p>Improve access to Speech and Language therapy for children and young people who require specialist support.</p> | <p>The in-person drop-ins provide an opportunity for children, young people and their parents/carers to access the service when they have most concern. If the families access the drop in repeatedly and there is still a concern and a significant impact on the child due to their speech language and communication needs, they may require an assessment by SLT and may require specialist support.</p> <p>Some children and young people will require a robust assessment of their speech, language and communications needs. If intervention is recommended following assessment, the SLT will work with those closest to the child i.e. parents, carers and education staff to set targets and to share helpful strategies to maximise the child /young person's communication potential.</p> <p>As a team we are working to reduce the Wait Times (WTs) for SLT assessment and subsequent specialist support through the initiatives already highlighted. An increase in staffing and a more balanced skill mix has supported service improvement plans.</p> |

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| | | As a result, the WTs have steadily reduced. Between February 2024 and February 2025, the CYP WTs reduced by 64% from 138 weeks to 50 weeks. |
| 29 | Develop a trauma informed workforce by rolling out trauma aware and trauma skilled resources. | Level 1,2,3 training in place along with a PDA in trauma. We have incorporated trauma informed and trauma skilled information and resources in our whole school nurture approaches as well as including it in our extended training offers, including our CALM training and work on functional behavioural analysis and Building on Positive Relationships (based on Non-Violent Resistance). We continue to work collaboratively with our education workforce to ensure that up to date trauma informed training is made available to support the individual needs of establishments. We are currently updating our supporting relationships and behaviour policy, training and guidance and will include this within it. |
| 30 | Develop an evaluation framework to maximise resources to support children and young people, to enable system partners to invest and sustain early intervention approaches. | A monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed to support implementation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. All funded elements provide 6 monthly reports setting out how they are meeting the aims and outcomes of the WFWF, involvement and impact on children, young people and their families, and sustainability. This is in line with the annual Scottish Government reporting expectations. |
| 31 | Reach and identify all young carers earlier in their caring role and promote increased uptake of Young People's Carer Support Plans. | Education Staff have been supported to identify an increasing number of young carers, 406 Young Carers have been offered Young Carer Statements with 366 completing. North Ayrshire Council signed up to the Young Carers Covenant in 2024. The Carer Team are supporting our primary and secondary schools to sign up and to be part of the Young Carers in Schools Challenge. It involves a set of outcomes that young people have highlighted as being key to improving their lives. This shows our commitment to identifying young carers at the earliest opportunity, ensuring they feel safe and secure and have choices in their lives. Each school has a nominated Young Carers Champion who are supported by Young Carer Locality Officers from Carers Gateway North Ayrshire (CGNA). An agreed CGNA offer has been communicated to all schools with the provision of 1 to 1 support and drop-in sessions, Young Carers Awareness Training and Young Carers Statement Training. The Young Carers Education Information Pack was launched in October 2024 to provide staff within education with an overall understanding of the duties and approach in North Ayrshire to identifying, working with and supporting young carers. A programme of engagement and review on the current Young Carers Statement (YCS) has been progressed with final sign off from Social Work Governance Board in April 2025. CGNA Young Carers Team facilitated face to face sessions with 55 young carers aged 6 – 15 across North Ayrshire schools. 36 families also engaged with an online survey. Feedback was also offered from Children & Families Services. Young carers reported that the YCS is valuable to them. It ensures at least one staff member is informed about their personal circumstances. Young carers reported that their voices had been heard after completing their statement, they feel listened to and supported. They would appreciate the removal of the future/ emergency planning section, language was in places complex and questions repetitive. Overall, young carers wanted a shorter, more accessible YCS would be appropriate to assist in better caring conversations. All participants were happy for the original separate primary and secondary YCS to be condensed into one document. At 31/03/25, 549 young carers were recorded on Seemis (education system) and 492 registered with CGNA, crossover information means there is an estimated 650 identified young carers. |

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| | In the reporting period 1/4/2024 - 31/03/2025 Education staff offered 406 young carers the opportunity to prepare a YCS. To date 366 were accepted and completed via schools and an additional 5 completed by CGNA. |
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Priority 3: Making things fairer

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| 32 | Implement the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan. | <p>We have a key ambition to transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people. Eradicating child poverty is a key component of that priority, and we continue to make strong progress in delivering the objectives of our Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26, including within this most recent year. We have transferred governance from the previous Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board to become a key priority for the Community Planning Partnership. This will provide sharper focus, greater impact and direct engagement with relevant partners. To further progress our ambitions for a fully joined- up approach, a new Child Poverty Strategy Team was established with funding from Scottish Government's Fairer Futures Partnerships to bring coherence and oversight to continue reducing child poverty in North Ayrshire.</p> <p>Adding to the many existing services supporting children and families experiencing poverty, we have been undertaking research in preparation for the next phase of evidence-led systems change, recognising complexities in current mechanisms that can present barriers to families accessing support. For our commitment towards a No Wrong Door approach, our Customer Services team have trained and raised awareness directly with frontline staff across housing and social work services. Alongside this continues the technical developments as we strive towards creating a Single Shared Assessment to maximise benefit entitlements. Our Transformation Team streamlined supports such as free school meals, school clothing grants and council tax reductions, while also making access easier through the Cost-of-Living webpage.</p> <p>The Welfare Rights Officers in Schools team grew from one to three members of staff, and the team have helped financial gains of £818,636 going back into the pockets of families. This represents a 46% increase from 2023/24 to 2024/25. Since August 2024, the extension of the team increased its provision to now include Early Years Centres and primary schools, in addition to the secondary schools who have been supported since 2022/23.</p> <p>Key allocations from the £1.2m Child Poverty and Early Intervention Fund (CPEIF) being utilised in 2024/25 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £50,000 towards the provision of computer equipment for our communities to tackle digital exclusion, • £61,322 to remove school meal debt, • £50,000 for initiatives to support travel for training and employment; and, • £20,000 for our targeted Active Schools programme removing poverty as a barrier to accessing sport. <p>A sub-group from the Third Sector Chief Officers Group alongside some of our Connected Communities and Employability representatives began working together in December 2024. This identified the key issues of Childcare, Employment Support and Financial Inclusion as priorities where proposals were co-designed for allocation of the CPEIF for 2025/26.</p> <p>The Child Poverty Strategy Team welcomed the opportunity to learn from young people attending the P7 Youth Council in March 2025 as supported by the Youth Participation and Democracy team. The interactive workshops gave the pupils the chance to be the first contributors to Community Conversations on Fairer Futures, as we heard their voice and views on the stigma of child poverty, which will inform future developments.</p> |

