

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 12 August 2024
Title:	North Ayrshire Children's Services Performance Update 2023-24
Responsible Director:	Caroline Cameron, Director North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (NAHSCP)
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1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Integration Joint Board Strategy or Direction

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

Every Local Authority and 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. North Ayrshire published their Children's Services Plan 2023-26 in June 2023.

The North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26 is part of a suite of child focused plans which outline how we are actively supporting the wellbeing and wellness of our children and young people, as well as promoting and advocating for the rights of our children and young people.

Our Children's Services Plan Performance Update Report 2023-24 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 Update Report 2023-24 highlights some of the key achievements and areas of work which impact on Children, Young People and their families during the first year of our new Children's Services Plan.

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 Update Report 2023-24 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 suite 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 over the summer months to ensure it is fully accessible and engaging for our young people.

Some of our key highlights from the 2023-24 Performance Update report include:

- Community Learning and Development (CLD) hosted two strategic forums - the Joint Cabinet and Joint Youth Forum. Young people actively participated in shaping the CLD Strategic Plan, providing valuable input into the future direction of community learning and development initiatives.
- On the 8th December 2023, we held our second 'Promise' Conference with over 130 delegates including 40 Care Experienced young people. We created and launched Scotland's very first Care Experienced app.
- We have employed a Welfare Rights Officer to engage directly with families following referral from education staff. Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, this has resulted in financial gains of over £572,000 for families who need it most.
- The Integrated Early Years Team empower and enable parents and carers to support their child in a range of areas. During 2023-24, 965 Requests for Assistance were received. Requests included supporting parents with topics such as communication, behaviour, sleep, weaning, community integration, parental mental health, relationship issues and home conditions.
- 90 group based physical activity and health education sessions were delivered by the Child Healthy Weight Team in addition to attendance at 12 promotional events. Partnership working with the Trinity Active Travel hub continues, supporting events and initiatives aimed at promoting active lifestyles and healthy habits.

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 of 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 – 6 June 2024
- North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board – 13 June 2024
- Submitted to Scottish Government – 20 June 2024

2.4 Recommendation

For awareness and discussion.

3. List of appendices (where required)

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 : North Ayrshire Children's Services Performance Update 2023-24

North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan Performance Update 2023-24



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Introduction / Foreword

Welcome to our Children's Services Plan Progress Report 2023-24 which highlights our progress and activities over the past 12 months.

This is our first performance update for our new Children's Services Plan 2023-26. In our plan we set out our collective vision as a Community Planning Partnership for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up. We continue our focus on promoting children and young people's wellbeing, underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

Our Children's Services Plan is part of a suite of plans which outline how we are actively supporting the wellbeing and wellness of our children and young people. These include our Child Poverty Action Plan, Children's Rights Report, Corporate Parenting Plan, The Promise implementation, and our Child Protection Plans, all of which are at the centre of everything we do to support and nurture children and young people. Our Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP) leads on the development of these plans and consists of key representatives from across our Community Planning Partners.

Central to our planning is ensuring children and young people's voices are heard and their rights are respected.

Our performance report is split up into five sections, relating to our five key priorities –

- The rights of children and young people are promoted and protected
- Acting early to improve what happens next
- Making things fairer
- Promoting good mental health and wellbeing
- Inspiring children and young people to be active

Appendix 1 contains updates against all of the actions set out in the 2023-26 Plan.

Appendix 2 contains a baseline of Performance Measures supporting our monitoring of the Plan.

A Children and Young People friendly summary of this report will be developed over the summer.

Caroline Cameron
Director of Health and Social Care Partnership

We hope you find this report informative. If you would like to contact us about anything related to this report, 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 Case Studies

Childrens Rights

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. We have further embedded our Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) and this has been carried out on all new policies that affect the lives of our children and young people. In December 2023, it was agreed that the Council would treat "care experienced" as a protected characteristic for the purposes of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).

Preparation continues to involve children and young people in the planning process for actions that affect them (related to Article 12 UNCRC). Further work has been undertaken to encourage this process including Nurture Bricks and Pupil Voice Templates (PVT) which are used in schools to gain an insight into how effectively we meet Additional Support Needs (ASN).

We continue to place human rights and the needs of every child and young person at the centre of all that we do. A new Learner Participation Strategy has been introduced involving schools and early years settings, clusters and local authority officers. Staff have participated in collaborative sessions to ensure that the new strategy is "fit for purpose". The Learner Participation Strategy will be further developed in session 2023-24 through the co-creation and co-design of a young person friendly version with learners. The strategy and follow up action plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Rights Respecting Schools (RRS)

Considerable progress has been made across the Rights Respecting Schools programme (RRS). This programme has been promoted and introduced into almost all of our schools. The Rights Respecting Schools Award recognises achievement in putting UNCRC at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. Children's rights underpin the Getting it Right for Every Child approach. Over 90% of our schools have achieved or are working towards RRS status, which is divided into bronze, silver and gold levels. RRS Gold Award is the highest level of the award and is granted to schools that have fully embedded the principles of the UNCRC into their ethos and curriculum. The accreditation is valid for a period of three years. The following North Ayrshire schools have achieved Gold status:

Ardeer Primary School; Beith Primary School; Dykesmains Primary School; Glencairn Primary School; Stanley Primary School; St Bridget's Primary School; St Luke's Primary School; St Mary's Primary School; St Matthew's Academy; Whitehirst Park Primary School.

The remainder of schools engaging with RRS awards are at Bronze level, working towards silver or working to maintain their Silver status. Rights education and the Rights Respecting Schools approach remain areas of success and strength. The RRS approach is evident in all schools with success being shared through their social media platforms and via attractive school and classroom displays.

Focus groups of children reveal that they are knowledgeable about their own and others' rights. Increasingly children and young people are taking on elements of responsibility and participation ensuring that all schools listen and involve pupils fully in decisions that affect them and their school

community. A focus on inclusion and equality by our schools and centres ensures increasing opportunities are provided for those with protected characteristics.

Supporting needs

Following a collaborative review of the processes involved in supporting needs, specific areas were targeted for redesign. Our Staged Intervention policy for identifying and planning for children and young people with additional needs was redesigned and simplified. This focuses on three elements of support: Enhanced Universal, Stage 1 and Stage 2. The policy includes detailed descriptors around each element which clarify the level of need and how these can be best supported. Streamlined approaches to short, medium and long term planning are in place along with clear guidance on how meetings with young people and their families are recorded to ensure we fully comply with legislation.

Processes for accessing supports such as the Outreach Support Service (Extended Outreach and Tuition Support), Early Years Inclusion Support Service (EYIST) and Accessibility Strategy have been streamlined to enable a service which is learner centred with clear routes to referral. Accessing these services can be time-critical and so the referral pathways have been improved.

At all stages, collaboration and co-creation have been crucial with evaluation ongoing. Leaders from all sectors and at all levels have been involved with the evaluations demonstrating the effectiveness of the approach in ensuring all voices are heard, policies are co-designed and there is a clear sense of joint ownership.

Following successful pilot projects running in Greenwood Academy and Irvine Royal Academy in 2021-22, Secondary Support Resources were established in all 9 secondary schools. This enhanced support resource is available to learners across all secondary schools and offers an environment which supports personalised learning for young people who have a range of support needs and require ongoing enhanced transition. This is not specialist provision, instead is a way of offering targeted support to those who require it to support their mainstream school experience.

Data and impact reports were compiled and showed that, in this first full year, over 300 learners were supported to attend their mainstream secondary provision. Data demonstrates that there were significant impacts in the areas of attendance, engagement, motivation and positive attitudes to school and self.

Links with educational psychologists and the mental health and wellbeing team have ensured that staff are well-trained and feel confident in the impact they are making on the lives of the young people they support. Evaluations from our people and their families demonstrate the high regard in which the support is held.

Youth Work

We held a celebration of Youth Work Week, emphasising the importance of youth work in the community. Events and activities during Youth Work Week aimed to raise awareness about the significance of youth work in supporting young people's personal and social development.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) hosted two strategic forums - the Joint Cabinet and Joint Youth Forum. Young people actively participated in shaping the CLD Strategic Plan, providing valuable input into the future direction of community learning and development initiatives.

Ongoing support is provided for Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP), indicating a commitment to amplifying youth voices at the national level. We have active engagement with pupil councils and parliaments to empower young people in decision-making processes at a school

level. We have focused on engaging with ambassadors for mental health and climate change, addressing critical issues relevant to the well-being of young people and the environment.

We successfully re-established the Executive Youth Council, demonstrating a renewed commitment to youth governance and leadership. Campaigning and voting for the next Scottish Youth Parliament candidates saw significant participation. An error in the national Young Scot system led to a rescheduling of the voting process through paper ballots in January 2024 and we saw over 1,000 votes cast by our young people using these.

