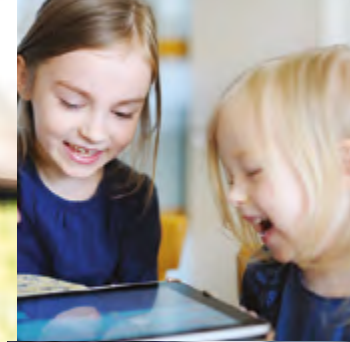


North Ayrshire
**Children
Services Plan**
2020/2023





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It is inescapable that the Covid-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on our children and families, in terms of their financial situations as well as the impact on mental health and other aspects of everyday life.



Foreword

Welcome to our updated North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23.

This is our second Children's Services Plan and we are aiming to build on the progress that has been made to date. We have set out our key priorities for the next three years to achieve our vision in North Ayrshire – for all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow

We continue to listen to and engage with children, young people and families and use the best data available to strengthen the strong local partnership working we have in place. Children and Young People's rights are at the heart of all we do as a Child Centred Council, and the implications of Scottish Parliament Bill to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the law in Scotland will be a key development of our approach.

We support and build on the strengths of our families, schools and communities to ensure that capacity building,

collaboration and radical kindness underpin all our work together.

During 2020/21 we have been reviewing our Children's Services Planning and conducting self-evaluation activity. This led to the creation of a new group, the Children's Services Executive Group, to deal with operational governance and decision making. The self-evaluation identified various areas where we wanted to make improvements and we have initiated some short term workstreams, the details of which are included in the main report below.



One of our main concerns is tackling Child Poverty and this can be seen in our ambitious Child Poverty Action Plan. We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty,

We will have an ongoing rolling programme of improvement workstreams that will be implemented within our annual planning cycles.

Our Children's Services Executive Group maintains strong strategic links to our Children's Services Strategic Partnership, which has the main strategic oversight of our Children's Services Planning suite. During 2021/22 we will be reviewing our Key Performance Measures with the Children's Services Strategic Partnership to ensure they reflect our renewed areas of focus and workstream improvement activity.

As part of our ongoing self-evaluation we will be reviewing our Children's Services Plan Performance Framework during 2021/22.

One of our main areas of focus is tackling child poverty and this can be seen in our ambitious Child Poverty Action Plan. We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.



**Councillor
Joe Cullinane**
Leader of North
Ayrshire Council



Audrey Sutton
(Education and
Communities)
and Chair of the
Children's Services
Strategic Partnership



Introduction:

Local Context and key facts

In North Ayrshire we understand that all of our children and young people are unique individuals and should be able to feel confident and happy with themselves and the place where they live.

Currently, we have 135,000 people living in North Ayrshire. 16.7% of our population are children and young people under 16 (17% national average).

The infographic below provides a snapshot of some of the key statistics about children and young people across North Ayrshire. Throughout this document we outline how we plan to tackle these issues and improve outcomes for our children, young people and families.



Child protection Registrations
(Rate per 1000 0-15 year olds):
The number of children on the
Child Protection Register in 2019

North Ayrshire

6.7

in 2018

4.6 in 2019

Scotland

2.8

in 2019

Teenage Pregnancies
per 1000 15-19 year olds
in the period 2015 to 2017

North Ayrshire

35.6

Scotland

31.42



Childhood Obesity:
Percentage of Children with a healthy
weight in Primary 1 in 2018/19



North Ayrshire

72.26%

Scotland

76.58%

Breastfeeding Rates:
Babies exclusively breastfed
at 6-8 weeks in 2019

North Ayrshire

19.2%

in 2019,
improvement from
17% in 2018

Scotland

32%

in 2019

Rates of looked After Children age 0-17 in 2019

North Ayrshire
2.1%

Scotland
1.4%



2018/19 Attainment of all School Leavers

% Attaining Literacy at SCQF level 5 or above

North Ayrshire
84%
Scotland 82%

% Attaining Numeracy at SCQF level 5 or above

North Ayrshire
69%
Scotland 69%

2018/19 Attainment of Looked After Children

% Attaining Literacy at SCQF level 5 or above

North Ayrshire
39%

% Attaining Numeracy at SCQF level 5 or above

North Ayrshire
25%
Scotland 22%

School leavers destinations 2018/19

All leavers:

North Ayrshire
94%
Scotland 95%

Looked After school leavers:

North Ayrshire
83%
Scotland 82%



Children living in Poverty 2018/19 (Before Housing costs)



North Ayrshire
27.9%

National
24.3%

Domestic abuse incidents recorded per 10,000 total population, 2018/19



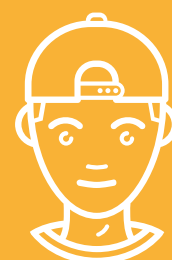
North Ayrshire
123.5

Nationally
111.5

As at July 2020, the Unemployment Claimant Count for 18-24 year olds

North Ayrshire
14.6%

Scotland
9.6%





We have created a profile of our area based on the latest information and data available. You can view our full data profile dashboard at [Appendix 1](#).



We use a range of information from consulting and speaking to our children and young people such as the Youth Forum, Joint Cabinet and via our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy.

Strategic Needs Assessment

In 2014/15, in partnership with the Dartington Service Design Lab, we carried out a ChildrenCount Wellbeing Survey of almost 8000 young people aged between nine and 16 years old and more than 600 families of younger children. This rich range of information was used to inform our priorities for the 2016-20 Children's Services Plan.

We continue to use a range of data, including further focussed work with Dartington, to build our understanding of the needs in our area in partnership with our Community Planning Partners. Our data sources include:

School Census data

This includes information collected in schools such as the numbers of pupils by age, additional support needs and other information.

Child Protection data

This includes the number of children who are looked after by the Council and the reasons for this.

Health data

This includes information on birth weight and breast-feeding rates, dental health information, immunisation rates and levels of smoking, alcohol and drug use in young people as well as the population as a whole.