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| 33 | Improve attainment and achievement for all. | <p>A new data visualisation tool has been launched with all schools to support the tracking and analysis of progress in learning across the Broad General Education stages. This will support more effective targeting of interventions and raising attainment strategies. In addition, there have been trackers developed for Early Years establishments to track progress across Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing which align more closely with C. An increased focus on data for improvement has provided senior establishment leaders with opportunity to use data and linking with this, a Data Service Improvement Group has been created in session 2024-25 which consists of senior leaders across Primary and Secondary schools working collaboratively to support improvements in the use of data for raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Data clinics have also taken place to continue to offer support in this area. Early Years and Primary senior leaders have worked collaboratively to create consistency of approach and resource in the tracking of Literacy and Numeracy. These resources will be launched to Early Years Heads and Primary Head Teachers in May 2025.</p> <p>Annual leavers attainment and positive destinations statistics were published nationally at the end of February 2025. This follows the annual publication of Curriculum for Excellence attainment data in December 2024. There is a varied picture across a range of measures, with some clear strengths and areas for further improvement.</p> <p>Attainment dialogues took place in October 2024 and March 2025 with senior Secondary School senior leaders where there was analysis of our areas of strength and areas for improvement in terms of attainment and will feed directly into improvement plans for 2025-26 at both service and school level.</p> <p>The Education Service Digital Learning Strategy was launched at an event for school and early years' leaders, members of the strategy development group and colleagues from IT Services.</p> <p>Colleagues from across NAC establishments are involved in the national curriculum review cycle and we also have representation on the national implementation group.</p> <p>A full professional learning programme is in operation, expanding our focus on building the capacities and skills of our workforce in effective techniques in the classroom. This includes programmes for teachers, early years practitioners and pupil support assistants and. The Professional Learning Academy (PLA) has a well-regarded in-residence delivery model to ensure training can be adopted, practised and embedded in individual establishments.</p> <p><u>Attainment</u></p> <p>The latest published achievement figures are for 2023-24. Combined Numeracy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 76%, in line with attainment in the previous year. Similarly, combined Literacy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 69%, again in line with attainment in the previous year.</p> <p><u>Improving leavers' attainment in literacy and numeracy</u></p> <p>Performance of all school leavers in attaining Literacy at Level 4 and Level 5 displays a positive 5-year picture. In 2023-24, our school leavers have outperformed all other comparators at level 5, with 93% achieving literacy at level 4 or better and 81% achieving literacy at level 5 or better.</p> <p>The performance of our school leavers in attaining Numeracy at Level 4 and Level 5 also displays a positive 5-year trend. For Level 4, 90% of leavers achieved this and 71% of all leavers achieved Level 5.</p> <p>In addition, the performance of all school leavers with 1 qualification at Level 5 and 1 qualification at Level 6 continues to improve. In session 23-24, 87% of all school leavers achieved at least one qualification at Level 5 which is broadly in line</p> |

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| | | <p>with the previous year. 68% of school leavers achieved at least one qualification at Level 6 which is almost 2 percentage points higher than in session 2022-23.</p> <p>School Leavers entering an initial positive destination</p> <p>An initial positive destination means that a school leaver has gone on to one of the following activities immediately after leaving school: further or higher education, training, skills development or employment. At 96%, the proportion of our leavers moving into an initial positive destination continues to outperform the virtual comparator. To maximise the percentage of school leavers entering and sustaining positive destinations, schools continue to work in strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland and DYW Ayrshire.</p> |
| 34 | Close the poverty related attainment gap. | <p>Excellence and Equity Leads (EELs) in EY establishments (allocated to those with higher levels of children residing in Q1) continue to focus on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. More focused training with these Leads has provided ongoing consistency of delivery & data collection across the authority. Work with the EELs and Education Scotland is providing support & frameworks to ensure Early Years establishments can measure the attainment in relation to the poverty related attainment gap.</p> <p>In the 8 mainland Secondary schools, the MCR Pathways programme continues to be delivered to care-experienced learners and those at risk of being placed into care. To date, over 400 young people have been supported through the programme in this academic session, participating in activities such as group work and mentored relationships. There has been collaboration with the corporate parenting team to help support schools with engagement with "Keeping the Promise" award of which 2 Secondary Schools are currently involved.</p> <p>An increased focus on the use of data for improvement has allowed for a greater focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, working closely with Senior Managers, has provided targeted support to schools with a higher number of learners in Q1 to support increased attainment in session 2024-25.</p> <p>There is ongoing analysis of schools' Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) evaluations of impact of spend to analyse interventions and their impact on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.</p> |
| 35 | Implement the recommendations from the Independent Care Review (Scotland), The Promise. | <p>We have fully committed to #KeepThePromise which provides a benchmark for corporate parents, carers, practitioners, managers, care experienced community, and decision makers in fulfilling the goal to meet the collective and individual needs of all of our Care Experienced infants, children and young people. Promise drop in information events for staff are continuing to be held regularly. Our 3rd annual Promise Conference was held on 9th December 2024. 73 Care Experienced young people from across our Secondary Schools came together to learn about The Promise Scotland Plan 24-30, meet corporate parents and connect with each other.</p> <p>The HSCP and multi-agency partners across North Ayrshire have worked hard since 2020 to promote and implement The Promise locally. Agreement was reached at the Children's Services Strategic Partnership in June 2024 that the work of the former Promise Oversight Group in North Ayrshire would be incorporated into the overarching Corporate Parenting Steering Group. The Corporate Parenting Action Plan was revised as necessary in August 2024 to capture all activity associated with The Promise. The action plan has been aligned with the 5 key foundations upon which The Promise is built - Care, Voice, Family, People and Scaffolding.</p> |

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| 36 | Implement the recommendations from the Additional Support for Learning Review (Scotland). | <p>Significant work is underway to review and refresh our Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy including a focus on tackling violence and aggression within establishments.</p> <p>A new family engagement hub has been launched in partnership with two support groups who represent and work with parents and families of children with additional support needs. These will act as a focus for conversation, problem solving, information, co-creation and collaboration.</p> <p>Inclusion Ambassadors programme piloted in almost all secondary schools alongside the Success Looks Different Awards which were publicised to all establishments and support available for those who wish to apply.</p> <p>High profile given to language used to describe needs and how they are supported – example needs are not considered additional as everyone has needs, some require a more intensive level of support which can be part of our universal offer within all establishments.</p> <p>Secondary schools linking with Scottish Government in the codesign of the national measurement framework and dashboard with a specific focus on capturing successes and achievements of young people who are following different pathways.</p> <p>All Classroom Assistants have been re-graded as Pupil Support Assistants with an up-to-date role profile and professional learning calendar. Work to lay out a strategy for deployment in underway.</p> <p>We continue to develop good practice based on the ASL Review within North Ayrshire. We have developed a Family Engagement Hub where we engage with our parents to understand the issues and concerns that they have with regard to supporting children with ASN, including streamlining our placement process and complaints process. We have updated our literature on this also and have made this available to all parents. We continue to monitor and review the level of need within NA and have worked to update our offers of support based on this need, building upon our outreach services offer, our provision to support children with complex needs and our support for children with attendance and behaviour issues. We have several working groups looking at attendance and relationships and behaviour in order to develop policies and practice that will support children and young people.</p> |
| 37 | Build strong collaborative partnerships in local areas to ensure we deliver high-quality services for all of our children, young people, and families. | <p>Please see actions 33 and 34 for detail.</p> <p>NAC Early years staff are working with our funded providers who contribute to the early childhood development and education of our young people. We have provided training and engagement sessions this session to ensure the delivery of high-quality experiences for all.</p> <p>There is ongoing work with other sectors within NAC and SCMA to encourage North Ayrshire residents to become childminders. This is aimed at a targeted group and support will be provided to encourage people to venture into this career pathway providing more choice for families with regards to their funded childcare.</p> |
| 38 | Create a new 3 year Raising Attainment Strategy. | <p>See action 33 for detail.</p> <p>Activity in this area will be captured and synthesised in June 2025 and shared with senior leaders of all educational establishments.</p> |
| 39 | Maximise opportunities to work with Third Sector providers to provide early intervention and prevention supports, with a particular focus on primary prevention approaches. | <p>Through Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, the Children's Services Strategic Partnership has awarded grants to eight third sector organisations during this financial year with the aim of testing or expanding early intervention projects which support a whole family approach. Some of these projects include support to kinship families, the use of art therapy in early years, transition support to young people with additional support needs and intensive therapeutic counselling support to children who have been sexually abused or experienced other significant trauma.</p> |