Young people aged 8-25 actively participated in co-designing and reviewing this year's participatory budgeting process, showcasing a commitment to inclusivity and empowering young people in decision-making. Over 105 projects across North Ayrshire were subject to participatory budgeting, providing a platform for young people to shape the allocation of resources for community initiatives.

A rights-based approach is applied to all youth work provisions. We collected data from over 200 young people regarding powers that could be added or used to facilitate youth decision-making. The survey also explored types of support needed for young people to build their capacity in the community and how to ensure inclusivity in decision-making processes.

During LGBT History Month, various school and community-based programmes and events were held. Ten young people from the Garnock Valley Umbrella Group have been engaged in discussions and workshops to create a Trans Resource for young Trans people.

The young parents group was launched with 15 young parents regularly engaging in weekly activities.

KA Leisure has engaged with our Youth Services to explore a range of options to better engage young people in the decision-making for leisure and sport provision. A new Youth Forum will be established in 2024 which will encourage young people across our communities to share their views.

Case Study - Kindness Murals Garnock Valley Dalry Community Gardens



Working with the Bee You Ambassadors group, the Mental Health Project Delivery Officer had many discussions around what issues young people faced in their local communities and how they could use their mental health training to benefit these young people. Through these discussions it was recognised that some work around suicide prevention should be prioritised. The young people felt a project highlighting positive mental health messages that would also give young people local signposting/ support services would support their peers in a proactive way.

Following on from the Kindness Mural Consultation across the Garnock Valley, the Project Delivery Officer developed the mural initiative, co designed and produced with input from young Bee You Ambassadors, Community Partners and Locality Staff. Working with Garnock Valley Youth Forum, supporting group meeting and facilitating session around the creation of the Mural in the Garnock Valley, the young people collaborated with a local graffiti artist and volunteers from Dalry Community Gardens. This was the first draft of the design was created

by the artist and young people.



The young people and Graffiti Artist would work on creating this design in November 2023 with the reveal and open day in December 2023. The vibrant and eye-catching mural is located at the community garden where young people can not only see the message of positivity but provided links through QR codes to support services and mental health and wellbeing mapping for young people. Bee You Ambassador Finley said: *"We were all really passionate about building a lasting legacy for young people in North Ayrshire. The reason for this is because we understand that mental health and the stark rise of young people impacted by suicide are both serious issues having a real, detrimental impact on the wellbeing of local young people today. So, over the last few months we have been speaking directly to our peers in both*

classroom and youth settings to hear more about their lived-experiences. This has given us an understanding of what is working well and if they need it, we've shared what support is out there locally. One key theme we have identified through this work is that there's so many young people out there who are unsure about where they can turn to outside of school."



Provost Anthea Dickson unveiled the new mural at the official opening ceremony. She said: *"Although the consultation stage has been several months in the making, the painting of the mural itself only started out on Monday last week, and what a transformation! I would like to thank all of the dedicated young people who came up with the mural design and to local graffiti artist extraordinaire Tragic O'Hara who has worked together with them on this striking modern mural for Dalry. Congratulations to everyone involved. You should all be really proud of yourselves."*

Advocacy

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to ensuring people have their voices heard, are able to express their needs, make informed decisions and have their rights and interests protected. Our new Advocacy Strategy will take us from 2022 to 2029 and has been influenced by a number of policy drivers.

We work closely with our national and local partners as we help to deliver 'The Promise' for Children, Young People and Families. The promise is responsible for driving the work of change demanded by the findings of the Independent Care Review. Made on 5th February 2020, the Promise seeks to improve the experience of all children, young people and their families if they require additional support. The Promise aims to create a more compassionate care service for families and young people. This includes five key foundations that all change must be delivered against. Among these is the foundation of 'Voice', in which all children must be listened to and respected and appropriately involved in decisions about their care. Specifically referencing advocacy, 'All care experienced children and their families will have access to independent advocacy at all stages of their experience of care.' 'Care experienced children and young people will be able to easily access child centred legal advice and representation'. Advocacy provision will follow the principles set out in the promise.

Barnardo's Hear 4 U is an independent advocacy service based in Kilwinning and operational across North Ayrshire. The service provides community-based advocacy to children and young people ensuring that they are aware of their rights as defined within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). 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

The feedback from children and young people using the services shows:

- They are more able to report safety concerns/complaints safer/at reduced risk.
- They feel more able to contribute to planning/decision making; and
- There is improvement in how their views are voiced and acted upon.

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next

Key Highlights and Case Studies

Child Protection

We have set up a multiagency Implementation Group for the new National Guidance for Child Protection, with all core partners represented - Health, Police Scotland, Education, Social Work Services, SCRA. A series of briefings were developed on the new guidance to assist staff to be prepared on the changes, e.g. Child Protection registration changes and changes to Initial Referral Discussion (IRD). These were designed to assist frontline staff to be prepared and informed of the new expectations.

Feedback from Pan Ayrshire services was very positive about how helpful the briefings were in preparing the workforce. The guidance was implemented in September 2023 within the specified timeframe. The ongoing impact of the new guidance e.g. length of registration, inclusion of non-familial harm and numbers of IRD will require close monitoring via the Child Protection Committee to ensure all services work together effectively to keep children and young people safe.

Practice Reflective Improvement (PRI) Dialogue sessions encourage greater levels of reflection on cases with an element of child protection. North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership continue to accept referrals for Practice Reflective Improvement Dialogue sessions. PRI Dialogue has been in place for over two years now and feedback from both participants and facilitators is showing the value of these sessions:

“It is really helpful to hear reflections from different perspectives – it makes it easier to understand the context of decision making and broadens ideas extrapolated from reflection” (Participant)

“It (PRI) validated the great work being done and the care and love practitioners have for their jobs and the children and families they work with. It showed that everyone believes in aiming for the best outcomes for young people. It also gave people permission to evaluate their own practice and talk about it openly. The difference it made was, there were no judgements made on the choices taken. It allowed people to see the different ways services work and raised the levels of mutual respect for the work we all do.”

Early Years

The percentage of pre-school children achieving their early learning milestones by the time they start primary school has once again increased to 81% in 2022-23 academic year. This is the best performance recorded since the measure was introduced, with improvements made in all aspects of the early learning milestones including literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

We continue to offer all families support from a multi-disciplinary, integrated Universal Early Years (UEY) service. All children in North Ayrshire have access to the full Universal Health Visiting Pathway which consists of a minimum of 11 Health Visitor visits from the ante-natal period to the pre-school assessment when a child is 4 years old.

For younger parents, under the age of 21 years, they can opt-in to the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme which provides more intensive and targeted support. The multi-disciplinary team consists of Health Visitors, Family Nurses, Early Years Social Workers, Health Visiting Support Workers, Family Nurturers, Perinatal Mental Health Nurses, Community Infant Feeding Nurses, and, during 2023-24 has been expanded to include a dedicated Dads' worker in partnership with national charity Dads Rock. 965 families have been supported by the team during this last year. In addition,

the wider team of support across the NHS, local authority and third sector organisations including services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Paediatrics received 980 Requests for Assistance for children under the age of 5 years old in the last 12 months. In total, 1,945 children and their families have received additional support from a range of early years' services.

The service also receives notifications from services such as Police Scotland, NHS 24, NHS Ayrshire and Arran Emergency Department, housing (homelessness), North Ayrshire Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (NADARS) and Paediatrics/ Paediatric in-patients where information pertaining to a child requires to be shared. During 2023-24, 2,436 notifications were received from these agencies/ services and were shared with Health Visitors and Family Nurses to support a holistic assessment of a child's needs.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran continued to work in partnership with the Breastfeeding Network to provide mother to mother peer support to breastfeeding mothers. Between April and October 2023, the service was offered to all first-time mothers who were breastfeeding on discharge from Ayrshire Maternity Unit. Up to September 2023, across Ayrshire, 85% of mothers took up the offer of peer support; 35% of those mothers were from North Ayrshire. At 6-8 weeks 48% of the mothers who took up peer support from North Ayrshire were exclusively breastfeeding their baby, while 26% of mothers were giving a mix of infant formula and breastmilk. In November 2023, the service expanded to offer peer support to all breastfeeding mothers.

Speech and Language

Data collected at the end of March 2024 confirms there were 86 children on our waiting list with an average waiting time of 79 weeks. It is projected that at the end of April 2024 there will be 82 children waiting with an average wait of 26 weeks.

We know that for many children the most effective way to support their development is by empowering the people who are communicating with them on a daily basis at home or in their school or nursery. Therefore an essential part of our support for families and other professionals is provided via the helpline support and also drop-in appointments when our Speech and Language Therapists provide advice and resources to support parents and staff working with the children depending on the child's needs.