Children and young people's views and experiences

We use a range of information from consulting and speaking to our children and young people such as the Youth Forum, Joint Cabinet and via our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy. We ask for the views of children and young people in schools using the How Good is Our School pupil questionnaires.

Our Priorities for 2020 to 2023

A key focus for all Children's Services partnerships will now be recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and all of the associated challenges this brings. Our key priorities will be even more important in this new context.

We have a good understanding of the needs of our children and young people and their families and we are determined to ensure that a whole systems approach delivers the best results.

Our Plan is a living document that will be updated and adapted based on the changing needs of our area, especially as the effects of Covid-19 become more apparent. We will be developing detailed action plan and performance framework which will show the actions we will take and how we will measure our progress.

We have ensured that as many children and young people as possible in North Ayrshire are involved in making decisions about what is important to them. We have identified our key priorities by listening to what our children and young people have told us.



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

Ensuring the rights, views and aspirations of children and young people are at the centre of everything we do

We will:

- Implement the North Ayrshire UNCRC plan actions
- Ensure the rights of all children and young people are protected
- Ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the work of the Community Planning Partnership
- Ensure children and young people have the opportunity to develop their citizenship skills, including active democratic participation opportunities



Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next
Focussing on early intervention and prevention

We will:

- Work with our partners to keep all children and young people safe
- Continue to support families with children age 0-5 through our integrated universal early years' service
- Increase access to early learning and childcare
- Work together with parents or carers to provide support to their children
- Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people



Priority 3: Making things fairer and better **Reducing inequalities and improving outcomes**

We will:

- Implement the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan
- Improve attainment and achievement for all
- Close the poverty related attainment gap
- Implement the recommendations from the Independent Care Review (Scotland).
- Implement the recommendations from the Additional Support for Learning Review (Scotland)
- Build strong collaborative partnerships in local areas to ensure we deliver high-quality services for all of our children, young people and families



Priority 4: Supporting mental health **Supporting social, emotional and mental wellbeing**

We will:

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



Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy **Helping children and young people to be physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle**

We will:

- Create innovative physical activity and sports opportunities with communities and partners
- Adopt a whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight
- Design opportunities into the whole system to enable children, young people and their families to have a healthy lifestyle
- Ensure all our early years indoor and outdoor learning environments and activities enable children to be physically active



What our Plan means for you: Our Children and Young People

We want you to know what this plan means for you and your family



At the heart of our all of our work with you, your families and our partners, are the principles and values called 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC). This way of working is designed to support you and your family by making sure you can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help you to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that you can realise your full potential.



There are a range of ways that you can get involved and make your voices heard.



If you feel like you need help or advice, then you should speak to your class teacher in primary schools. In secondary schools you can speak to your pastoral care teachers or any other adult in your school that you feel comfortable with. They will be able to help or direct you to the right place or person. There are a range of ways that you can get involved and make your voices heard. This could be through your pupil council, or taking part in focus groups, questionnaires, class surveys and discussions. Or you might want to get involved with clubs, organisations or youth groups. Lots of information is available online in our **Youth Participation Strategy**.

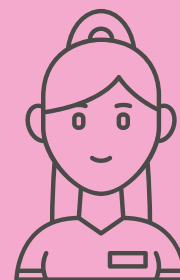
Some of you have helped us to develop this Plan and choose the most important areas for us to work on – and we want to say thank you for this.



What our Plan means for you: Our Children and Young People

1. Your Rights and Views

- We have worked with you to develop a new **Citizenship and Participation Strategy** that will focus on your rights
- If you have been or are being cared for, you can take part in or be represented by our **Champions Board**
- Our **Rights Respecting Schools** and rights awareness in schools make sure that your rights are at the heart of everything we do
- Your views are gathered regularly in your schools. What you tell us is used to make improvements



2. Act early to improve what happens next

- **Healthy food** options are available and promoted in our schools
- Our **Active Schools** programmes provide activities in school, after school or in local clubs through KA Leisure
- Our schools and early years centres are working to develop outdoor areas for learning and activity



3. Make things fairer and better

- We support families when they have a new baby. This includes **helping** with feeding babies, family money advice, and supporting healthy choices
- We encourage you and your family to get **immunisations** to help protect against diseases
- Our **Family Learning Team** supports you and your family to learn and play together
- We work together to make sure that we give help and support as early as possible if you have challenges or something goes wrong
- We provide support for you to enjoy and benefit from using the internet and social media safely





4. Support mental health

- We work with you to achieve your full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors
- We make sure that there are lots of options in our **schools** for your learning.
- When you leave school, we support you to take the **next steps** into college, university, training or work
- We provide healthy lunches and activities during the school holidays



5. Help you be active and have healthy lives

- There are people and programmes to support your mental health. We have **Counsellors** in each of our secondary schools and all of our schools and early years centres work to remove stigma about mental health
- We use **nurture approaches** throughout all of our Children's Services to make sure that you are supported with your social, emotional and behavioural needs
- For more serious and complex issues, you may be referred to the **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service** (CAMHS). If this happens we work with you to assess your needs and wishes to best support you and help you recover



Partnership Approach to Children's Services Planning

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership is a strong and effective partnership of a wide range of organisations. We value the benefits of sharing our resources, knowledge and skills to improve the lives of our children and young people. All partners have a shared commitment and partnership vision – **North Ayrshire – A Better Life.**

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership is made up of the following organisations:



Our work fully supports the purpose, values and national outcomes as set out by the Scottish Government. Our vision demonstrates our link to the National Performance Framework.

The public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities, known as the Fairer Scotland Duty, requires that when taking strategic decisions, particular public bodies, including local authorities and health boards, must have due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage in the exercise of their functions.

We have a clear focus on inequalities. In [our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(LOIP\) 2017-2022](#), we have increased our focus on children and child poverty.