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| | | Through the Children and Young People's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework grant funding we have supported 6527 children and young people and 1212 family members through a range of programmes. 6283 children and young people have engaged with positive mental health and wellbeing services highlighting the focus on early intervention and prevention. 94% have reported an improved outcome. We have engaged with Third Sector partners through a collaboration with the adult community mental health fund processes. |
| 40 | Providing a robust 'peer' support model that upskills parents and carers, providing training and volunteering opportunities and enhances employability skills as well as building self-esteem and confidence. | In 2024/25, the Employability service has registered 794 new parents who are engaging, developing skills, confidence, and resilience to secure and sustain employment in the future. In this period 80 parents have secured paid work experience through placements in third sector organisations, the council and 50 more have progressed into employment, with 130 more families in employment with increased household income this will contribute directly to addressing child poverty. Three new Peer Navigators have been recruited to engage and support parent to engage in training, volunteering and the range of opportunities provided by Your Next Move Working North Ayrshire to prepare and progress to employment. |
| 41 | Take an asset-based approach to communities/children and families and build upon the skills and strengths that exist. | The Signs of Safety model works in collaboration with families to identify strengths and family network and wider support networks who can assist to support the children wellbeing or child protection plan that has been established. All Children and family paperwork identifies family strengths and "what is working well". Equally core partners e.g. Education have adapted the child protection concern referral to incorporate what is working well as well as what we are worried about. All referring partners are being asked to identify if this issue arose in the past who or what helped support and scaffold it. These strengths-based questions assist us to be curious about family asset and ensure the best approach is taken to working in collaboration with those in our communities. |
| 42 | Establish a Financial Inclusion Partnership in North Ayrshire to better support access to support for families. | <p>A North Ayrshire Financial Inclusion Partnership was established in May 2023 with membership including financial inclusion service providers and key stakeholders. The Partnership developed and delivered a Community Consultation at the end of 2023, the findings of which will be incorporated into an update of the Financial Inclusion Strategy to be produced late spring 2025, for 2025-30. The consultation found that advice/financial inclusion services are highly rated by those who had used them, but in response to a question relating to barriers to accessing advice services, there are a number of areas to be addressed in the promotion and development of services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of platforms available for access services for people who don't like using the phone/internet • That advice services are available for people in all housing tenures including owner-occupiers • Stigma/self-stigmatising • Fear of the situation getting worse • Services available to island communities • Improved engagement with gypsy/traveller communities <p>A Communications sub-group of the Partnership has now been established to address the above. Another key finding, which reflects wider national research, is that where both debt and welfare rights advice is required, accessing both through one referral/service is preferred. In response, it has now been agreed that to supplement the debt advice service available to council tenants from the HSCP Financial Inclusions service, an additional welfare rights and debt adviser will be recruited for non-council tenants, to provide a service for those who seek welfare rights advice from Money Matters, but also require help with debts. This will then eliminate the need to refer on to another service for this support.</p> |

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| 43 | Develop peer support models. | <p>Our leadership opportunities allow young people to become peer mentors and role models through our youth voice provision (youth forums, junior youth forums, Scottish Youth Parliament and executive youth council). These young people co design service delivery and support the work being delivered.</p> <p>Our Modern Apprenticeship programme takes young people through and SCQF Level 7 in youth work, participants design, produce and deliver work with young people across North Ayrshire around all areas of CLD and youth work.</p> <p>This year has seen Active Schools employ our first Modern Apprentice, who will start their journey of SCQF Level 6 in Sports Coaching. The funding for this post has come from ENABLE and sportscotland. As part of the criteria from the funders the candidate had to have a disability. They are working across our team but their role has a particular focus on ASN provision.</p> |
| 44 | Strive for parity of access to support and services for our Island Communities including for Children and Young People. | Cumbræ and Arran are supported to deliver youth work provision. Through a Service Level agreement with Arran Youth Foundation this provides a variety of youth work opportunities for young people in Arran. Specific measures were implemented to deliver the holiday meals programme. |
| 45 | Provide multiple points of access for young carers into carer support services. | <p>Effective access points available for young carers in North Ayrshire are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated young carer leads from CGNA staff covering school cluster areas. • Carer Champions in each school with a specific role/ skill to identify and support young carers. • Awareness raising of young carers in schools through posters and leaflets, assemblies, parent's evenings or PSHE lessons to inform young people and parents about the information and support available. • Drop-in sessions or dedicated groups established within some schools for young carers. • Bridgit's new online platform for young carers was launched in March 2025, offering a wide range of resources and support designed for young carers available 24/7. • March 2025 saw Carers Gateway support 230 young carers within a group setting and 59 on a 1 to 1 basis. • An improved online registration for young carers for professionals and self-referrals has been established. • For young carers aged 16 – 18 and not in school NAHSCP Carers Team have a Carer Support Officer who can offer and support the completion of a YCS and provide access to support. |

Priority 4: Promoting good mental health and wellbeing

| No. | Action | Update 2023-24 |
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| 46 | Develop our nurturing approach across all Children's Services. | <p>Our nurturing and trauma informed approaches are intertwined and we have ensured that all our training offers incorporate the key concepts from both. In addition, we continue to offer support in nurturing approaches to our Children's Houses to ensure they offer attuned and developmentally appropriate support for children and young people in their care. We have also invited a range of professionals across the HSCP to our training sessions on Building on Positive relationships to ensure they have a basic understanding of attachment, positive relationships and authoritative parenting. Staff involved in the training include Area Inclusion workers, Family Centred Wellbeing Service, Fostering and adoption services and Rosemount. In addition, we invited our HSCP colleagues to attend our recent collaborative event on relationships and behaviour.</p> |