These supports include linking with the communication champion in nursery or teacher in school, adapting the environment in nursery or school using a communication friendly approach, making sure the team around the child know how best to help them, providing families with links to helpful resources as well as topic specific webinars and drop-in appointments. Children are therefore only added to our waiting list when there is a difficulty that requires a Speech and Language Therapy assessment. We make sure we provide ongoing support for families and staff while children are on the waiting list by encouraging them to continue to access support using the drop-in clinics or helpline.

Over the course of 2022-23 the service experienced financial restrictions and budgetary vulnerability along with recruitment challenges which meant population needs, particularly the number of children waiting for individualised interventions, posed unprecedented challenges. The service consequently could not deliver timely, evidence based, individualised interventions nor could it effectively address the speech, language and communication needs of the wider population.

These challenges have now been addressed and the service is now financially stable and fully staffed. The focus of our recent improvement work has therefore been to improve our systems to support efficient flow from assessment to therapy and our communication with families regarding waiting times to help manage their expectations and encourage them to engage in the wider

supports available to them. Waiting time information suggests this work along with staffing and financial stability is helping to reduce the number of children waiting and the length of wait.

Parental Programmes

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Project Delivery Officers have provided support to parents through Take Time families programme and Bee You family sessions. The nationally accredited Your Resilience programme provided young people with the skills to increase their emotional resilience and provided toolkits and methods to enable them to safeguard their wellbeing. The establishment and support to our equality forum ensures that our LGBT+ community are heard, participating in youth work opportunities and increasing their wellbeing while supporting peers who are like minded and facing the same issues.

Developing a range of initiatives, interventions, and programmes to increase opportunities to enhance family engagement in learning continues to be the focus of our Family Learning Team. The Team has worked closely with schools and families to devise and develop family learning opportunities which meet the needs of parents and families.

In school session 2022-23 a total of 2,566 families engaged in Family Learning opportunities offered in schools and within the local community. Throughout this year Family Learning opportunities were delivered across 39 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. The programmes delivered by the Family Learning Team can be split into four key areas – Curriculum, Transition, Health & Wellbeing, and Learning Opportunities for Parents/ Carers. Through individual school requests the team has delivered 19 different interventions during 2022-23.

Bereavement support is young person centred and individually assessed case by case. In depth work has taken place with young carers with the programme being shaped by the young people with issues faced by themselves and their peers.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

The Promise is a large-scale, complex, 10-year change programme with multiple objectives across multiple partners. For North Ayrshire to realise the asks of The Promise, all our partners need to be clear on respective roles and responsibilities as a foundation for future development. Building this foundation alongside our key partners and strengthening the scaffolding around the change programme has been the major focus for North Ayrshire in the last three years.

The COVID-19 pandemic had impacted our ability to progress our ambitions as originally planned. There were reduced opportunities to work alongside children and young people. Despite this, we have included them when it was safe to do so, and our partners have remained strongly committed to progressing The Promise and have sought out creative and innovative ways to overcome some of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

The support that young people and families need to ensure they prosper and thrive is identified by The Promise as Scaffolding and is one of The Promise's Foundation Principles.

We have accomplished the following:

- Engaged with our Champions Board and other young people and involved them in discussions
- Employed a full time Participation and Engagement Lead
- Employed a full time Corporate Parenting Youth Worker
- Appointed a Participation Assistant

- Agreed the Governance arrangements to ensure partnership approach and accountability internally and with our partners.
- Developed a Promise Operational Group (PrOG) and sub-groups to drive priorities.

The Steering Group and Promise Operational Group (PrOG) have been established to ensure consistency and involvement across the Partnership at a strategic and operational level. The Promise Operational Group is attended by operational staff. There are four PrOG sub-groups:

1. Communication and Language
2. Alternative Care
3. Relationships
4. Data Mapping

Prior to and upon the publication of The Promise, we have made considerable progress in improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people and their families. We are confident that:

- The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and values are embedded in all that we do; our workforce recognises our children and young people are the most important people in our communities.
- Partnership working is embedded in our operational and strategic efforts through our Corporate Parenting Steering Group. This is not just across the Corporate Partnership but also in partnership with young people through our Champions Board and care experienced networks.

We have strong partnership working across all public services, including Community Planning Partners and third sector. Our partnership strengths have resulted in –

- A focus on prevention and early intervention programmes.
- Co locating the workforce from different disciplines to reduce silo working.
- Listening and responding to children, young people, carers and parents at a pace that is right for them.

The Promise Conference

On 4th November 2022 North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership held their first Promise Conference with over 130 delegates from across a range of Community Planning Partners, Government officials, Carers and Care Experienced Young People. Of the 130 delegates, 23 were carers and care experienced young people. The conference was facilitated by two care experienced young people who chaired throughout the day.

On the 8th December 2023, we held their second ‘Promise’ Conference with over 130 delegates from across a range of Community Planning Partners and Care Experienced Young People. Of the 130 delegates, **40 were Care Experienced young people**. The conference was facilitated by the Corporate Parenting Manager for the North Ayrshire Partnership and a Care Experienced young person. The conference’s aim was to bring together staff and front-line managers who engage with Care Experienced children and young people as part of their work, allowing them to meet one another and to learn about and discuss issues, ideas and work that focus on Care Experience. The expected outcome of this conference was that delegates, having made connections that will enable them to collectively and individually support the Care Experienced community to reach their potential, and leave the conference feeling inspired, motivated, and empowered with knowledge and solutions. The Conference was solution focused, addressing the three themes from the Promise Oversight Board Report 2 (June 2023) of **Education** (in its broadest sense to include skills, hobbies, learning and qualifications), **Moving On** (including transitions at other times), and **Brothers and**

Sisters. An additional theme of '**Working Together**' with the **Care Experienced Community** was discussed.

Discussion around the themes took place at tables with reflective activities, main discussion points and case studies. The Corporate Parenting Team are creating a report to summarise young people's views from the day. This will be shared after consultation with our young people. The next conference will be co-designed with our school's Care Experienced Youth Groups.

Care Experienced App

Our North Ayrshire Champions Board have created and launched 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 as they often found they didn't know a lot of the information that was out there or they simply didn't know who or what to ask to find it for them, and so Scotland's very first Care Experienced app was created.

Signs of Safety Model

Health and Social Care have begun the implementation of the 'Signs of Safety' assessment and planning model. This model places parents, children and everyone naturally connected to the child at the centre of the assessment, decision-making and planning.

The Signs of Safety practice principles support our vision that the best place for children and young people to grow up is within their families and networks where they have the potential to care for them safely. When this is not possible, we will provide a secure, stable home, and help them achieve their full potential. We continue to be committed to giving families every opportunity to come up with and apply their own solutions.

We went fully live with Signs of Safety for all new cases in September 2023 for Children and Families Locality teams and the Child Protection team. Prior to then we had a period from June where we used the approach with a small amount of practice in order to build workforce confidence and knowledge. Since then, we have utilised this practice framework with over 250 children and young people.

We will be establishing an internal implementation steering group to monitor and drive progress. We are moving into our second year of a 5-year implementation plan to fully embed the model in practice. Over the next year we will transition all work with families over to a Signs of Safety model approach. Social Work Children and Families Teams will be working to ensure this support model is implemented for all children and young people receiving a service.

Partner agency briefings have continued and been provided to Children's Hearing Scotland, SCRA staff, education colleagues, NHS colleagues, Police Scotland, and other third sector partner members. More than 25 partner briefing sessions have now been offered, with a mixture of face to face and online sessions, and approximately 450 multi-agency partners have received this input and have developed understanding of the aims and benefits of the practice model.

Safe and Together Model

Based on domestic abuse research, the Safe and Together Model has been implemented. The model is key to realising the Pan Ayrshire vision and directs us to reframe domestic abuse "as a parenting choice", and it shifts assessments towards a "perpetrator pattern-based" approach as

opposed to solely focusing on incidents, which is crucial in the assessment of risk to a child and their non-abusing parent. The model provides a suite of assessment tools and enables practitioners to challenge and address the gender-based nature of domestic abuse through the following model principles:

- Keeping the child safe and together with the non-abusing parent. This is usually the most effective way to promote children's safety, healing from trauma, stability and nurturance.
- Partnering with the non-abusing parent in a strengths-based way. This approach is likely to be the most efficient and child centred way of assessing risk through mutual information sharing.
- Intervening with the offending parent to reduce risk and harm to the child.