Underpinning this we have four priority areas:

- A Working North Ayrshire
- A Healthier North Ayrshire
- A Safer North Ayrshire
- A Thriving North Ayrshire – Children and Young People

Our cross-cutting themes are building stronger communities and prevention, and these underpin our approach to these priorities.

Our work to improve Children's Services also directly links to the mission, vision and priorities set out in the [North Ayrshire Council Plan](#). This is the key strategic plan for the Council, which is focused on making North Ayrshire a fairer and more equal society.



We have assessed the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Funding. We have also reviewed our school counselling service.

The Children’s Services Plan directly links to the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2018-21 – [Lets Deliver Care Together](#).

Our Children’s Services Planning includes our **Children’s Rights Report** and our **Child Poverty Action Plan**. Our new **Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy**, ‘Step up Speak Out’ was launched in March 2020 and ensures the voice of children and young people is at the centre of all we do. Together they form our approach to giving children and young people in North Ayrshire the best start in life.

Our Children’s Services Planning approach links all relevant plans and strategies together as described above. These can be seen in the diagram below.

The Children’s Services Plan links with, and feeds into, a range of other strategic plans including:

- [North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Business Plan](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan](#)
- [Early Learning and Childcare Strategy](#)
- [Out of School Care Plan](#)
- [Community Learning and](#)

[Development Plan](#)

- [North Ayrshire Carers Strategy](#)
- [Ayrshire and Arran Child Transformation Plan](#)
- [Ayrshire and Arran Oral Health Strategy](#)

A number of major national reviews have taken place since our Children’s Services Plan 2016-20, including the Care Review, the review of Additional Support Needs and the Scottish Attainment Challenge evaluation.



At a local level, Audit Scotland carried out a [Best Value Audit](#) the end of 2019. We have had many of our schools inspected by [Education Scotland](#) over the last three years as well as an assessment of the impact of the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#). We have reviewed the effectiveness of the Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Funding. We have also reviewed our school counselling service.

All of these reviews and assessments at national and local level are considered in the ongoing development of this plan and inform our improvement planning activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for our children, young people and their families. The economic impact is considerable for many of our families and the associated

impacts such as mental and physical health, well-being and educational outcomes will be vitally important in shaping our work over the next three years of this plan.

The Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) have developed a [community vulnerability measure](#) to help guide the social mitigation response to the effects of Covid-19. North Ayrshire is identified as being at high risk to Covid-19. This is in common with Inverclyde, Dundee City, West Dunbartonshire, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Dumfries and Galloway and Glasgow City.

We are committed to using all of the information available to us to ensure that we continue to take steps to ensure that the impact of Covid-19 is addressed in a manner that reduces the risk of causing long term damage to children.

Figure 1: Children’s Services Planning Dashboard

Children’s Services Planning 2021





The GIRFEC approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential.

Our Children's Services Plan Development

Our Plan takes a rights-based approach. We are committed to promoting and protecting children and young people's rights. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 strengthens children's rights and places duties on local authorities, health boards and partner agencies. Our first North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020-23 is a core aspect of our approach to Children's Services Planning.

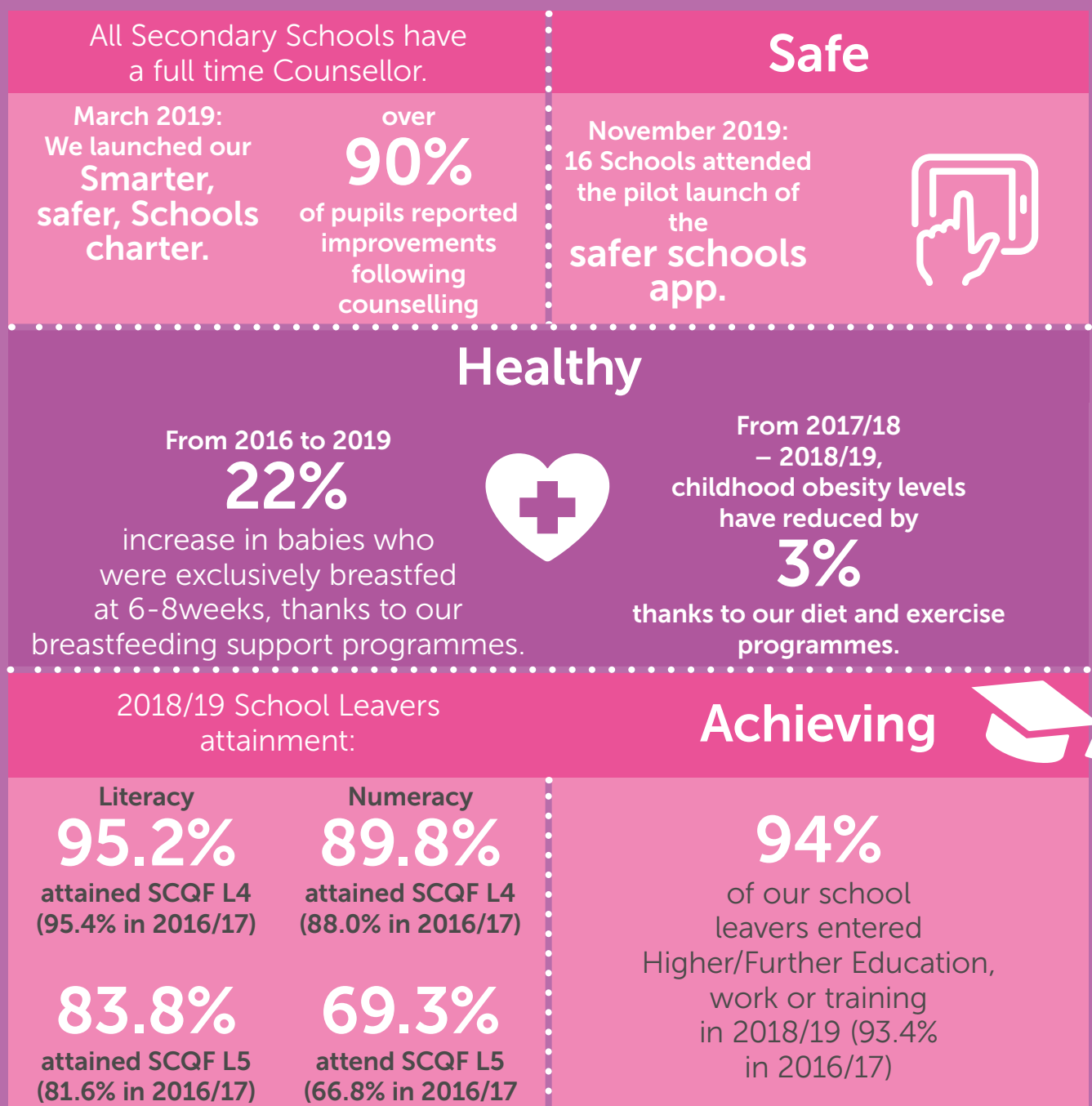
Our plan has been written based on the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and values. GIRFEC is based on children's rights and its principles reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). GIRFEC also respects parents' rights.