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| 47 | Work with children, young people, families, and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social participation. | <p>Over this year our health and wellbeing work had focussed on supporting schools by delivering our Bouceback mental health and wellbeing programme. We have supported learners at the Hive, Ayrshire College with Your Resilience workshops and training. The Take Times Families Group work with 15 parents/ carers and children looking at anxiety, emotions, and resilience in fun understandable ways. Both Joint Youth Forum and Primary 7 youth council featured MHWB workshops for young people to look at resilience, wellbeing and positive mindset. Our Cyber Explorers programme supports young people gaining a cyber resilience qualification and supports wellbeing and online safety with 755 registered on the system, 129 young people achieving SCQF Level 4 and 57 young people achieving SCQF Level 5. There are 1024 active DofE participants where mental and physical health and wellbeing questions are regularly answered by participants on their DofE app showing improving their mental/ physical health whilst taking part in the Award.</p> <p>CLD Supports and leads on initiatives such as Our Scottish Sports Future, Community Schools for non-attenders, New Scots Girls football, adventure group and volleyball. Park Lives – Dalry Community Sports Club Taboo Topics Group – which focusses on wellbeing podcasts and North Coast Media Studio with. Our games group supports ASN young people with wellbeing and resilience through gaming.</p> <p>All Active Schools activity supports positive mental health for all participating children and young people. Our extra-curricular provision, events and leadership programmes across the year all help to reduce stress, boost their mood and enhance their self-esteem. In addition, our staff have developed a guide for schools to raise awareness on how our work contributes to positive mental health. Furthermore, the coaches and volunteers have been part of a robust training programme around mental health and how to support young people during their weekly sessions.</p> |
| 48 | Continue to have appropriate pathways in place for supporting mental wellbeing. | <p>Our mental health and wellbeing staff support early intervention and wellbeing to secondary and primary aged young people. Pathways to further services are in place for young people needing more support with links to school councillors, LIAM training and conflict resolution sessions.</p> <p>Mental and emotional wellbeing is one of the 10 priority pathways in the school nursing service. During 2024/25 we have undertaken work within the school nursing service to clearly define what support is able to be offered in relation to mental health and wellbeing and agreed across Ayrshire that the following areas can be supported: low level anxiety, low mood, bereavement support, self-harm and low self-esteem. Staff have received additional training in relation to bereavement support whilst continuing to deliver Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) where capacity allows.</p> |
| 49 | Work together with children, young people, and their families to help build resilience. | <p>Our Building on Positive relationships programme has been delivered to around 30 families to help build resilience in families. We have developed resources to support anxiety to help improve attendance in our primary and secondary schools. Five of our schools have been involved in a national programme to build resilience in schools. We have continued to support and expand our LIAM and Project Restore Programme to help support children's anxiety. We continue to develop resources to capture children and young peoples views to help them share their experiences. We have recently invested in Emotion Coaching training to help young people express their emotions whilst setting clear boundaries.</p> |
| 50 | Improve services for children with neuro-developmental conditions, implementing a whole system approach with partners across Health, Education, Social Services and the Third Sector. (Implementation of | <p>Through North Ayrshire's CYP Neurodevelopmental Implementation Group, the following progress has been made during 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All North Ayrshire family supports for children with neurodevelopmental differences (NDD) have been mapped and uploaded onto the NEST website. |

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| | the National CAMHS and Neurodevelopmental Specifications). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A third phase of engagement work was undertaken with parents/carers around their experiences of NDD support and services, following on from the focus groups undertaken in 2023/24. A summary report of the findings has been developed and will be shared with those who attended. The focus groups have been a helpful reference point to sense-check progress to date, to get feedback and to consider and respond to this. • Following the 2023/24 training needs analysis of the children's services workforce in North Ayrshire, an agreement to create a NDD Learning and Development Adviser post (fixed term) was made. This post will support build capacity and capability of all agencies working with children and young people in relation to NDD. Due to delays in processes, this post will be recruited in the next financial year and will be funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. • A test of change involving the creation of a multi-agency panel (MAP) to review all children and young people who had been referred to CAMHS since August 2023 but who no longer met the CAMHS criteria. <p>In addition, pan-Ayrshire discussions regarding what a potential ND service would look like have been ongoing, with a draft business case being completed currently.</p> |
| 51 | Public Health will implement a life course approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing, focusing on the first thousand and one days, infancy and Children and Young People. | <p>Public Health continues to socialise the life course approach to mental health and has presented to a range of colleagues and partners this year including the Integrated Children and Young People's Transformational Change Board.</p> <p>Public Health continues to co-chair the North Ayrshire Wellness Model group alongside Education with a view to improving access to tier one supports for children and young people across North Ayrshire.</p> <p>In addition to our MHWB resources 'A Guide for Children' and 'A Guide for Young People' a new 'Children's Workbook for Mental Wellbeing' has been developed and is being promoted for use by all front-line staff working with young children and families. 'A Workbook for Mental Wellbeing' is available to support older children, young people and young adults.</p> <p>Public Health staff work closely with NA Education Mental Health and Wellbeing Operational Lead to provide training, resources, expertise and support with a Whole School Approach to supporting mental health. 'Mental Health Improvement- a practical approach' training has been delivered to the MHWB Operational Lead as well as Area Inclusion Workers who continue to cascade the training and use learning to facilitate work with children and families. This training is available through the PH Training Brochure for others who wish to access it.</p> <p>An MHI-apa training session was delivered to school nurses from across Ayrshire, including those from North Ayrshire. All health information, resources and self-management tools to support CYP and family MHWB were highlighted during the session.</p> <p>There is now a network of facilitators delivering Time, Space, Compassion workshops which are open to staff working across children's and young people's services. More information is available via the previously attached poster and people can register an interest in the workshops using the QR code. Since October 2024, Public Health has organised and delivered 9 TSC workshops across Ayrshire and Arran. Three of these sessions were in North Ayrshire. However, staff from North Ayrshire have accessed all sessions. 97 staff members from various have registered for the sessions with 75 attending and completing these sessions. (Please let Nicola Tomkinson know if you would like any specific information about these sessions- an evaluation report will be written soon).</p> <p>Within North Ayrshire the TSI have worked with Public Health and a number of partner and community groups to develop a suicide prevention toolkit for the third sector. While this is not specifically aimed at CYP the staff working with them could use this as it contains links in the apps list for CYP. The toolkit can be accessed here: Projects - Arran CVS</p> |