Engaging and holding them accountable in a variety of ways, including connecting them to their parenting role, reduces the risks to children. We have a variety of multiagency trainers accredited to deliver the Safe and Together training, in partnership with Women's Aid as our third sector partners who also work to ensure the voices of those with lived experience are included.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The MARAC model has been launched in August 2022 and continues to operate on a monthly basis. MARAC is a local meeting where representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies meet to discuss individuals at high risk of serious harm or murder as a result of domestic abuse. The meeting provides a safe environment for agencies to share relevant and proportionate information about current risk, after which agencies agree actions to reduce risk and increase safety. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim. However, the MARAC will also make links with other processes and agencies to safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator. MARACs are attended by a range of adult and children's services including Police Scotland, Women's Aid, local authority and health services.

Brighter Pathways: re-modelling care options

The Health and Social Care Partnership have embarked on a programme of work to address the current challenges associated with resources and accommodation for looked after and care experienced young people. A Programme Manager has been appointed and will work alongside a Planning Manager and Senior Management, to deliver and support the transformational change over the next two years. A Programme Board has been established and chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer, with membership from key stakeholders and Corporate Parents, to provide strategic leadership and governance to support the workstreams and allocate resources where required.

The Project Board will work jointly with key stakeholders to focus on shifting the balance of care from high cost purchased residential accommodation to alternative community resources, supported carers, supported accommodation, family placements (foster / kinship care) and to provide support to families in need of intensive support.

The work of the Brighter Pathways programme board will be closely aligned with The Promise development plan and the work of the Corporate Parenting Steering Group which is responsible for overseeing the six Corporate Parenting duties and each corporate parent upholds the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of Care Experienced people.

There is a shared awareness with regards to the current pressures and a commitment from all corporate parents and key stakeholders to contribute to the work of the project to deliver services differently and for children and young people to have access to the appropriate resources and supports into adulthood.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children/ Trafficked Young People

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and separated migrant children under the age of 18 who have been trafficked to Scotland, are looked after and accommodated by local authorities as children in need under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

Over the last few years there has been an increase in young people coming to North Ayrshire through the mandate of the National Transfer Scheme in 2021. Trafficked young people are spontaneous arrivals and we are required to identify appropriate accommodation for these young people at short notice as the notification is usually through out of hours social work and there is lack of opportunity to plan and resource accommodation options.

We are proud of the support that we offer displaced and disadvantaged young people and we are committed to supporting these young people into adulthood and support their asylum process, educational needs and their transition from residential care to semi-independent or independent living.

The Refugee and Resettlement team continue to liaise with a range of multi-agency partners. This work is usually more complex and involving Professional's Meetings and Team Around the Child Meetings as well. Each department brings its own area of expertise to enhance the client's experience and hopefully make difficult issues a little easier to understand and address.

We continue to work with Refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine (for social care only). However, it has been decided that we are no longer taking people on the UKRS (Syrian) programme. The Afghan programmes continue.

Currently we work with 624 people from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria all on programmes such as Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme, UKRS and ARAP. We also have contact with people on Homes4Ukraine programme and at times BNO's – Hong Kong Nationals. We found out earlier this year that one of our Syrian ladies has got through to the Adult Learners Final in Edinburgh.

We employed two Family Wellbeing Support Workers in early 2023. Training was developed and a Newsletter has been produced to provide information about services as well as informing clients, for example, bank holiday information, how to access services and dates for community events such as the Summer Fun days. The NHS team were up to full quota by May 2023 and have taken on the healthcare work related to our Ukrainian families.

Rosemount Crisis Intervention and Intensive Support Service

The Rosemount Crisis Intervention and Intensive Support Service continues to support children and families to remain together and prevent the need for children to become looked after and accommodated.

Family Therapies

Notre Dame have been commissioned to support children and young people under 12 years old, and their families, with specialist therapeutic interventions and counselling to aid their recovery and support them to overcome abuse they have experienced. We are expanding the criteria so that any child/ young person who has experienced emotional and/ or physical abuse or neglect can be referred to Notre Dame and be supported. Basing each case on 26-36 weeks of intensive therapy over three 10–12-week blocks, approximately twenty-four young people and family members (as appropriate), can be supported.

Break the Silence have also been commissioned to support children and young people over 12 years old with specialist therapeutic interventions and counselling to aid their recovery and offer support to overcome abuse they have experienced.

We have commissioned several forms of therapy including Art, Play, Dance and Pet Therapy to support children and young people.

Trauma

There is ongoing work within Police Scotland to deliver bespoke training to all staff ensuring trauma informed thinking is at the forefront of policing in Scotland. A Looked After & Accommodated Protocol is in place to minimise negative contact with police and care experienced persons.

The Active Schools Team have undertaken bespoke training to make sure the team are trauma informed and use these principles throughout all their work. The Trauma Informed principles will now be written into the Active Schools Annual Action plan collaborating closely with schools and communities. This will be the first of its kind across the Active Schools network.

We have appointed a Trauma Champion within the Health and Social Care Partnership and are establishing a Trauma Working Group which will focus on trauma aware and trauma skilled approaches, and the creation of a website and e-learning modules.

Health and Wellbeing

During school session 2022-23, we have continued to focus on ensuring children, young people and families have access to the right supports at the right time in our schools and communities. One cluster has piloted the Whole School Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing self-evaluation tool, and this has shaped the further enhancement of supports within establishments.

Education staff have had access to an extensive range of professional learning opportunities with an additional 200 members of staff engaging with our Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Professional Learning Resource this session. We now have 93 members of staff across a range of schools who are trained to deliver Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM). To broaden the reach of this approach, we have this year developed a "LIAM at home" project which targets children and young people whose engagement with education is impacted by anxiety. This new project is showing early signs of success. 33 children and young people have completed the wider LIAM programme this year with an additional 8 engaging with group work. Positive impacts have included: young people who can now cope with being in crowded spaces; a reduction in exam stress; and an increase in the number of young people who are now able to come to school without feeling anxious.

We have delivered Suicide Prevention Training, with 15 additional staff trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST), 54 members of staff trained in Assessing Suicide Risk in Kids (ASK) and 29 in safeTALK – Suicide Awareness training. All S6 pupils in our Secondary Schools have been offered Suicide Awareness Training (safeTALK) with over 100 young people taking part in training during June, feedback from young people indicates they feel more confident to have conversations around wellbeing with their peers.

Our partnership with See Me See Change continues to develop by contributing to the further enhancement of the national anti-discrimination and stigma youth programme. 200 senior pupils took part in training in June 2023 in preparation for next session. This session, the See Me Ambassadors delivered assemblies, PSE lessons, supported mental health and wellbeing sessions in Primary schools and held bakes sales to raise awareness of mental health.

We have invested in the recruitment of 12 additional Area Inclusion Workers who, along with the original team have undertaken extensive professional learning around supporting children and families with their mental wellbeing. They have a key role in maximising school attendance, providing support and guidance to families and delivering Health and Wellbeing sessions to children. Most pupils who have engaged with one of our Area Inclusion Workers have shown an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing and school attendance. Further evaluation is continuing to support the identification of the most impactful interventions.

Family Centred Wellbeing Service

The Family Centred Wellbeing Service (FCWS) is a partnership between North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Education, targeting early intervention support to children of primary school age (5-12 years) and their families in two of North Ayrshire's localities. The remit of the FCWS has been expanded to include support for children with Neurodevelopmental Differences (NDD) and their families. This will support North Ayrshire's transformational approach to the national neurodevelopmental service specification and will see the service expand to all localities in North Ayrshire, including Arran.

The service has a focus on supporting children and families where neurodevelopmental differences (NDDs) are present – with or without a diagnosis – and this is impacting on family functioning and/ or a child's physical, social, emotional, behavioural and/ or mental health and well-being. This focus on NDDs has been necessary due to changes in CAMHS' referral criteria, that is, children will not be accepted for a neurodevelopmental assessment unless there is an accompanying mental health concern. It is anticipated there will be a significant level of unmet need in terms of upskilling parents in their capacity to understand and support their children's distressed behaviours in the context of their emotional wellbeing, whether they have a diagnosis or not. The service seeks to support parents to adopt strategies to assist their children to regulate their emotions, and to implement appropriate routines and boundaries that will help each child reach their full potential. Similarly, there will be a need to provide individual support to children and young people to build their resilience and equip them with skills to communicate their emotions and increase coping mechanisms.

From 01/10/23 to 31/03/24, the FCWS received 131 referrals for 258 children (including sibling groups). Of these referrals, known or suspected NDD was indicated in 62%, with the majority being children without a formal diagnosis.