The GIRFEC approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

Progress since previous plan

Since the introduction of the 2016-20 North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan we have made significant progress in a number of key areas. These can be viewed in detail in our Children's Services Plan Performance Reports [here](#).





Nurtured

Our real nappy incentive scheme was launched in October 2019.



It can save families

£1,300

per child and reduce environmental impact by 40%.

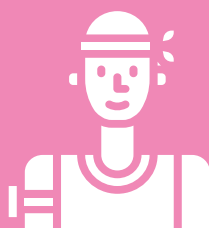
Family Nurses support young mums (19 and under) until children are 2 years old.

From Jan 2017-Jan 2020 we supported 98 young parents and currently have 78 parents enrolled.

Our Active Schools Team provide opportunities in sport, activity and leadership development.

Active

7,748
children and young people participated in ActiveSchools activities in 2019/20.



Our Early Years centres are creating outdoor learning environments.

Respected

We are changing how we support children, young people and families by bringing teams together in local areas.

Over 90%
of our schools are rights respecting schools (RRS) accredited to Bronze level – RSS committed.

Responsible

5,583
children and young people voted in the latest Youth Participatory Budgeting event (Nov2019)

In 2018/19 our activities supporting participation in democracy had a total of 9,515 attendances



Included

A new £20m Additional Supports Needs Campus is being built in Stevenston including an Adult Respite House.

Our champions board engaged with over 60 professions and Care Experienced young people to research language and stigma associated with the care system.

Resources

In 2019/20 we spent more than £180 million in Education and Health and Social Care, on services to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people living in North Ayrshire. A breakdown can be seen below, in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Spend breakdown in Children’s Services (NHS and HSCP)

Children’s Services – 2019/20 Spend (£’000)

Health and Social Care Partnership and Health Board

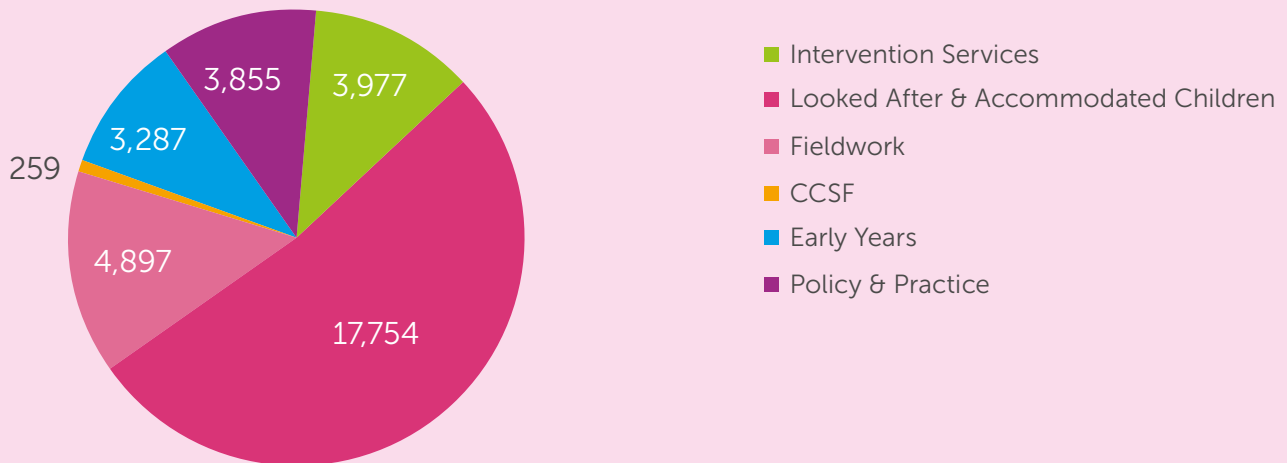
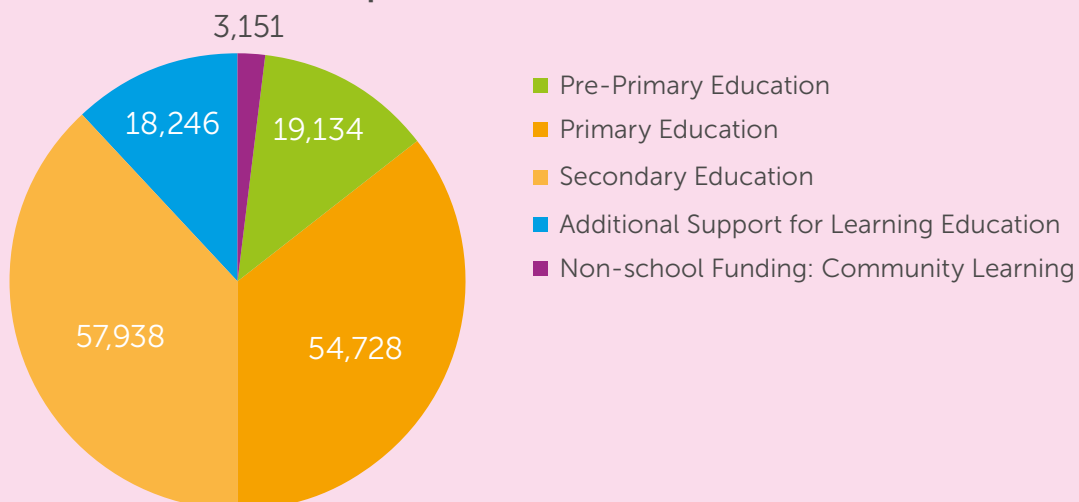


