

# Children's Services Plan 2020-23

**Progress Report  
2021-22**



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# Contents

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| ▶ Foreword                                  | 3 |
| ▶ Introduction: Local Context and key facts | 5 |
| ▶ Progress on our Priorities                | 6 |

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## Priority

1

|  |   |
|--|---|
| ▶ Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to. | 7 |
|--|---|

---

## Priority

2

|   |    |
|---|----|
| ▶ Acting early to improve what happens next | 10 |
|---|----|

---

## Priority

3

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| ▶ Making Things Fairer and Better | 12 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

---

## Priority

4

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| ▶ Supporting mental health | 16 |
|----------------------------|----|

---

## Priority

5

|  |    |
|--|----|
| ▶ Helping children and young people to be active and healthy | 18 |
|--|----|

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# Foreword

Welcome to our Children's Services Plan Report 2021/22. This report will provide a summary of what our Community Planning Partners (including our Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland and Scottish Enterprise) have achieved in supporting our children and young people during the past year. Moving away from lockdown and moving to a more normal way of life has been a welcome relief. Our focus is now on recovery, building on our strong relationships and what we have learned during the past two years to improve the lives of all our residents. The impact from Covid-19 on our children and families cannot be underplayed and the longer term impact is yet to be fully understood, it is important that we are there to respond and provide support and guidance when and if needed.

Looking forwards we are developing our 2023-26 Children's Services Plan. We are currently working with our communities and our young people in particular to define our priorities for our Children's Services Plan 2023-26. We would welcome your views on what you feel is important. Please contact us at (01294 324648) or [NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk). It is important we always remember who this plan is for and ensure the voices of our children and young people are heard.







## Key Facts and Figures

| Measure  | North Ayrshire | Scotland |
|--|----------------|----------|
| Child Protection Registrations per 1,000                       | 5.2            | 2.3      |
| Teenage pregnancies per 1000                                   | 36.1           | 29.2     |
| Exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks                             | 22.0%          | 32.2%    |
| Domestic abuse incidents per 10000                             | 129.4          | 115.1    |
| Looked after children of 0-17 years old population             | 2.1%           | 1.3%     |
| Claimant Count as a % of 16-24 Population                      | 10.59%         | 7.17%    |
| % of leavers attaining literacy at SCQF level 5                | 85%            | 83.41    |
| % of leavers attaining numeracy at SCQF level North Ayrshire   | 72.25%         | 72.7%    |
| % of children living in poverty (after housing costs)          | 24.73%         | 20.86%   |
| % of school leavers in a positive post school destination      | 95.2%          | 95.48%   |
| % of care experienced leavers achieving level 5 in literacy    | 53.47%         | 40.96%   |
| % of care experienced leavers achieving level 5 in numeracy    | 37.62%         | 27.37%   |
| % of Care Experienced Leavers achieving a positive destination | 94.06%         | 87.94%   |

# Progress on our Priorities

**Our Children's Services Plan 2020-23 has five priorities. This section explores the progress we have made in partnership with our Community Planning Partners (CPP).**

# 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.

### ➔ Areas of Focus

#### ***During 2022-23 we will:***

- ▶ CPP partners, notably Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, will continue to build relationships with the Champions Board, Education and other partners and further support activity in relation to care experienced young people to ensure that they are active contributors in Corporate Parenting.
- ▶ We will introduce new models of provision for free period products across schools and communities.
- ▶ We will review our approach to nurture across our educational establishments.
- ▶ We will raise the awareness of children's rights (UNCRC) across all our partners.
- ▶ Police Scotland are building on the excellent work already carried out by Campus Officers in school by identifying other ways that they can provide mentor support and enhance life skills for school leavers. This will be extended to include young people who have already left school or further education.
- ▶ Police Scotland will work with partners over the coming three years to conduct focussed activity with individuals and support them into employment or other positive destinations. They have identified an Inspector to lead on this work and engagement has already begun with partners.



## Key Activities

- ▶ We have reviewed the way we reach those in our communities who struggle to access period products:
  - We have rebranded from Period Poverty to Period Dignity.
  - We are promoting the service with the aim of broadening awareness.
  - We have launched a range of promotional updates using various marketing platforms including press releases and social media.
  - We are expanding the number of distribution sites and using the 'Pick Up My Period' app to direct our residents.
  - We launched a consultation to seek views of the current service provision to shape future improvements based on user led experiences.
- ▶ We have allocated £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities. This enabled us to provide over 1,000 laptops and connectivity solutions to our children and young people who need them the most. We also provided 265 devices which included 54 Chromebooks, 45 laptops and 25 iPads to children who are looked after and care leavers.
- ▶ The EQUAL Programme within our Council supports parents, young people and people with disabilities into employment. It works in partnership with other services to identify employment opportunities and support our residents. We have worked with 135 people with a disability during 2021/22 with 34 progressing to employment.
- ▶ The Ayrshire Community Trust (part of the North Ayrshire Third Sector Interface) provides placement opportunities for volunteers within TACT to support the development of employability skills. Several people who volunteered at TACT have secured employment within the organisation.