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| 52 | Establish a Community Planning Partnership led Health and Wellbeing Alliance to bring key partners together to co-ordinate approach to targeting support to improve individual, family and community health and wellbeing. | KA Leisure continues to work with partners to establish the strategic priorities of the North Ayrshire Wellbeing Alliance. Meanwhile we have collaborated with partners to deliver two pilot projects – Garnock Valley Task Force A collection of partners working to deliver an intervention project for young people disengaged in the classroom. The aim of the collaboration is to encourage the young people to return to the classroom, make better more informed decisions and connect with their communities. Kilwinning Wellbeing and Employability Pilot A collaboration between wellbeing and employability to increase opportunities and reduce inequalities of residents in Blacklands and Kilwinning West. |
| 53 | Build on services that encourage parenting skills and interactions with between family members. | Please see actions 15 and 23. |
| 54 | Build on the National CAMHS Specification through the 3 established pathways (core, unscheduled care, neuro), ensuring young people are on the correct pathway at a much earlier stage. | 3 teams are now operational and unscheduled care provide a 7-day service. Pathways between the three teams have been developed to ensure that the young person is assessed and advice given and or referral to the appropriate pathway of care. |
| 55 | Continue to provide 'worry workshops' e.g. identifying key issues raised as worries by North Ayrshire children and young people and using this to develop targeted workshops on these issues. | No longer required. |
| 56 | Be responsive and pro-active in responding to and learning from Young Person's Suicide through our Young People's Suicide Prevention Taskforce. | The Young People's Suicide Prevention Taskforce continued to meet regularly during 2024-25. The group have reflected on learning and practice. It has been agreed that the Young People's Suicide Prevention Taskforce will move to be incorporated in the overarching Suicide Prevention Taskforce. Work is ongoing to integrate these strands into one strategic group. |
| 57 | Deliver the new National Secure Adolescent Inpatient Secure Unit (Foxgrove) for children across Scotland, which will also benefit young people in North Ayrshire. | Work within Foxgrove is ongoing. |
| 58 | Explore opportunities to ensure young people are not admitted to non-specialist environments including options to develop and in-house CAMHS inpatient provision. | Conversations started and Business Case developed. |
| 59 | Building on the success of the Kilwinning Wellness Model, the Revised Wellness | The revised wellness model is now in place in all localities except the Three Towns. Plans are in place to complete the roll out early in the next school session. Education and Primary Health care colleagues have commented on the positive relationships |

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| | Model working group will now seek to roll out the approach across all North Ayrshire localities. | being developed through the model. This ensures children and young people are receiving mental health and wellbeing support timeously with robust referrals to CAMHS in place when required. |
| 60 | Enable young carers to have a quality of life outside caring and ensure support when moving through key life stages. | <p>Please see Action 12</p> <p>Our HSCP Young Carers Education Fund received 119 requests between 1/4/2024 and 31/3/2025. Young carers were supported to receive a break from caring, look after their own health and wellbeing via KA Leisure Memberships, sports equipment etc. and improve life opportunities such as representing their country at sport or dance or commencing driving lessons. Carers Gateway North Ayrshire (CGNA) supported 94 requests from young carers via their Time to Live funding to support a break from caring, which was just under 25% of all funding allocated.</p> <p>CGNA hosted a range of young carer/ family events and activities over spring, summer and festive holiday periods and at key national points like Young Carers Action Day, Carers Week and Carers Rights Day. There have been woodland wake ups at Eglinton Park, Maritime Museum trips, a Hopscotch residential, movie nights, Christmas and Halloween parties as well as the Scottish Young Carers Festival which takes place every year in August allowing young carers to come together, have a break from caring, meet new friends and take part in national consultation but mostly, have fun.</p> <p>CGNA and HSCP supported the formation of a Transition Together Group in late Summer 2024.</p> <p>The Young Adult Carers Transition Plan, developed by the Carers Gateway Team, is designed to support positive and meaningful conversations with young carers at key transition points. It focuses on providing holistic support across areas such as education, employment, finances, peer networks, and community engagement. This plan is available to young carers either moving into the Young Adult Carers service or those aged 16 and leaving full-time education.</p> <p>The Carers Gateway Education Offer, along with established working agreements between the CGNA Team and education providers, places a strong emphasis on supporting young carers during the transition from Primary 7 to Secondary 1. The focus is on ensuring they receive appropriate information and guidance, and are aware of how to access or continue support as they move into secondary education.</p> <p>The Young Carers Champions Board is in its early stages, with key planning underway for an initial residential at the Arran Outdoor Activity Centre. This residential trip aims to ensure that young carers remain at the heart of decision-making, helping to shape support, services, and future developments.</p> |

Priority 5: Inspiring children and young people to be active

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| 61 | Create innovative physical activity and sports opportunities with communities and partners. | <p>Active Schools and KA Leisure have continued to support more young people to be active both within a school and community settings. We have worked in partnership to make sure there are school to community links in all six localities. Across this year we have also worked together to fill any gaps in provision to ensure all localities have an equitable number of opportunities for all young people to take part in. Our pathways between school to club/community sport has been strengthened to allow a better transition for our young people.</p> <p>In addition, Active Schools have continued to focus on those who most need our support to access sporting opportunities across our system. The Active Schools and Communities Partnership Officers have played a crucial role in this and have</p> |

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| | | <p>removed any barriers to participation for those that are care experienced, living in poverty, on the cusp, non-attenders or targeted. Furthermore, the team have continued their support to the HSCP, third sector partners and ASN young people. KA Leisure offers a diverse range of programs that include sport and general physical activity. We collaborate with communities and partners to provide term-time activities and holiday programs. Our term time programme is spread across all localities with over 100 classes per week.</p> <p>There are 1024 active DofE participants where physical health is part of all participants award Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) which has four core sections: Volunteering, Skills, Physical, and Expedition, with a Residential section added at the Gold level.</p> |
| 62 | Adopt a whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight. | In relation to the healthy weight whole systems work, an event is being planned by Connected Communities for mid-late June 2025 to discuss how to remobilise the work. |
| 63 | Design opportunities into the whole system to enable children, young people, and their families to access supported physical activity opportunities and have a healthy lifestyle. | Active Schools key priority is still to support ALL schools in North Ayrshire to deliver high quality extra-curricular programmes that are open to ALL. Across the year the top 5 sports participated in by our schools are – football, netball, rackets sports, dance and Multisports. Our events calendars this year have seen over 2003 young people take part in a variety of sports across 25 events. In addition to these events, we have supported our ASN pupils to attend the Ayrshire Sports Ability and Scottish Disability calendar of events to make sure ALL young people have the opportunity to perform and compete at the appropriate level. |
| 64 | Ensure all our early years indoor and outdoor learning environments and activities enable children to be physically active. | All early year's establishments provide learning environments which provide opportunities for physical play both indoors and outdoors. All staff are aware of the importance of developing gross motor skills and ensure experiences offered support development of core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. |
| 65 | Promote access to leisure services for children and young people to encourage participation in physical activities. | KA Leisure continues to deliver innovative marketing campaigns to encourage participation across the general public. We also collaborate with partners to provide targeted approaches to encourage harder to reach young people to participate in our programmes. |
| 66 | Promote the introduction of the INSPIRE programme to improve opportunities for alternative activities, including arts, drama and music. | KA Leisure promotes the INSPIRE programme by offering a comprehensive membership that provides children and young people with access to a wide range of activities, including arts, drama, dance, and music. We ensure visibility through community engagement, partnerships, and targeted marketing efforts. The programme includes term-time activities and holiday programmes. |
| 67 | Create and protect safe spaces for children to play and enjoy being outdoors. | <p>There are 1024 active DofE participants where physical health is part of all participants award Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) which has four core sections: Volunteering, Skills, Physical, and Expedition, with a Residential section added at the Gold level.</p> <p>We led a consultation around the national Play Strategy engaging with primary and secondary young people through a variety of events that supported young people voice in North Ayrshire.</p> <p>Our outdoors for wellbeing programme gave 30 primary aged young people a weeklong programme of outdoor activities that supported wellness which included yoga, tree planting, nature walks and more.</p> <p>We work in partnership with Scottish Ports Futures to provide the Twilight Basketball programme that incorporates physical health with youth work issue-based programmes throughout the year. Working with our New Scots girls group we support the Swans Girls Football Team. All early year's establishments have access to outdoors at all times of the year.</p> |