Figure 3: Spend breakdown in Education Services

Education Services – 2019/20 Spend (£’000)





Strategic Themes

The following key themes are strategically important in our work.

Child Poverty

In North Ayrshire we are committed to reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty. We know that 27.9% of children in North Ayrshire are living in poverty and this can affect children's health and wellbeing, as well as school attainment and achievement. Covid-19 has exacerbated this situation and the evidence of this and the related actions are detailed in our Child Poverty Action Plan 2019/20. Covid-19 has exacerbated this situation and the evidence of this and the related actions are detailed in our [Child Poverty Action Plan](#).

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, almost one in four children in Scotland (24%, just less than 225,000) were living in relative poverty in Scotland in 2019/20¹.

New data on child poverty was released in May 2021. This new estimate is based

on Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data, but is based on family income levels, after housing costs. The new data shows that over 6,200 children (27.9%) age 0-16 could be living in poverty in North Ayrshire. This is higher than the national estimate of 24% for the same measure. These calculations are estimates but support our experience and knowledge of our local areas.

There is increasing evidence that households with children, which were already at greater risk of poverty, have been disproportionately affected by the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is too early to know the impact that Covid-19 will have on levels of child poverty in Scotland but an analysis by the Institute for Public Policy Research

1 Child poverty in your area 2014/15 – 2019/20 – End Child Poverty



We are clear about the value of employment for our residents and want to attract the best jobs and employers possible.



(IPPR) Scotland finds that since lockdown almost half (49 per cent) of households with dependent children in Scotland find themselves in the two most serious categories of financial stress – ‘in serious financial difficulty’ or ‘struggling to make ends meet’. This is compared to 30 per cent of all households in Scotland reporting the same levels of financial stress.

Our Child Poverty Action Plan and Report sets out our commitment to Economic Growth in our area through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and Community Wealth Building. We are clear about the value of employment for our residents and want to attract the best jobs and employers possible. We also work to reduce the cost of living for our residents and are committed to develop 1,575 new build Council homes by March 2025.

Cost of the School Day

Our 2019/20 Child Poverty Action Plan and Report was published in October 2020. This identified The Cost of the School Day as a key area of focus for 2020/21. The theme of reducing the Cost of the School Day was also identified as a priority by our Fair for All Poverty Truth Commission work and in the Year of Young People legacy action plan recommendations, both of which are our mechanisms for taking account of our residents’ lived experience.

A formal Cost of the School Day (COSD) Working Group was established comprising Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers.

We have previously participated in work with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.

The aim of the COSD Working Group was to further drive forward a whole systems approach to reducing the cost associated with education. We already have strong approaches to this across our area and we continue to look for new whole-system commitments from the Council and its community planning, wider community, and business partners.

The objective of the COSD working group was to produce a policy that could be used by all schools, services and partners to embed the agreed principles and to develop a high-level action plan to be taken forward in 2021. The policy and action plan encompasses the work of all educational establishments and of community planning partners, communities and local businesses. The working group have also developed



We protect, support and provide a loving and nurturing environment for those who have either been in care or have experienced it.

a set of North Ayrshire Commitments, which will be launched with schools and partners to set out the overall objectives.

The COSD Policy was agreed by Cabinet in March 2021 and will be formally launched at our first annual COSD Conference which will take place in June 2021.

More details are available in our [Child Poverty Action Plan 2020/21](#).

Children and Families Investment Fund

As part of our determination to address poverty and particularly child poverty we aim to give everyone the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives. In June 2021 we will be launching our £500,000 Children and Families Investment Fund programme. The fund will focus on:

- **Food:** £150,000 to extend our school and community food network across all schools to support children and families;
- **Clothing and sustainability:** £100,000 for a School and Family Participatory Budget Investment Fund for educational establishments to respond to local needs in relation to school uniforms, outdoor clothing, sports kit and recycling and reuse equipment; and

- **Digital inclusion:** £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.

This is a recurring annual investment and the launch planned for June 2021 will ensure families will be supported ahead of the return to schools for the new term in August.





Wellbeing

In January 2018, the Ayrshire and Arran Wellness Model looked to test a whole system model of mental health support by developing a fully integrated approach, aligning specialist child and adolescent mental health teams with developing initiatives in partnership with North Ayrshire schools and other parts of the community. The aim of the model is that there will be clear evidence of a shift in the emotional wellbeing of children and young people within one locality (Kilwinning) evidenced by more appropriate requests for assistance being made to CAMHS.

The Kilwinning Wellness model has reduced the routine referrals from 68 days in August 2018 to less than 2 weeks consistently from September 2019.

The Wellness Model has significantly influenced, managed and changed the demand pressures placed on specialist mental health services for children and young people in a locality, ensuring those individuals with serious mental health concerns are seen timeously and appropriately.

This model fits around children and young people's needs using a broader lens for mental health services, and one that incorporates the wider system, supporting young people wherever they are.

The Wellness Model has also been rolled out in Largs and the scoping work has already started for the Garnock Valley and will spread to the rest of North Ayrshire.