The team has formed an alliance with the Neurodevelopmental Empowerment & Strategy Team (NEST) in Ayrshire, which offers resources on various issues that can affect a child with NDDs. NEST provides face-to-face workshops for parents and carers which are facilitated by health practitioners, covering topics such as sensory needs, diet, sleep, executive functioning, and so on. The FCWS has actively facilitated parents' attendance at workshops and taken on a role of assisting parents to implement strategies into their day-to-day routines. NEST now has a locality worker for North Ayrshire, and along with other local and national organisations, and the professionals who will be located within the service (Speech & Language, Occupational Therapist, and the Educational Psychologist) the team will be extremely well equipped to empower parents to meet the needs of neurodiverse children.

The team has actively linked families with Welfare Rights services to maximise income and ensure that parents/ carers are gaining access to benefits, such as, the Child Disability Payment, if they are entitled to this, particularly if a child does not have a formal diagnosis.

We also encourage parents who are not in employment to access employability services, such as, We Work for Families (The Lennox Partnership), and this contributes towards the outcomes and local priorities of tackling child poverty and mitigating the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

In terms of reducing the number of families in crisis and children being subject to child protection registration, the FCWS has a pathway with the Child Protection (CP) team in North Ayrshire. Where safeguarding concerns exist, a CP social worker undertakes further assessment alongside the FCWS worker. Should risks be identified and concerns substantiated, the CP team will undertake formal investigation and take the family to case conference. Only when registration is implemented will the FCWS step back and the case will be progressed via the CP Team. However, in the past six months, only one case has progressed to a CP investigation. This did not result in registration, and it was decided that it would be proportionate for the case to remain with the FCWS and for our team to continue with an intervention.

The team has been effective in reducing families becoming involved with statutory services, and how the numbers of families requiring crisis intervention can be reduced by the availability of this early intervention resource.

Transitions Post School

Each secondary school has a Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Coordinator who promotes opportunities and pathways designed to ensure young people have the opportunity to develop skills responsive to future economic changes. Specific data is used by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and other partners for early intervention and support in advance of anticipated school leaving date. For example, in partnership with SDS and our Local Employability Partnership (LEP), 169 young people were identified to take part in an offer delivered by employability training partners CEIS (Community Enterprise in Scotland). Young people took part in workshops focusing on confidence, skills & qualities, workplace health & safety and money management.

As part of the Local Employability Partnership, an evening was held targeting young people considering next steps beyond school. The Your Next Move event was attended by over 600 young people and families with over 40 local employers and Ayrshire College represented. Supplementary events were also held on Arran and a uniquely adapted Reverse Job Fair for Lockhart Campus to ensure universal access for all leavers.

Case Study - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The Youth Volunteer Service of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service aims to create a safe, enjoyable environment for young people to learn, build relationships, and contribute to safer communities. It offers opportunities for skill development, community engagement, and insight into the workings of the fire service. Participants gain practical understanding and support community development while enhancing personal skills and confidence. The program doesn't guarantee future employment but focuses on personal growth and skill enhancement. Volunteers are encouraged to attend sessions regularly and participate in community events. The service is committed to providing an inclusive environment free from discrimination and harassment, aiming for volunteers to enjoy their experience and gain valuable skills. Clear expectations, support, and training are provided to ensure volunteers' safety, development, and enjoyment. Volunteers are expected to behave professionally, seek guidance when needed, and adhere to safety protocols.

So far, 22 volunteers have attended the unit, five have already progressed through the unit and are now instructors. One of these individuals has also now been accepted to represent SFRS On-Call Duty System, whilst another one of the youth volunteers is now an instructor also received the Youth Volunteer Award at the Tri-Services last year. The program has yielded positive outcomes, with several volunteers progressing to become instructors and receiving recognition for their contributions.



Priority 3: Making things fairer

Key Highlights and Case Studies

Child Poverty

Our Child Poverty Action Plan for 2023-24 continues to build on the work progressing to tackle child poverty and the cost of living crisis. In session 2022-23, financial gains for families who have worked with the Schools' Welfare Rights Officer was £572,060.

Workers in both the Rosemount Project and Family Centred Wellbeing Service are vigilant in ensuring that, where relevant, parents are encouraged to utilise Employability supports to increase their prospects of entering work, training or further education.

The Education service identified reducing the cost of the school day (COSD) as an area of focus for schools. It is recognised that education can support children to find a route out of poverty, but crucially only if children and young people can access education as fully and equally as possible. An action plan for reducing the cost of the school day has been used to build upon the priorities identified by North Ayrshire's Tackling Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board.

The Education Service, in partnership with the Youth Participation team has made very good progress towards reducing the COSD for children and young people. Learner Participation has played a key role within our Child Poverty strategy and action plan and as part of our commitment to ensuring children and young people are at the centre of our efforts to reduce the COSD. Our second COSD conference was held in May 2023, where we brought together over 170 pupils from across North Ayrshire Primary and Secondary Schools for a full day of activities led by Education staff and the Youth Services team.

All educational establishments have been encouraged to use the COSD toolkit. Schools using this approach have seen positive changes, including the following:

- Uniform recycling and new school uniform policies implemented to reduce costs
- Support towards transport to and from school and external trips and visits
- Food initiatives e.g. breakfast clubs, holiday lunch provision, healthy snacks
- Extra-curricular activities and after school Clubs
- Support and fundraising for equipment and trips
- Digital support
- Period dignity products
- Supporting children beyond the school day

Pupils and staff have shared good practice across establishments as well as throughout the community via school and early years networks, youth participation and locality planning forums. There is now a stronger commitment to continuous improvement and a focus on reducing the cost of the school day and the barriers experienced for children and families and poverty.

Attainment

The latest published achievement figures are for 2022. Combined Numeracy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 76%, an increase of 9 percentage points on the previous year. Similarly, combined Literacy achievement for P1, P4 & P7 is 67%, an increase of 8 percentage points on the previous year. It is evident that the additional interventions in literacy and numeracy have had a significant impact in continuing recovery from the pandemic. Early indications are that this improvement has continued throughout school session 2022-23.

Improving leavers' attainment in literacy and numeracy

Performance of school leavers in attaining Literacy at Level 4 and Level 5 displays a positive 5-year picture. In 2022, our school leavers have outperformed all other comparators at both level 4 and level 5, with 95% achieving literacy at level 4 or better and 84% 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, 91% of leavers achieved this which is the second highest figure in the 5-year trend. Similarly for Level 5, 71% of leavers achieved this which is also the second highest figure in the 5-year trend.

Learner outcomes post-school

The School-College partnership with Ayrshire College continues to form a valuable part of the curriculum. The offer provides high quality senior phase vocational courses from Level 4 and above and continues to support young people to prepare for employment and Further or Higher Education. It also builds a network of support for young people as they move between school and college or university and plan progression pathways onto full-time courses. Our School-College Partnership team meet regularly to discuss the attendance and progress of each pupil to ensure all possible step success on their college course.

Education works in partnership with Employability Service to offer individualised support. This feeds into a programmes, partners and referrals process which offers various pathways for vulnerable leavers and supported by partner agencies. For example, Barnardos are employed for outreach and targeted work with young people, including care experienced, facing significant challenges in accessing a positive destination.

School Leavers entering an initial positive destination

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 is the highest on record. To maximise the percentage of school leavers entering and sustaining positive destinations, schools continue to work hard in strong partnership with Skills Development Scotland.

The Annual Participation Measure for all 16-19 year-olds

The Annual Participation Measure (APM) is a measurement of the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment over a whole year (1st April-31st March). The indicator provides a measure of the status of the wider aged 16-19 cohort – not just those who have left school. The Annual Participation Measure, covering the year from April 2022 – March 2023 showed that of the 5,872 16-19 year olds in North Ayrshire, 93.9% were in education, employment or training and personal development. This is the highest on record since the APM started in 2016.

Further details on school attainment and achievement can be found online at – [Education Services Standards and Quality Report](#)

Libraries

105 Bookbug Early Years Literacy sessions have been held with over 1,000 adults and 1,200 pre-school children attending. 1150 Bookbug bags were gifted to P1 pupils during library visits. Our Lifelong Learning team delivered a range of sessions for families such as, Bookbug on Tour, Forest Fun and sensory play at a range of indoor and outdoor venues across North Ayrshire. There were

193 primary/ early years class visits supporting a range of topics with 3,892 children and adults. As part of Book Week Scotland in November, 54 primary one classes and 1,022 pupils attended the interactive sessions in libraries. Support for afterschool activities continues to be strong with 272 sessions and 1,785 attendances from children.