- ▶ Our Scottish Youth Parliament elections took place in November with young people from across North Ayrshire voting on their preferred candidates. We have appointed four Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) who took office in March to start their two-year term. These young people are the representative voice of young people locally and nationally.
- ▶ The Police Scotland Youth Volunteering scheme in North Ayrshire builds life skills, enhances confidence and provides a supportive platform for the young people to move on to the next stage in their lives. It seeks to support care experienced young people in this programme to contribute to achieving better outcomes for them.
- ▶ Our Champions Board goes from strength to strength, established three years ago as a group of care experienced young people who work alongside corporate parents to create change in the care system.





The Champions Board has been split into two groups to focus on specific issues in relation to young people aged 12 to 21 and for those up to aged 26 to consider the specific needs of different groups.

- ▶ Positive Steps with Partners is a structured development programme for individuals that have been developed by The Ayrshire community Trust (TACT) (part of the North Ayrshire Third Sector Interface) in partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team. The programme helps people develop skills and gain practical work experience. In addition, participants gain accredited qualifications. Participants complete a programme of development modules before commencing a placement with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team.
- ▶ The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Youth Volunteer Scheme gives our young people who are aged from 12 to 18 years the opportunity to learn new skills and contribute to a safer Scotland. By participating, our young people gain a really good understanding of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and develop skills to help them actively contribute to their communities.
- ▶ The Police Scotland Youth Volunteering scheme in North Ayrshire builds life skills, enhances confidence and provides a supportive platform for our young people to move on to the next stage in their lives. It seeks to support care experienced young people in this programme to contribute to achieving better outcomes for them.



**£250,000**

in a Digital Families Fund,  
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and connectivity for online  
learning and activities.

## Priority 2:

### Acting early to improve what happens next.

Focussing on early intervention and prevention.

#### ➔ Areas of Focus

##### *During 2022-23 we will:*

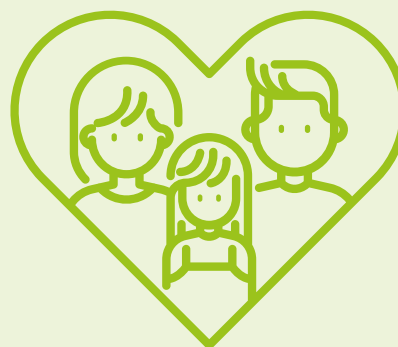
- ▶ Refresh and strengthen the focus of the school-college partnership and provide enhanced opportunities for achievement, e.g. through the Regional Improvement Collaborative, in the senior phase.
- ▶ Design tailored programmes with partners to provide enhanced support for specific groups of school leavers, including those with identified needs.
- ▶ Improve the quality and accessibility to services for children and young people who themselves (or whose parent/care givers) are at risk of the harmful effects of alcohol or drug use, by establishing a specialist support team in partnership with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

#### Key Activities

- ▶ Our Health & Social Care Partnership has worked to enhance the support and services it provides to parents/carers, children and young people. We are now able to offer the following:
  - **Family Centred Wellbeing Service** – Created to provide early intervention family support.
  - **Community-Based Short Breaks Service** – Created to provide short break carers for children aged from birth to 16 years old who reside in the community with birth parents, as well as for children and young people who are placed with kinship carers.
  - **Enhanced Early Years Support Programme** – Created to see a shift in relationship-based support with identified families from the ante-natal period to a child starting nursery.
- ▶ We were able to support 314 children, parents and carers through the Rosemount Project who supports families and young people to help families remain together and in their communities. The service is committed to whole family support and, wherever possible, will include siblings, parents/carers and extended family members in the parenting interventions and family work that the service facilitates.



- ▶ 'Team Around the Parent' is a new way of working with families who have had their child removed from their care. It was developed in conjunction with families with lived experience. The aim of Team Around the Parents is to help families feel supported and heard at the time of such a distressing event. This service helps them to link with any necessary support which should assist them to take part in the parenting assessment. We worked with parents to identify barriers in communication.
- ▶ We Work for Families, in particular via Health Visiting teams, link strongly with our Council. "We Work For Families," delivered by the Lennox Partnership, is a key partner of the universal Early Years' service, supporting parents/carers to access training, education and employment. Health Visitors and Family Nurses have referred around 650 individuals since early 2018. Recently, support has extended to include low-income households as well as those who are unemployed, and new pathways with social work colleagues have been developed.