The Kilwinning Wellness model has reduced the routine referrals from 68 days in August 2018 to less than 2 weeks consistently from September 2019.



Love and Support for Care-experienced Young People

The national Independent Care Review was published in February 2020. The review of Scotland's Care system has far reaching recommendations. We will continue to reflect on how best we can 'Keep the Promise', take the recommendations of the review forward in North Ayrshire and embed in our local plans.

We protect, support and provide a loving and nurturing environment for those who have either been in care or have experienced it.

We have a Champions Board constituted from a range of young people who are all care experienced aged between 15 and 22 who come together weekly and look for ways to change the care system as well as producing tools and advice for their care experienced community. The Board is supported by the North Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Team.

Throughcare and Aftercare Services

The Throughcare and Aftercare teams support young people moving on from being accommodated away from home to

the next stage of their lives. They are there to listen and respond to young people's emerging needs in any way they can.

Support is offered in a variety of ways, for example, the team has a dedicated Employability Advisor who supports young people to explore pathways into employment, training or education. Advice offered is adaptable to suit individual needs as their employment, education or training journey progresses. In addition, staff can assist young people in finding their own accommodation and provide bespoke emotional and practical support through what can be, for some, challenging and uncertain times, as well as exciting.

Furthermore, the team offers guidance to those who need advice and guidance in applying for DWP benefits, as well as those who are applying for educational bursaries, care leaver's bursaries and financial support. Assistance can also be provided on legal matters, emotional health and wellbeing and life skills.

The teams are dynamic, creative and flexible to meet the emerging and individual needs of care experienced young people.



The Promise Workstream has been established to take a co-ordinated approach to our reorganisation.



Current Transformation and Improvement Themes

Our Response to The Promise Workstream

'The Promise' sets out an overall view of a new approach based on five foundations.

The five foundations are:

- **Voice:** When children speak, adults must really listen to them. Adults must make sure that children are included in decisions about their lives.
- **Family:** If children are living with their family and are safe and feel loved, they should stay there. Their family should be given all the help they need to stay together. If they need extra help when things get difficult, they should get it.
- **Care:** If children cannot stay with the adults in their family, they will stay with their brothers and sisters. The home they live in together will be a place where they feel safe and loved. It should be their home for as long as they want and need it to be.
- **People:** Relationships are important. Adults must make sure children are

able to stay close to the people they want to and keep in contact with them. Adults must also help children make new relationships as they grow up. Sometimes adults need some help too. The adults who are close to children must get the help they need to make sure they can do their best for children.

- **Scaffolding:** Help and support must be there for children and families whenever they need it. It must also be there for the adults who are close to children and families. It is important everyone knows where to go for help and that it is ready when it is asked for.

The Promise Workstream has been established to take a co-ordinated approach to our reorganisation. The workstream will seek to build upon the existing practice across the authority to support care experienced young people



GIRFEC policy continues to describe the benefits of a service supporting Named Persons, Lead Professionals and wider integrated, multi-agency working.

and oversee a coordinated whole system review that is centred on improving children and young people's experiences of the care system. This will be founded on the Getting It Right For Every Child principles and wellbeing indicators.

Named Person Service Evaluation Workstream

Part 4 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which was revoked in September 2019, required local authorities and the relevant health board, to put in place arrangements for the provision of a 'Named Person' for each young person from birth to 18. The legislation indicated each Named Person would act as a single point of contact for each child with responsibility for providing advice, information and support where required.

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

children by supporting families through early intervention and preventative non-statutory measures.

- The Review of the Named Person Services Workstream will review the processes and procedures and identify improvements where applicable, to ensure Named Persons and Lead Professionals are provided with effective and efficient early intervention and preventative support in meeting the needs of children, young people and their families. This will be aligned to, and measured against, aspects of best practice outlined in Additional Support Needs and Getting it Right for Every Child legislation.

Multi Agency and Locality Working Workstream

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 outlines a statutory duty for local authorities to engage in community planning at a locality level in order to enable local communities to become more actively involved in decision making. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Equality Act (Scotland) 2010 also emphasise the importance in ensuring equity and equality are at the centre of developing and delivering effective services.



The work continues to take an asset-based approach, ensuring that building capacity is at the heart of all we do.



The value of empowered communities and citizens is also recognised in the Learning Together National Action Plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021. This plan set a vision for improving the education and life chances of children and young people by recognising that parents / carers are often a child's primary education. This workstream seeks to align to this vision by further enhancing approaches to parental involvement and engagement in a child's learning journey.

Following the success of the locality model adopted during the initial stage of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Connected Communities service has led an exciting transformation project to reshape the relationship the Council has with residents with shift from 'customers to citizens'. This involves developing services and systems to provide a single point of contact within the locality to coordinate services. This will enhance partnership working across agencies and improve outcomes for residents in their locality.

Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework Workstream

In June 2019, the Scottish Government and COSLA commissioned a Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Board. The purpose of this Board is to oversee reforms to

ensure children, young people and their families receive the support they need, when they need it, underpinned by the values, principles and components of GIRFEC while remaining responsive to local needs and systems. The Programme Board works to ensure the development of a coherent, whole system approach with a focus on putting the voices and experiences of children, young people and their families at the centre. The work continues to take an asset-based approach, ensuring that building capacity is at the heart of all we do.

Additional funding has been provided from the Scottish Government that will be used to strengthen existing integrated working between Services and partners to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and will look to enhance existing supports as well as identifying the need for additional or new supports.

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



The move between being a child at school and an adult participating in economic life, and associated transitions, is uncertain for many disabled children and young people.

Transitions to Adult Services Workstream

On the 30th of September 2020, a Private Member's Bill was introduced at Scottish Parliament titled the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill. While still at the early stages of consultation this Bill, which is still subject to parliamentary approval, seeks to improve opportunities for disabled children and young people as they grow up and would legislate a requirement for local authorities to have plans for each disabled child and young person as they move into adulthood. In practice this would mean a statutory plan would put in place up until a young person is 26 years old and a need for a whole systems approach to supporting young people with a disability.