The Learning Community Librarians (LCLs) are supporting 4 Duke of Edinburgh pupils to assist in the school libraries, 4 pupil volunteers to help deliver activities for the weekly book group, 4 S4 volunteers helping to organise the monthly Family Book Group and a senior pupil working in the library as part of their Saltire Award (assisted by Pupil Support staff). One LCL had a successful bid for national funding through the Scottish Library & Information Council's School Library Improvement Fund. The project aims to "bring pupils of Ardrossan Academy and Winton Primary together using stories. Events for "Let me Tell you a Story" with author Victoria Williamson so far have been very successful.

We were proud of one of our Junior Rangers who after 5 years with the group was the first recipient of the SCRA JR leadership award. Further information can be found here - [North Ayrshire Ranger Service](#).

Digital Learning

14 schools have achieved the Digital Schools award with almost all North Ayrshire schools registered and on the way to achieving this award. Many schools are also working towards the Digital Wellbeing award, demonstrating a strategic approach to cyber resilience and internet safety. Senior school leaders from across the authority engaged in a professional learning programme entitled 'Evolving Digital Thinking', supporting this journey. An established network of Digital Coordinators continue to meet termly to develop digital skills and cascade these within their school contexts. Pupil Digital Coordinators have met twice, learning new skills and networking with other schools, with plans to build on this further next session.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

Our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) has been co-designed by Care Experienced Young People and addresses their priorities and commitments we have made to them. All the priorities and actions lead to the fulfilment of the Promise.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) can be found here – [North Ayrshire's Corporate Parenting Plan](#).

Some key highlights include:

- A Family Wellbeing Support Worker has been appointed to specifically work with families where two or more children are at risk of being looked after or are looked after and their principal role will be to strengthen relationships between family members.
- Every children's residential house has a named link Nurse to enhance communication and to address any health issues timeously.
- Health and Social Care have developed and implemented their 'Keeping Sisters and Brothers Together' policy. 73% of Sibling Groups are together in the same living environment. This is likely a result of the above policy and an even greater focus on keeping siblings together combined with guidance and updated processes.
- Police Scotland's 'Looked After & Accommodated Protocol' has been established to minimise negative contact with police and care experienced young people. Facilities within Police Offices have been modified to accommodate care-experienced young people and minimise trauma.

- The Health and Social Care Partnership have developed several new programmes focused on diversion and youth offending.
- Universal Early Years staff have Trauma Informed Modules within their mandatory training to support them to achieve a deep understanding in the context of trauma.
- Campus Police officers and the newly formed Community Wellbeing Unit are trained to support care experienced individuals through engagement and education.

Housing Services have introduced a care experienced housing officer to be a single point of contact for Care Experienced Young People. The Throughcare/Aftercare Service have a Housing Protocol in place where care experienced young people are prioritised and supported to ensure they maintain their tenancies. Young people are supported to remain with their Kinship Carers and eligible for continuing care. They will receive ongoing support from Throughcare, and their carers receive kinship care allowance until the young person is 21 years.

In the last three years there has been a 10.7% increase in young people in kinship care placements and significant increase in numbers of young people requesting continuing care. The uptake of Continuing Care has increased as training, guidance, policy changes, and embedding processes in the review meetings have all been established and implemented over the last three years.

We have more Children and Young People in positive destinations such as college or university than ever and in our three recent inspection reports, our approaches to continuing care have been highlighted as best practice. Kinship Care has also increased as we have adopted our 'family first' approach in practice and policy.

Care experienced children and young people continue to be supported through a range of interventions where the focus is on delivering equity and improving educational outcomes.

The MCR Pathways Young Talent programme supports our young people in, or on the edges of care within 6 secondary schools. In the last academic year 229 young people were supported through the programme. Of this number, all 102 S1 and S2 pupils participated in weekly group work throughout the academic year. The focus of this group work was on building self-esteem and confidence, strengths and interests, teamwork, problem solving and employability skills. A further 50 young people were directly supported by one of our MCR Pathways Co-ordinators, who are members of the school's extended pastoral support team. They provide an enhanced and integrated level of support, liaising with partners. A large number of this group are preparing to be supported by 1:1 mentors.

A key part of the MCR Pathways programme is the use of mentors from across our communities. Our mentors come from local businesses, the public sector and the third sector. They have a wealth of experiences and life skills. They all share the same desire to support a young person in their local community and give something back. Our mentors are trained and supported throughout each stage of their mentoring relationship with their young person. This year, 77 young people were supported in weekly face-to-face sessions by a mentor, with plans to increase this figure in the near future.

The impact of the MCR programme is evident in: improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for this group; improvements in the number and level of qualifications achieved and 100% of this year's leavers group supported by this programme entering a positive destination.

Case Study - MCR Pathways

Amy* and John (*Young Person Name changed) - Auchenharvie Academy

"When Amy was first introduced to the MCR Pathways programme she was a shy girl who had low self-belief. She had a clear idea of what she wanted to be when she was older, which was to be an aeronautical engineer. Amy was unsure of how she could reach this career, as she was struggling academically in most subjects, particularly maths, which was essential for her chosen post school career.

Amy was matched to mentor John who had spent a significant part of his career as an engineer. John and

Amy were both extremely laid back and had a calm demeanour. Amy needed a mentor who was not going to pressure her or be too persistent and John's patience and calm nature allowed the relationship to move at Amy's pace.

John and Amy bonded straight away. As well as having shared career interests, they also had many common hobbies/interests to discuss. The main commonalities being travelling and theatre. John was a great supporter of Amy and supported her to believe that she could achieve anything she set her mind to. He supported her with the subjects she was struggling with, and helped Amy grow in confidence and believe her goal could in fact be reality.

Amy is a young person who is now confident and has a strong work ethic. She applied for many aeronautical engineering apprenticeships and college courses and is going to pursue her unconditional offer for PEO at college. She has also attended college visits, day courses etc and has seized any opportunity for more experience to help her with her goals, with John encouraging her throughout this.

Amy's attitude is brilliant and I am confident she will go on to achieve her goals in life."



Care experienced leavers in North Ayrshire are continuing a positive 5-year trend of attainment in the number of Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications achieved. In 2022, 87% of our care experienced leavers attained at least 1 qualification at SCQF Level 4 or better, the highest performance in the 5-year trend. For Level 5, 62% of care experienced leavers achieved at least 1 qualification which is in line with highest performance in the 5-year trend.

Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

Through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, third sector organisations have been engaged in the transformational activity required to support holistic family support, shift focus to early intervention and prevention and work towards the aspirations of The Promise. This has included:

- Universal Early Years partnership with national charity Dads Rock to bring a Dads Support Worker into the existing integrated UEY team. The worker supports dads and other male caregivers with children in the early years with practical parenting skills, empowerment and confidence in their role as dad. One to one support, as well as group support is being provided by the worker and there is also a review of current processes within UEY to ensure inclusivity to dads, and not just mums.
- Barnardos - Barnardos will scale-up the existing Stronger Families service, providing a focus on Kinship Families who have been affected by substance use. Stronger Families is trauma-responsive and adopts a whole family approach, aligning with the National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support, The Promise and Children's Rights. In the short time it has been operating, it has proven to be an effective and successful approach to supporting Children, Young People and Families impacted by substance use.
- Ayrshire Children's Services - Delivery of 3 x 15 week "Nurturing and Positive Parenting" Courses for parents/ carers who are currently awaiting referrals, are on the periphery of social work care and/ or are at the point of crisis. This is a new element to the existing work of Ayrshire Children's Services with the overall aim of developing a Family Wellbeing Service.
- Impact Arts - Plan to run two 6-month programmes a year for 2 years in different localities in North Ayrshire, working with ten to twelve parents or kinship carers in each programme, to support them to: better understand their child(ren)'s behaviour; develop tools to connect, communicate and support their child(ren) including approach (e.g. activities being led by the child; being curious), language and play activities; identify their own needs and develop coping strategies for themselves; connect with other parents, access peer support, and develop their local support networks by linking in with other local organisations which can support other aspects of family life.
- The Ayrshire Community Trust – will deliver a tiered model of universal family support and engagement within the Three Towns area with additional targeted family support to a smaller number of identified families through 1-1 and small group work provision. The project will build on the significant work already being delivered to support local families in relation to poverty, employability and community connectedness.
- The STAR Centre – Ayrshire's Rape Crisis Centre will use WFWF funding to recruit a family worker who will work with parents, carers and the wider family of young people aged 13 years and above who have been sexually assaulted. Currently only supporting the young person themselves, this expansion will provide a more holistic approach to the family, helping them to understand what has happened and enabling them to offer appropriate support to their child/ family member.

Case Study - Dads Rock

In a first of its kind partnership our Dads Rock worker is embedded in the Universal Early Years' team with funding from the Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. We're helping Dads and families to be the best that they can be by supporting them to give their children the best possible start in life. This means working with Health Visiting, Midwifery and Social Work to provide bespoke 1-1 support for dads and their families at home and in the communities of the Saltcoats, Stevenston and Ardrossan, with a view to supporting the whole of North Ayrshire in time.