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| 68 | Support parents to understand the importance of movement and enjoyment for children and young people. | KA Leisure encourages this through ongoing marketing campaigns, open days and targeted programmes. |
| 69 | Work with local small business/ fitness team to provide access to activity and nutrition information. | Partners of KA Leisure support funded memberships for young people from the age 12. Any young person from the ages of 12 – 15 looking to use our gyms must first take part in our Elevate Academy. This 4-week programme provides 12–15-year-olds with an introduction to a Gym Environment. These sessions will provide information on how to exercise safely and effectively whilst looking to Inspire, Educate and Challenge the Future Generation. |
| 70 | Creation of new and local growing spaces to support communities to grow foods, to upskills families, enhance family time and connection. | <p>New Community Gardens are underway in Beith, Bourtreehill, and Largs.</p> <p>A new outreach programme managed by The Three Towns Growers and supported by The Community Campaigner from North Ayrshire Foodbank has started in the Three Towns. Six new sites have been identified within the three towns and link in with existing facilities. These include Ardeer Primary, The Hub on the Prom, Doon the Beach and Argyle Community Centre. Local families and individuals will be encouraged to get involved and learn new skills in food growing, and any leftover produce will support the Fairer Food Network of larders.</p> <p>Existing allotments and growers continue to develop a year round series of community events and themed days to encourage public interest and support. These include plant sales, themed event such as Halloween and Christmas, Duck Races and Tattie day, which encourages local people to grow their own potatoes.</p> <p>This year, households using Ardrossan South Larder were able to get a free potato growing pack including grow bag, seed potatoes, compost and instructions. In addition, school visits to local sites encourage an interest in growing from a young age which is then nurtured and supported through school learning.</p> |
| 71 | Ensure all primary, secondary and ASN schools are provided with quality extra-curricular opportunities in sport and physical activity that are open to all. | Active Schools key focus has remained on getting 'More Kids, More Active, More Often'. Extra-curricular provision has been delivered across all primary, secondary and ASN establishments. 9201 young people have attended a variety of sport and physical activity sessions across this year, which is over 52% of the whole young people population. There were 10,420 sessions delivered across the year with 217,225 visits in total taking place (if 10 kids attended 10 times that's 100 visits). We had 663 deliverers of which 98% of them are volunteers, this highest in recorded in Scotland. |
| 72 | Ensure all young people have the opportunity to compete and perform regardless of what level they are at. | Our Active Schools Calendar of events this year have seen over 5300 young people take part in a variety of sports across 63 events. The events calendars run in clusters, localities as well as North Ayrshire wide. In addition to these events, we have supported our ASN pupils to attend the Ayrshire Sports Ability and Scottish Disability calendar of events to make sure ALL young people have the opportunity to perform and compete at the appropriate level. |
| 73 | Create and support a school to community club pathway for sport across North Ayrshire. | <p>Last academic year Active Schools supported 52 North Ayrshire clubs to engage in schools.</p> <p>Clubs delivered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum enhancement sessions (PE slots over and above the schools 2 hours of PE) • Health week sessions • One off days in schools • Visits to the club • Promotion of club through distribution of flyers <p>Furthermore, Our North Ayrshire Community Sport Hub are flourishing. In partnership with KA, we have been supporting clubs with training, venues and one to one development sessions. In collaboration with selected affiliated clubs, we have</p> |

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| | | been supporting the delivery of satellite clubs to encourage more localised participation. In addition, we have supported the development of additional ASN sessions at North Ayrshire Athletics club. Badminton has also been a focus this year with the employment of a racket sports officer who sits within the KA team to develop school to community clubs in targeted localities. |
| 74 | Ensure an effective leadership pathway is developed for P6 through to S6 and beyond to develop transferable skills. | Active School have a sector leading leadership pathway from P6-S6 and beyond. The P6 Move and Improve programme has seen 1003 young people trained as leaders. Their role is to deliver quality sports and physical activity lunchtime session to their peers. We have also had 36 teaching staff members trained through this programme to support the delivery. Our S1-S6 Young Ambassador programme has 148 representatives. Their role is to promote sport and encourage others to be more Active. Our S5-S6 North Ayrshire Sports Academy programme has 168 young people engaged. Each participant will have gained a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 qualifications. These range from their Saltire Awards, National Governing Body Qualifications all the way through to and SQA in Higher Leadership. This programme has seen the young people volunteer over 5500 hours within their local schools and communities. |
| 75 | Ensure we remove any barriers to participation for care experienced young people to take part in sport and physical activity. | The role of the Active Schools and Community Partnership to work with key partners and stakeholders to remove barriers for the young people and families within Care Experience across North Ayrshire to take part in Sport and Physical Activity using a Whole Systems Approach to lead a healthier Lifestyle. This last year has seen the delivery on 31 different experiential opportunities to 273 young people. The opportunities are wide and varied and range from water sports, climbing, sailing to residential and fun days. On completion of their experiential activity the young people are then supported into more frequent activity within their own school and or communities of which 59% currently have taken this opportunity on. The work of this team has grown to supporting non-attenders, those living in poverty, ASN (244 of which 90% have moved into frequent activity), young people supported by the Drug and Alcohol team (16), New Scots (10) and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children/ Trafficked Young People (16). |
| 76 | Expand and develop the Health and Wellbeing Service to accommodate children and young people, with a focus on partnership working within the Mind and Be Active programme to establish an early intervention approach that provides supported physical activity opportunities for children and young people who are experiencing poor mental health. | KA Leisure has delivered targeted interventions to secondary schools and collaborated with partners to encourage the use of sport and physical activity to improve young people's mental health. |
| 77 | We will work with Community Planning Partners to establish a set of outcome indicators to measure progress on each of the priorities and actions. | The Children's Services Strategic Partnership agreed a set of performance measures to ensure we are monitoring progress of our Children's Services Plan and this will be reported as part of our performance reporting. |