This transition to adulthood is a crucial life transition for a young disabled person. Transition in this context encompasses the move from school into the adult world of work, and/or further or higher education. However, the move between being a child at school and an adult participating in economic life, and associated transitions, is uncertain for many disabled children and young people. This Bill seeks to address that issue.

Our practices are focused on ensuring that, where it is in the best interests of a child, a multi-agency Team around the

Child is established and if applicable a Coordinated Support Plan is put in place. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic North Ayrshire had established a Transition Pathways Group. This is a multi-agency team with representatives from Education, Children with Disabilities and Adult Services to oversee and plan the effective transition from education to adult services.

The Transitions to Adult Services Workstream aims to ensure that young people with additional support needs and their families, will be provided with a more effective transition into adulthood, which delivers greater access to a range of provisions and supports in the local community. This will be achieved through reviewing current policies, procedures and practices and enhancing collaborative working across agencies to proactively plan person-centred transitions into adulthood.

Family Support

A cross-cutting theme for all our work is Family and Parental Support. We believe that good partnerships between parents, schools and services are key to getting the best outcomes for our children. As part of our ongoing improvement activity, all our improvement Workstreams are considering their links with family and parental support and we will continue mapping and improving access to services and activities in this area.



Our performance will be driven and monitored by the Children's Services Strategic Partnership.

Evaluation and reporting on our plan

This Plan provides details of our activities and how this will contribute to the achievement of our priorities and better outcomes for children. Our framework will include a range of performance measures to help us track our progress. All of our Children's Services Strategic Partners are committed to contributing to our success.

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

As part of our 2021/22 self-evaluation activity we are planning a review of our Children's Services Performance Framework.



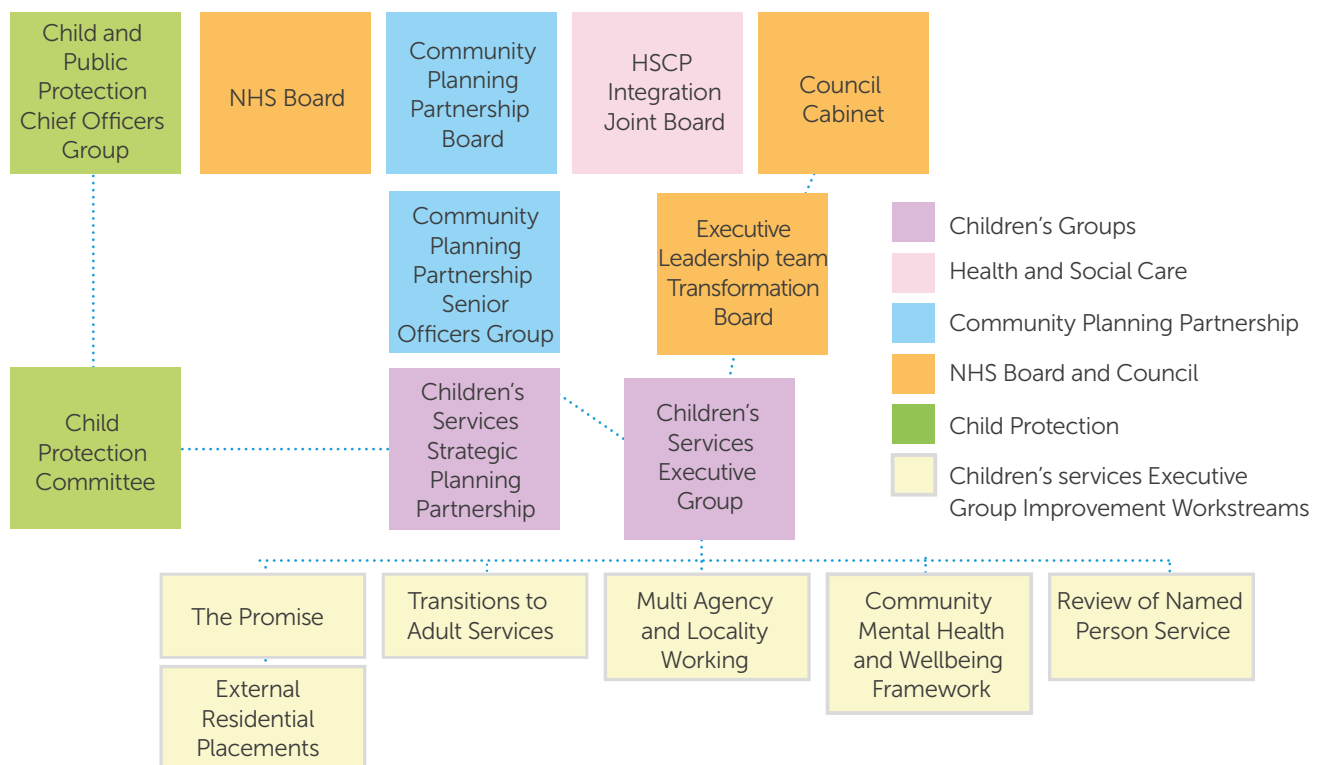
Who we are and how we work together

This Plan has been written by the North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP). The structure chart for the CSSP has been included below at Figure 4. Our membership is made up of the following organisations:

- North Ayrshire Council
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- Police Scotland
- KA Leisure
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
- Children's Panel Area Support Team
- Ayrshire College
- Care Inspectorate
- Voluntary Sector

Figure 4: Children's Services Strategic Partnership Structure Chart

Children's Services Strategic Planning Partnership





The CSSP is part of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and reports regularly on our progress. The CPP have overall responsibility for

this plan and works together to improve outcomes for all of our children and young people. The CPP structure diagram has been included below as Figure 5.