# 314

We were able to support 314 children, parents and carers through the Rosemount Project who supports families and young people to help families remain together and in their communities.



## Priority 3:

### Making Things Fairer and Better.

Reducing inequalities and improving outcomes.

#### ➔ Areas of Focus

##### ***During 2022-23 we will***

- ▶ Develop a three-year Raising Attainment Strategy to improve outcomes for all learners and reduce inequity of outcomes, including a focus on accelerating progress in early primary and early learning centres following the implementation of 1,140 hours of funded childcare for all 3–5-year-olds.
- ▶ Reprioritise our targeted interventions to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap in North Ayrshire, maximising the coherence and impact of our work.
- ▶ Continue to work collaboratively in partnership across the local authority, South West Education Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) and national networks to support sharing of highly effective practice that reduces the poverty related attainment gap.
- ▶ Work closely across North Ayrshire services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.
- ▶ The Ayrshire Community Trust will develop a strand of mentoring within the Positive Steps with Partners Project employability project. The project will have volunteer mentors who will support new referrals, supporting them to attend volunteer interviews and placements helping mentees to overcome worries and fears and helping to increase confidence in individual abilities and be more included in their communities.



# 1,140

hours of funded childcare  
for all 3–5-year-olds



## Key Activities

- ▶ We have been distributing winter aid funding directly to families to tackle fuel and clothing poverty and administered the Scottish Government child bridging payments. As well as administering the low-income pandemic payments, we have engaged with our vulnerable families regarding Covid-19 isolation grants and supported families to access services.
- ▶ We embarked on a two-year financial inclusion demonstrator project 'Better Off Hub' in October 2020. The Better Off Hub delivers vital financial advice services in a new holistic way, focussing on the individual's needs. Ultimately it is expected to build capacity by addressing the causes of financial issues and reducing future demand on services. The proposals align with Community Wealth Building ambitions and support our economic recovery. A total of 183 people from the Three Towns engaged with Better Off North Ayrshire during 2021-22. Of these residents, 35% were from vulnerable families, with supported families including a total of 64 children.
- ▶ We have extended universal free school meals (UFSM) to Primary 4 and 5 children and are working on the future provision for Primary 6 to 7. This is expected to greatly increase uptake. Currently the UFSM uptake for Primary 1 to 3 is around 80% and, if replicated across the other year groups, would represent a significant increase in children accessing healthy and nutritious food during the school day. This is likely to have an impact on local employment by increasing the number of jobs with local suppliers.
- ▶ Bags of Hope continue to make a difference to many of HSCP Families. Alongside the amazing donations by North Ayrshire's foodbank of hampers provided for our vulnerable families, which included butcher packs donated by Stalkers Butchers in Dalry, we were able to share some vouchers from our Hope bags to help those who are struggling. The delight from the families involved was immeasurable and obviously made a difference to their wellbeing.
- ▶ There is a focus by Police Scotland on supporting fair employment and procurement and they are exploring how best to contribute within the confines of national structures.

# Money Matters



**The Money Matters Team generated over £17.5m in financial gains for our residents in receipt of Welfare Benefits.**



**Money Matters received 4,432 enquiries in 21/22 via their Advice Line.**

This included referrals from Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), NHS, Council employees and the website. It ensures our most vulnerable residents have support to check their entitlements and that they are receiving their legal rights to benefits.



**Money Matters began a two-year pilot with North Ayrshire Council's Communities and Education Directorate in August 2021, delivering a Welfare Rights service in seven secondary schools.**

The first six months focussed on establishing the project in the schools but also resulted in over 50 referrals – generating £38k in financial gains to families.







## Priority 4:

### Supporting mental health.

Supporting social, emotional and mental wellbeing.

#### ➔ Areas of Focus

##### ***During 2022-23 we will:***

- ▶ Review the impact of school counselling services and external counselling/ community wellbeing supports and refresh provision, strengthening the relationship between school counselling and other available supports.
- ▶ Assist education establishments to implement the national mental health and wellbeing Whole School Approach, including curricular, professional learning, and parental supports.
- ▶ Promote staff mental health and wellbeing in a range of ways, including through the development of a programme of supported reflective practice sessions.
- ▶ Review approaches to promoting positive relationships and whole school nurture and continue to adapt our approaches based on an analysis of need.
- ▶ We will continue to prioritise mental health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

#### Key Activities

- ▶ Our Health and Social Care Partnership's (HSCP), Service Access team has been instrumental in the development of a Support Pathway for children and young people who have attempted suicide. The pathway is intended for our young people up to 18 years old who have made a significant attempt at taking their life such as a non-fatal overdose, act of self-harm significant enough to require treatment and intervention or deliberate act of a suicidal nature and who are not accessing any other social work services.
- ▶ The importance of perinatal mental health is recognised across North Ayrshire. Within Universal Early Years, 2021/22 saw an expansion to the support available to expectant and new mums experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties through the recruitment of a second Perinatal Mental Health Nurse within the integrated Universal Early Years' team. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 85 women were referred for early intervention support. Autumn of 2021 also saw the launch of the Ayrshire and Arran Perinatal Mental Health Service, which aims to offer support to expectant and new mums with severe and enduring mental health difficulties.