A key part of this work is the new North Ayrshire Baby Group for Dads led by Ryan, our Dads Worker. After speaking to local dads, community partners and Health and Social Care partners we recognised that there needed to be a place for Dads to come together and share their experiences of growing as parents. Though Ryan provides the group it's the openness and care for one another that drives the group and creates the supportive atmosphere of the group. Ryan says: "The role has been extremely rewarding, right from day one. I've got over 10 years experience in family support work, most of which was creating Dads support in Glasgow and so I really feel like I'm right where I need to be. I like that every day is different and I get to create amazing connections for dads. So many of them don't have a pathway when they're struggling, and the NHS can find it difficult to design services around dads support needs- so by being a Dads Worker, these dads can connect to NHS resources through me and get the advice and support they need, meet other dads and build great connections".

"We know that dads will do anything for their children so the group is pitched more as a baby group for dads, rather than just a 'dads group' for a reason. It's a great way for Dads to explore how babies grow and develop, but it's also a really good way for dads to meet other dads and learn from one another".



Quote from Social Worker - "Ryan and I have worked closely together to provide extensive support, advice and guidance to two vulnerable families that are on my caseload. Since Ryan has started we have undertaken 5 joint visits some of which when families/dads have been in crisis. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Ryan. Ryan has been actively involved in the care plan for both families. Ryan clearly has a wealth of previous experience and has used his transferable skills to this current post."

Priority 4: Promoting good mental health and wellbeing

Key Highlights and Case Studies

Nurture

During school session 2022-23 we have undertaken a range of activities to support our Promoting Positive Relationships approach. This has included work on Building on Positive Relationships (based on the Non Violent Resistance approach) for both schools and parent workshops. We have run three parent workshops over the session with parents reporting a significant improvement in the behaviour of their children following the workshops. Using the widely available and respected Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire as a basis for measuring impact, the mean scores for children's total difficulties significantly reduced following the 10-week parent group. We have also run workshops for our primary and secondary schools as well as our Area Inclusion Workers and further developed our Building on Positive Relationships plans in line with this.

A key part of our work has been a review of our whole school nurture approach to ensure that nurture principles are embedded within the whole school system at the same time as building capacity towards a consistent, authority-wide approach to whole-school nurture. This review has included surveys with stakeholders including:

- 832 staff who responded to our main review questionnaire
- 32 children and young people in focus groups across 4 primary and 2 secondary schools
- 11 Educational Psychologists, 15 Head Teachers and 141 teacher and classroom assistant responses to additional questionnaires

Following the review, work has commenced on updating the professional learning programme supporting this work, developing a whole school nurture benchmarking framework to support school self-evaluation and planning for improvement in this area and the establishment of a Service Improvement Group to take this work forward into session 2023-24 and beyond.

There are currently 22 Primary Nurture Groups and 9 Secondary Nurture Groups, with 4 further primary PEF funded groups operating a range of tailor-made nurture models with target groups, supported by the authority-wide Principal Teacher of Nurture. Clear guidelines have been produced and shared with each sector, alongside a quality assurance framework and weekly professional learning sessions.

Some of the positive outcomes of targeted nurture approaches include:

- Children and young people in primary and secondary settings who have received nurture support are showing gains in social and emotional progress and are continuing to access mainstream education.
- Children and young people who have received nurture support are attaining and achieving more closely in line with peers over time.
- Education establishments can demonstrate an increased understanding and application of whole school nurturing approaches. This will increase establishment understanding and awareness of the interdependencies between effective nurture and mental health and wellbeing support.
- Of the 832 staff who responded to our nurture survey, 78% felt confident applying what they have learned about nurturing approaches in practice.
- St Matthew's Academy were awarded the prestigious Marjory Boxall Nurture Quality Mark Award in 2023 in recognition of their support of children and young people. They also became

North Ayrshire's first secondary schools to achieve the Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award, in no small part due to their commitment to Nurture.

A longitudinal study is currently in preparation tracing the views and development of those pupils who attended nurture previously, with publication expected in session 2023-24.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The integrated early years team empower and enable parents and carers to support their child in a range of areas. During 2023-24, 965 Requests for Assistance (RfA) from the wider integrated team were received. 527 Requests for Assistance (55%) were made to the Health Visiting Support Workers to support parents with topics such as communication, behaviour, sleep, weaning and toileting. 11% were made to the Family Nurturers for support with home conditions, community integration, and bonding and attachment. 11% were made to the Perinatal Wellbeing Team for support with maternal mental health difficulties during pregnancy or in the initial 9 months following the birth of a child. 7% were made to the Early Years Social Workers for support with parental mental health, relationship issues and home conditions.

The Health Visiting Support Workers within Universal Early Years assist colleagues in Education to deliver parenting programmes, such as Incredible Years, in a group setting.

The Out and About project in the Garnock Valley, encouraged families to use the assets in their local area and to spend family time together. Based on partner feedback a programme of Saturday morning events were funded in the Garnock Valley libraries in the run up to the summer holidays in 2023. Families identified by the Family Care Workers have also benefited from KA Leisure memberships to support them to continue to get out and about. They have also been gifted experience kits which includes a range of items and activity ideas for families to enjoy both indoors and outdoors. The Little Free Library was launched at Lochshore Park, Glengarnock with environmental-themed books for children and families to use on site or borrow as part of the project.

Connected Communities Mental health and Wellbeing have a variety of early intervention, positive wellbeing, resilience and confidence building events and activities. These are for age 5–25-year-olds, including whole family approaches, work in schools and communities. This varies from drama, accredited programmes, outdoor learning, roadshows, murals, climate engagement and young parents.

Active Schools continue to support all schools to deliver high quality extra-curricular programmes across Primary, Secondary and ASN schools. Our top 5 participation sports are Football, Netball, Multisport, Basketball and Dance.

Active Schools continues to support over 50 sport and physical activity clubs across the academic year to deliver within our school settings. This includes the co-ordination of the delivery of weekly sessions, health week inputs, full day delivery and promotional distribution.

A full counselling review has been undertaken this session and has involved consultation with stakeholders including children and young people, school staff and counsellors. A literature review of effective practice was also undertaken. This review has been used to shape the future model of primary school counselling and update the well-established secondary school counselling service.

In terms of how the counselling service has supported staff practice within our schools, the impacts can be summarised in three main categories:

- School staff are able to support individual pupils better (through for example being more familiar with appropriate support strategies and language).

- School staff have greater awareness and knowledge (of themes such as trauma and its impact).
- School staff have strengthened positive relationships (with for example other professionals working together to support a young person, as well as strengthened links with the home).

Children, Young People and Families have access to a range of supports and services within their communities to support emotional distress and to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Data gathering and consultation with the community has been central to the development of services. Key highlights include the employment of a Welfare Rights Officer (WRO) to engage directly with families following referral from education staff. Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, this has resulted in financial gains of over £572,000 for families who need it most.

The link between financial insecurity and poor mental health is well documented and the positive impacts of our approach in North Ayrshire are increasingly evident. 71 children, young people and families have benefited from co-produced bespoke supports which have had a positive impact on mental wellbeing. Examples of referral reasons for support include family relationships/ home issues, poverty/ homelessness, trauma, with many children and young people experiencing multiple barriers to positive wellbeing.

A review of the Kilwinning and Largs Wellness models has taken place. We have used this review as the basis for developing a refreshed and expanded approach to supporting children and young people's wellbeing across the whole authority, with the revised Wellness Model being rolled out to additional localities. Our review highlighted the importance and benefits of all agencies working together to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing in our communities.

We have continued our focus on Whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing (MHWB), ensuring children, young people and families have access to the right supports at the right time. One school cluster has piloted the Whole School Approaches to MHWB self-evaluation tool, and this has shaped the further enhancement of supports within establishments.

Education staff have had access to an extensive range of professional learning opportunities with an additional 200 members of staff engaging with our Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Professional Learning Resource this session. In addition, we now have 93 members of staff across a range of schools who are trained to deliver Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM). To broaden the reach of this approach, we have this year developed a "LIAM at home" project which targets children and young people whose engagement with education is impacted by anxiety. This new project is showing early signs of success. Across the authority, 33 children and young people have completed the wider LIAM programme this year with an additional 8 engaging with group work. Positive impacts have included: young people who can now cope with being in crowded spaces; a reduction in exam stress; and an increase in the number of young people who are now able to come to school without feeling anxious. In addition we have delivered Suicide Prevention Training, with 15 additional staff trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST), 54 members of staff trained in Assessing Suicide Risk in Kids (ASK) and 29 in safeTALK – Suicide Awareness training. All S6 pupils in our Secondary Schools have been offered Suicide Awareness Training (safeTALK) with over 100 young people taking part in training during June, feedback from young people indicates they feel more confident to have conversations around wellbeing with their peers.