Figure 5: Community Planning Partnership Structure



Barnardo's run specialist advocacy services across the UK and are there for young people who need someone to support them, protect their rights and help them speak out.



North Ayrshire Context

Child Protection

The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (NACPC) is a locally based inter-agency strategic partnership which leads on child protection policy and practice. The Committee has an Independent Chair and is comprised of senior staff from across key services in North Ayrshire, including both statutory services and the third sector.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee adheres to National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) and Protecting Children & Young People: Child Protection Committees and Chief Officer's responsibilities. As such the NACPC has a range of day to day business activities to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities.

Domestic Violence

We are implementing Safer and Together Model of domestically informed practice. To build on the effectiveness of this approach a pan Ayrshire approach has been taken to establish a core group of trainers in each local authority area. These trainers will have a multiagency skill set and involve partnership with our third sector colleagues from Women's Aid. Currently an application for an Implementation Lead is being made to the Equally Safe Fund which if successful would enable a 3-year post to focus and ensure effective multiagency implementation of this approach across the three local authorities within Ayrshire.

Police Officers have attended training on the new Domestic Abuse legislation to improve their understanding of domestic abuse, its impact on victims and improve their ability to deal with reported incidents and to work with partners in safeguarding.



It is important that all children and young people get the support they need to enable them to reach their full learning potential.



Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

Our practice is informed by GIRFEC which is fully embedded in all of our roles and systems. Getting it right for every child has a set of values and principles that everyone who comes into contact with children in their work has to take into account when working with others, whether other professionals or children and young people. This is to ensure that all children, young people and families are treated fairly, with respect, and are listened to.

'Getting it Right for every child' provides everyone with a common language to describe wellbeing. It provides values and principles that practitioners and agencies should work towards, common tools and guidance to help practitioners identify the best support for a child, as well as defining roles and processes to help everyone to identify and meet a child's needs.

Advocacy

The advocacy support that is provided in North Ayrshire is by Barnardo's Hear 4u Advocacy Service. Hear 4u provides advocacy for children and young people aged 5-26 who are looked after and accommodated in residential, foster care, kinship and at home, on the child protection register and those with Additional Support Needs.

Barnardo's run specialist advocacy services across the UK and are there for young people who need someone to support them, protect their rights and help them speak out. Their advocates are independent, and they don't work for local councils, social services or the NHS. They strive to explain the wishes of the young person, represent their case and do not give their personal opinions.

Barnardo's advocates role includes:

- Attending meetings with or on behalf of children/young people where decisions are made – for example, children's hearings, looked after reviews, child protection processes.
- Writing letters on behalf of young persons and assisting them with complaints or appeals.
- Helping children and young people to access information so that they can make informed decisions.
- Helping children and young people understand decision making processes and what their rights are within these.
- Giving children and young people a voice to help them achieve their full potential.
- Empowering children and young people to develop their confidence/skills in self-advocacy
- Listening to young people is at centre to all the work they carry out as advocates.



Once additional support needs are identified, a plan is created – sometimes called the child’s plan – to help overcome barriers to learning.

Children’s Hearings

The Children’s Hearings System is the care and justice system for children and young people. At the heart of the system are Children’s Reporters. Children and young people are referred to the Reporter from a number of sources, including police, social work, education and health.

Children and young people may be referred because some aspect of life is giving cause for concern. For example, there may be needs for protection, care or guidance due to parent or carer issues. Other causes may be not going to school regularly or being in trouble with the police.

The Reporter can:

- Arrange a Children’s Hearing
- Decide that help is needed from somebody from the local authority
- Decide that there is no need for a Children’s Hearing

Meeting pupil needs

It is important that all children and young people get the support they need to enable them to reach their full learning potential. Children and young people can require additional support for a short time or for a longer period as a result of challenges presented by their learning environment, family circumstances, health, wellbeing needs or disability.

In North Ayrshire there are well-established processes in place to identify, assess and determine needs which involve the children or young people; their parents/carers and associated professionals (a group known as the Team Around the Child). The voice of the child and parent is recorded, and their views considered when assessing, planning and reviewing support.

Once additional support needs are identified, a plan is created – sometimes called the child’s plan – to help overcome barriers to learning. This plan is regularly reviewed, evaluated and updated ensuring progress, attainments and achievements are recorded.

These processes are in line with and informed by *“Supporting Children’s Learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended) Code of Practice (Third Edition) 2017”*.

Recently, the Scottish Government undertook a review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) in schools. The report’s recommendations have been considered by the Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA and ADES and an action plan was published in October 2020.



Adverse Childhood Experiences

We are committed to supporting the Pan-Ayrshire work on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in conjunction with Community Justice Ayrshire. ACEs are stressful events that occur in childhood and can have a lifelong adverse impact on sustained health and behaviour. We have held screenings in all our localities of “Resilience – The Biology of Stress and Science of Hope” documentary. Over 65 multi-agency screenings of the documentary took place in 2018, led by colleagues from Public Health and Police Scotland (Ayrshire Division). It is estimated that over 4,500 people across Ayrshire have attended a screening and panel discussion. A follow up to the first Pan-Ayrshire Conference on ACEs and trauma took place on 25 March 2019. The event was entitled “ACEs: Adversity is Not Destiny”.

Following a motion to Council for North Ayrshire Council to become ‘trauma informed’, officers in collaboration with partners across the wider Community Planning Partnership have been working to broaden and embed trauma informed practice in all services.

A targeted approach was taken with Community Development, Housing and Libraries employees to raise awareness. NHS and Health and Social Care have installed a module on their e-learning platform that aims to support employees to know how to adapt the way they work to make a positive difference to children and young people affected by trauma and adversity. We now have Trauma Champions within our services who are able to support colleagues ‘on the ground’ as they work together to make their area of work more trauma informed.



ACEs are stressful events that occur in childhood and can have a lifelong adverse impact on sustained health and behaviour.

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