APPENDIX 2: Childrens Services Plan Performance Indicators 2024-25

Priority 1: The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected

| Indicator | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Children and Young People receiving Advocacy Support | 178 | TBC | TBC | TBC |
| Number of young people taking part in influence and engagement through CLD (Community Learning and Development) (e.g. engagement, youth participation and citizenship work) | 12,749 | 20,694 | 15,202 | 11,746 |
| Proportion of child protection re-registrations within 18 months | 17.8% | 10.8% | N/A | N/A |

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next

| Indicator | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Percentage of children with one or more developmental concerns at their 27-30 month review (Calendar year) | (2022) 19.96% | (2023) 21.6% | (2024) 20.8% | N/A |
| Babies who have always been exclusively breastfed (reported at 6/8 weeks) (Calendar year) | (2022) 20.1% | (2023) 20.3% | (2024) 25.6% | N/A |
| Children referred to Reporter for offences (aged 8-15) (rate per 1000) | 5.23 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Children referred to Reporter for care and protection (aged 0-15) (rate per 1000) | 16.26 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Immunisation uptake for 6-in-1 - children (aged 24 months) (3 year rolling average) | 96.95% | 96.7% | N/A | N/A |
| Immunisation uptake for MMR - children (aged 24 months) (3 year rolling average) | 94.2% | 93.1% | N/A | N/A |
| Number of Requests for Assistance received - referred to Specialist Services - for Speech and Language | 61 | 26 | 46 | 12 |
| Number of Requests for Assistance received – referred to HV support workers within UEY (Universal Early Years) team in the period for Speech and Communication | 193 | 139 | 157 | 171 |
| Percentage of Primary 1 Children free from dental decay | 71.16% | 73.32% | 69% | N/A |
| Percentage of Primary 7 Children free from dental decay | N/A | 77.34% | 70.1% | N/A |
| Uptake of the HPV vaccine in S3 girls (3 year rolling average) | 75.20% | 78.23% | 79.3% | N/A |
| Deaths from suicide (aged 11-25) (rate per 100,000) (5 year rolling average) | 15.9 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Alcohol-related hospital admissions (aged 11-25) (rate per 100,000) (3 year rolling average) | 216.75 | N/A | 151.9 | N/A |
| Drug-related hospital admissions (aged 11-25) (rate per 100,000) (3 year rolling average) | 164.48 | 147.1 | 114.7 | N/A |
| Smoking during pregnancy as reported at antenatal booking (3 year rolling average) (Calendar year) | 21.46 | 15.6 | N/A | N/A |

Priority 3: Making things fairer

| Indicator | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Proportion of Looked after Children with more than 1 placement in the last year | 18.8% | 17.4% | N/A | N/A |
| Children looked after by the local authority as at 31 st July (aged 0-17) | 446 | 404 | 409 | N/A |
| Children on the child protection register as at 31 st July (rate per 1,000 children) | 4.2 | 3.5 | 4.1 | N/A |
| School attendance rate for whole population | N/A | 89.0% | 89.1% | N/A |
| School attendance rate for looked after children | N/A | 84.2% | N/A | N/A |
| Number of families receiving cash payments for Free School Meals during holiday periods (school year, snapshot of data) | 3,120 | 2,706 | 2,626 | 2,690 |
| Combined Numeracy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 (expected CFE level) | 75.5% | 75.9% | 76.2% | N/A |
| Combined Literacy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 (expected CFE level) | 67.3% | 68.5% | 68.6% | N/A |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 (LGBF) | 67% | 63% | 65% | N/A |

| Indicator | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils from 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at SCQF Level 5 | 53% | 52% | 53% | N/A |
| Annual participation measure for all 16-19 year olds (calendar year) | 90.84% | 92.0% | 91.7% | N/A |
| School leavers entering an initial positive destination | 96% | 96.5% | 95.6% | N/A |
| Percentage of Children living in poverty after housing costs | 29.0% | 29.2% | N/A | N/A |

Priority 4: Promoting good mental health and wellbeing

| Indicator | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of referrals to CAMHS (ISD Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Scotland) | 2,178 | 2,166 | 2,741 | 1,194 |
| Percentage of referrals to CAMHS started treatment within 18 Weeks | 99% | 95% | 99% | 99.6% |
| Number of children and young people accessing Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services | 3,093 | 6,038 | 5,962 | 6,527 |
| Total number of children accessing counsellors (school year) | 549 | 666 | 379 | 477 |
| Percentage of children who have reported an improved outcome following access to a counsellor | 100% | 100% | 100% | 99.4% |

Priority 5: Inspiring children and young people to be active

| Indicator | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Child healthy weight in Primary 1 (5% to 95% centile) | 72.1 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Number of young people (Distinct participants) engaged with Active Schools during Extra Curricular (school year) | 6,570 | 9,285 | 9,201 | N/A |
| Number of Young people who are leaders in our key Active Schools programmes (school year) | 556 | 1,171 | 1,327 | N/A |
| Number of Active Schools experiential opportunities offered to Care experienced young people (school year) | 9 | 31 | 31 | N/A |
| Number of ASN (Additional Support Needs) pupils engaging with Active Schools extra-curricular and through experiential opportunities (school year) | 55 | 140 | 213 | N/A |
| KA Leisure memberships distributed either free or funded by partners | N/A | 69 | TBC | TBC |
| Active travel to school | 51.70% | 47.49% | 48% | N/A |

Please note – data that is not available yet is due to timescales of national data releases or variations in reporting schedules, for example, academic years. Data will be reviewed and updated when available.

Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) Annual Summary 2024/2025

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Overview | <p>The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) continues to enable the development of strong foundations for transformational change to ensure preventative whole family support measures to help families overcome challenges before they reach crisis point.</p> <p>In its third year of implementation, the developments in North Ayrshire reflect a collective commitment from statutory services, the third sector and the independent sector to create sustainable, family-centred support systems.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has recently reaffirmed their commitment to the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund programme and confirmed a Ministerial decision to elongate the timeframe of the Programme beyond this Parliament.</p> <p>COSLA and the Scottish Government have agreed that from the 1st April 2025 the total funding for the WFWF will increase from £32m to £38.1m for both this current 2025/26 and 2026-27 financial years. Therefore, extending the programme from 4 years to 5 years.</p> |
| Key achievements | <p>During this reporting period, 14 new and existing projects and services have benefitted from WFWF funding, demonstrating a broad and positive impact across North Ayrshire. The developments in North Ayrshire reflect a collective commitment from statutory services, the third sector and the independent sector to create sustainable, family-centred support systems. These initiatives are crucial in addressing complex family needs and fostering a collaborative, integrated approach to service delivery.</p> <p>The third year of the WFWF has not only facilitated scaling up of essential services but has also supported the establishment of key roles and teams, including the WFWF Programme Lead and the Neurodevelopmental Empowerment and Strategy Team (NEST).</p> <p>The Dads Rock service's success highlighted the need for expansion, leading to funding and recruitment of an additional support worker to extend the service into Irvine. This growth reflects the increasing demand for dedicated support for fathers in the community.</p> <p>Implementation of the Building on Positive Relationships (BPR) parenting approach withing the Family Centred Wellbeing Service has significantly improved family support by involving parents in group work and one-to-one interventions. During this reporting period, three BPR groups ran simultaneously, each involving 4-6 families, with all team members trained in BPR. With 172 active cases, the FCWS delivers extensive daily interventions, supported by Educational Psychology partners. The approach is also being extended to schools to train pastoral staff, aiming for consistent support across educational and family Services and for dedicated support for fathers in the community.</p> <p>In January, 79 practitioners attended the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund event at Saltcoats Town Hall. The idea was formed by the WFWF Forum, where the group felt it would be useful to showcase and connect the funded projects and services with practitioners at an interactive meeting and networking event. Attendees, which included those from the Third</p> |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | and Independent Sectors, Education, HSCP, NHS and NAC, had the opportunity to hear from 11 of the funded services in addition to finding out further information at the market place stalls. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Challenges | <p>In early December 2024, the Chair of Ayrshire Rape Crisis confirmed that re-recruitment for the WFWF funded family support worker had been on hold due to core funding uncertainty. Separately to this, the unexpected resignation of the Star Centre manager in February meant the funded role could not be recruited and managed withing the remaining timeframe. As a result, £34,000 of unspent funds were returned.</p> <p>Due to Saltcoats Link-up having to withdraw from the WFWF, a review of the third sector applications previously received was undertaken. An approach was made to Beith Trust to ascertain whether they would still be interested in utilising the funding for the scale-up of the Baby Bundles project into other areas of North Ayrshire. The fund has enabled Beith Trust to employ a project worker for an additional 25 hours per week to ensure the Baby Bundles project is accessible outwith the Garnock Valley and expand into the Three Towns locality.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Outcomes and Impact | <p>During 2024/25, a total of 550 children and young people across North Ayrshire accessed WFWF funded services or programmes. Furthermore, 688 families have been impacted by the WFWF proposals during the 12 month period.</p> <p>It is promising to note that most funded projects address three to four local priorities, reflecting a strategic alignment with broader community needs. These targeted efforts play a vital role in addressing specific challenges faced by families and ensuring they receive the tailored support required.</p> <p>In terms of the geographical spread of the WFWF proposals, the majority are operating in the Three Towns locality and on a North Ayrshire wide basis. Although Arran does not have any specific services delivered on the island, Arran is covered by the North Ayrshire wide services.</p> <p>Overall, the WFWF’s progress in North Ayrshire underscores the importance of a holistic, community driven approach to family wellbeing, demonstrating both immediate benefits and laying the groundwork for long term, sustainable change.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Financial position | <p>The current financial position as of March 2025, is described below. The table sets out the spend to date and projected spend based on confirmation that the annual SG allocation of funds for Year 4 of the Fund.</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Year 3 24/25</td><td>Year 4 Projections 25/26</td></tr><tr><td>Brought Forward from previous year</td><td>£ 1,313,000.00</td><td>£ 933,999.96</td></tr><tr><td>SG Allocation</td><td>£ 954,000.00</td><td>£ 1,119,000.00</td></tr><tr><td>Total Funds Available In Year</td><td>£ 2,267,000.00</td><td>£ 2,052,999.96</td></tr></table> | | Year 3 24/25 | Year 4 Projections 25/26 | Brought Forward from previous year | £ 1,313,000.00 | £ 933,999.96 | SG Allocation | £ 954,000.00 | £ 1,119,000.00 | Total Funds Available In Year | £ 2,267,000.00 | £ 2,052,999.96 |
| | Year 3 24/25 | Year 4 Projections 25/26 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brought Forward from previous year | £ 1,313,000.00 | £ 933,999.96 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SG Allocation | £ 954,000.00 | £ 1,119,000.00 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Funds Available In Year | £ 2,267,000.00 | £ 2,052,999.96 | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | | | |
| | Family Centred Wellbeing Service | £ 575,503.28 | £ 600,000.00 |
| | Expansion of EY Social Workers | £ 154,004.79 | £ 55,000.00 |
| | Dads Rock | £ 68,095.00 | £ 70,138.00 |
| | Neighbourhood Networks | £ 50,312.00 | £ - |
| | Vicarious Trauma | £ 8,169.00 | £ 8,000.00 |
| | Notre Dame | £ 54,060.33 | £ - |
| | Programme Lead | £ 53,536.81 | £ 55,143.00 |
| | Neuro allocation | £ 27,728.69 | £ - |
| | Third sector allocation | £ 292,979.80 | £ 233,012.00 |
| | Educational Psychologist | £ 47,888.84 | £ 75,160.00 |
| | To be confirmed | £ 511.50 | £ - |
| | | | |
| | Total Spend | £ 1,332,790.04 | £ 1,096,453.00 |
| | Funds Remaining | £ 934,209.96 | £ 956,546.96 |
| <p>Allocations for CSSPs for years 4 and 5 have now been confirmed following conclusion of the Scottish Parliament's consideration of the Scottish Budget.</p> <p>WFWF allocation for North Ayrshire has been increased from £954,000 to £1,119,000. This is an increase of £165,000 per annum for years 4 and 5.</p> <p>The financial position will continue to be monitored and reported back to the CSSP.</p> | | | |
| Learning | <p>To ensure accountability and measure progress, all funding recipients are required to complete an evaluation template every 6 months. This comprehensive template captures vital information about each project, including intended outcomes, progress made, areas for improvement and any challenges or barriers encountered.</p> <p>WFWF recipients have come together 3 times during this reporting period to network, share learning, discuss challenges and project sustainability. The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund Forum will continue to meet quarterly.</p> <p>The first edition of the WFWF newsletter was published in September. The newsletter provides details on all the projects and services supported by the Fund and relevant contact details. This was circulated electronically to WFWF partners, the third sector and in the HSCP news bulletin.</p> <p>The WFWF Programme Lead attends the Learning into Action (LiA) Network. The purpose of this group is to allow CSSP's and other relevant stakeholders to access information such as briefings, policy updates, upcoming events, case studies and other useful resources regarding the WFWF.</p> | | |

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| Next steps | <p>The annual report for 2024/25 is currently being drafted and will provide more detail to the high level summary provided in this report. This will be submitted to the Scottish Government in June and shared with the Children's Services' Strategic Partnership.</p> <p>The WFWF logic model, created by Scottish Government, is a visual representation of how the funding is intended to impact its beneficiaries (children, young people, and families and CSSP staff). It captures the sequence of events expected to lead to outcomes that together, if achieved, are expected to lead to the impacts. It summarises the rationale for providing the funding and shows some of the mechanisms by which change might come about. As we approach the fourth year of the programme, we aim to create a North Ayrshire specific WFWF logic model.</p> <p>Finally, we will continue to focus on sustainability and longevity of projects beyond the life of the WFWF.</p> |
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