- ▶ **Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund:** The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund was established in 2021, with £15 million allocated to support mental health and wellbeing in communities across Scotland. The fund is being delivered and managed by Arran CVS supported by the HSCP and the Community Planning Partnership.
- ▶ **Roslin House,** a brand new, purpose-built respite facility for children and young people with additional support needs (ASN), welcomed its first guests on the 21st June 2021. Adjacent to the new Lockhart ASN Campus in Stevenston, it is an eight-bedroom, state of the art facility providing respite breaks for young people known to North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Children and Families Disabilities Team as part of their care and support plan. As well as providing a comfortable, 'home from home' stay for young people, the new facility will provide a bespoke respite experience and offers a smooth transition from child to adult respite services in the familiar surroundings of the complex, with the adult respite facility Red Rose House being situated next door.
- ▶ We launched 'Confident Kids Can' in April 2021. This is a 12-week Pan-Ayrshire project delivered in partnership with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to support neuro divergent children and their families who are experiencing emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties.
- ▶ **Positive Steps with Partners** is a structured development programme for individuals that has been developed by The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) (part of the North Ayrshire Third Sector Interface) in partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team. The programme helps people develop skills and gain practical work experience. In addition, participants gain accredited qualifications. Participants complete a programme of development modules before commencing a placement with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team.



## 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.

#### ➔ Areas of Focus

##### ***During 2022-23 we will:***

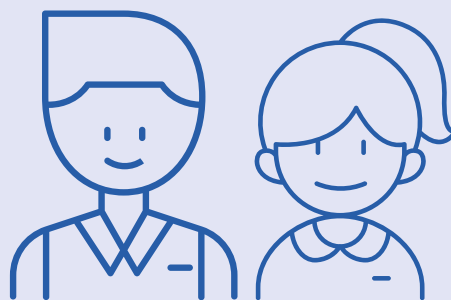
- ▶ Recruit additional dental health support workers to support vulnerable families across NHS Ayrshire and Arran focusing on minority ethnic and our most deprived communities.
- ▶ As the cost-of-living increases, we are working to ensure that the whole family can be active for one affordable price. Our family membership will launch later in the year and provide a tailored package of opportunities which suits each individual family's circumstances.
- ▶ We are working closely with Active Schools to develop a community programme on Arran. The recruitment of key delivery staff will allow us to ensure that residents have opportunities to stay active.

#### Key Activities

- ▶ Our team of Health Visitors has continued to deliver full national universal health visiting pathways throughout the pandemic. This is despite more complex caseloads dealing with higher levels of vulnerability and staff absence partially due to Covid-19.
- ▶ We are working with children with a BMI on or above the 91st centile. Jumpstart is a 10-session family and community focussed series of activities. The two-hour weekly programme focuses on healthy eating, physical activity, and positive health behaviour change, with children attending alongside their parents or carers. The number of referrals for the year was 40, with the consumption of fruit and vegetables increasing, whilst take away and high sugar consumption was drastically reduced.
- ▶ Our Active Schools team saw an increase in all areas work as the schools have returned much more to a normal environment. We continued our focus around extra-curricular provision across 43 primary schools, all nine secondaries and our Additional Support Needs school Lockhart campus. Across our Primary, Secondary and our ASN schools, 6,754 sessions were delivered. 107,036 visits were recorded, and 6,754 of our children and young people took part.



- ▶ Champions For Change uses sport and physical activity sessions to educate children and young people on the dangers of substance misuse including smoking, alcohol and drugs. A referral programme has been introduced for partner agencies to signpost individuals in addiction recovery to receive access to our gyms, classes, and pools. The new referral programme includes a buddy system to aid individuals recovering from addiction to attend our facilities.
- ▶ 56 of our young people graduated from our sector leading Leadership Programme. They volunteered over 1,600 hours across our schools and communities over the academic year. Each participant achieved between 15-18 sports and physical activity qualifications which can be added to their CV's.
- ▶ Working alongside KA Leisure and further community partners we provided a range of free places for our young people to participate in our holiday programme. These places were offered to families with low income within the care system or other children from vulnerable backgrounds. The summer programme also included free skating and swimming for young people which we funded. This year's opportunity proved extremely popular with Swimming attracting 91,35 and 5,527 taking part in skating.



**56**

of our young people graduated from our sector leading Leadership Programme.

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