We have refined our information sharing process from our Emergency Department for our Young Persons Suicide Prevention Pathway to ensure services receive the right information at the right time. This Young Person Suicide Prevention Pathway is intended for young people up to 18 years old who have made a significant attempt at taking their life i.e. non-fatal overdose, act of self-harm significant enough to require treatment & intervention or deliberate act of a suicidal nature. The pathway delivers a prompt partnership response with follow up arranged within 48 hours to ensure that no young person falls through the net.

The Suicide Prevention Task Force continues to circulate information across our Children and Families Services regarding Mental health and/ or suicide prevention training.

Our partnership with See Me See Change continues to develop with our Education Service contributing to the further enhancement of the national anti-discrimination and stigma youth programme. 200 senior pupils took part in training in June 2023 in preparation for next session. This session, the See Me Ambassadors delivered assemblies, PSE lessons, supported mental health and wellbeing sessions in Primary schools and held bakes sales to raise awareness of mental health.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) specification came into operation on the 1st August 2023 and with that, the national neurodevelopmental service specification. A North Ayrshire Children and Young People Neurodevelopmental Service Specification Implementation Group was established in June to take forward key aspects of the service specification. Progress to date has included:

- Mapping and gap analysis of available family supports for children with Neurodevelopmental Differences (NDD) and their families
- Training needs analysis of the current children's services' workforce including primary care, Allied Health Professionals, health visitors, school nurses, social workers, education staff and third sector organisations. A training plan will be produced from this to support workforce development.
- Further engagement with parents and carers of children with NDD to hear in more detail about their experiences of trying to access services and supports, strengths and areas for improvement. This will direct work in relation to family support, workforce development and assessment and diagnosis.
- Drafting a neurodevelopmental pathway for North Ayrshire for children who are of school-age but who do not have a co-existing mental health condition and commencing work to agree appropriate screening tools.
- Expansion of the Neurodevelopment Empowerment and Strategy Team (NEST) to provide dedicated support within North Ayrshire.

Pan-Ayrshire work to develop a diagnostic service is also underway. CAMHS has led some pilot work with a small number of schools to undertake neurodevelopmental assessments with identified children in the school, alongside their parents/ carers. Findings from the evaluation will inform future direction for assessment and diagnosis.

Young Carers are a core partner in the Joint Youth Forum network where they contribute to planning and shaping future plans and policies for both North Ayrshire and nationally. Needs are met through collaboration with young people when they complete the Young Carer's Statement.

The HSCP increased its investment in carer services threefold in 2023 through the recommissioning of the Carers Support Service – now the Carers Gateway. This has seen early indications of increased young carers registrations as well as an increase in support activity based around reducing social isolation.

This session Young Carers have completed 400 statements. This is approximately 93% of all Young Carers registered on school systems. Education and HSCP delivered a Young Carers Statement workshop for 27 staff at the Professional Learning Academy the feedback from staff was positive and contributes to building the skills within our teams of staff to support Young Carers across North Ayrshire.

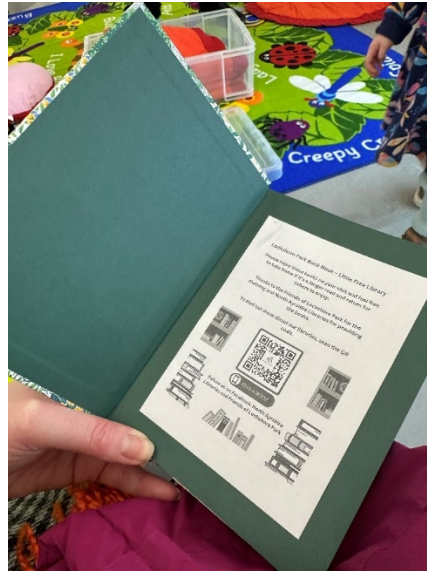
During 2023-24 the Public Health Department published a chapter of the Director of Public Health Annual Report titled “Director of Public Health - A Life-Course Approach to Understanding Mental Health Report”. The main aim of progressing a life-course approach to mental health will involve maximising the many opportunities to promote mental health and wellbeing across all of the life stages, through preventive approaches and timely access and intervention/support for people where a mental health need and mental illness/disorder presents. This will require a whole system approach, recognising and acknowledging current work and success, and building on this for future developments.

Over the coming year Public Health will continue to identify opportunities to have dialogue with colleagues and partners working in areas including children’s and mental health services regarding the life course approach.

Examples of Public Health Department activity in the previous year includes:

- Delivery of “Mental Health Improvement – a practical approach” to colleagues and partners working with infants, children and young people (i.e. Education, those working with non-attenders at school, community groups)
- Promotion and provision of Children and Young People’s Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing among other resources
- Support for a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Case Study – Book Nook at Lochshore Park



North Ayrshire Libraries has teamed up with Friends of Lochshore to create a new Book Nook for the community. Nestled indoors, next to the café, at Lochshore Park Hub between Beith and Glengarnock, it was launched on Wednesday 14 February at the community hub's monthly Story Tots session.

Named, the Little Free Library, the Book Nook features nature-themed books for all ages. A welcoming focal point, it forms part of a wider community project called 'Out and About' in the Garnock Valley where library services and partners have been working on behalf of communities to support families to get out and about in their local area, discovering some of the amazing spaces on their doorsteps – all at no cost.

This is the third Book Nook of North Ayrshire's Little Free Libraries' initiative – with others located at the Harbour Arts Centre and at the Townhouse/Portal in Irvine. At the new community space, parents and carers are encouraged to share a nature-themed story with their children during their visit and use the books there to help identify flowers, fauna and a host of creepy crawlies that can be found on the walks around Lochshore.

Already a popular venue with local sports clubs, schools, and young families, Lochshore Hub's new Little Free Library is all about encouraging visitors of all ages to pick up and donate books out-with conventional library locations while learning more about what's on offer at Lochshore Park. Other elements of the redevelopment at Lochshore include the newly-created 5km leisure route and walking path, the surrounding woodland plantation of over 12-hectares, and the construction of a Natural Play Area currently underway.

Councillor Alan Hill, Cabinet Member for Communities and Islands said: "It is great to learn that our latest Little Free Library at Lochshore Park is proving a hit with young visitors there. "Thank you to everyone who has helped us to bring the project to life and special thanks to The Friends of Lochshore Park who have used their expertise to meticulously hand carve the decorative owl and branch bookends. The lovely reading nook really does look right at home, it's as if it's always been here. This is another brilliant example of how libraries can work together with communities, partners and local volunteers to widen their offering and provide exciting opportunities for experiencing the wonders of reading in new and exciting places. The project is also about inclusion and social-connection too, as people can come together to learn about nature and enrich their experiences at Lochshore."

Priority 5: Inspiring children and young people to be active

Key Highlights and Case Studies

Physical Activity

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

Jumpstart Junior:	Aged 5 – 9
Jumpstart Senior:	Aged 10 – 13
JumpStart Teens:	Aged 14 – 17
JumpStart Plus:	Children with Additional Support Needs

During 2023-24, 55 children and their families were referred to JumpStart (5 to 17 programme). The referrals were split evenly between males and females with 28 males (51%) and 27 females (49%). Of the 55 children referred, 29 children (53%) were aged 5 to 9 years old, 19 children (34%) were aged 10 to 13 years old and 7 young people (13%) aged 14 to 17 years old. Also, the largest majority of referrals were for families living in the most deprived areas 86% areas.

90 group based physical activity and health education sessions were delivered by the Child Healthy Weight Team in addition to attendance at 12 promotional events. We continue to partner with the Trinity Active Travel hub, supporting events and initiatives aimed at promoting active lifestyles and healthy habits.

Positive outcomes for those participating on the programme include an increase in physical activity levels; healthier eating habits including an increase in consumption of fruit and vegetables and less consumption of foods high in fat, sugar and salt; an increased parental score on their child's health related quality of life (Peds QL), resulting in stabilisation or reduction in Body Mass Index Standard Deviation Scores.

Participating families also make use of a free leisure pass to access amenities such as the KA Leisure Centres, which for many families would otherwise be cost prohibitive.

The early years Tier 2 child healthy weight programme, Jumpstart Tots continued to focus on working with health visiting service to identify families with children aged 2- 4 years who would benefit from targeted interventions to enable healthy habits for healthy growth.

During 2023-24, 9 children and their families were referred to the Jumpstart Tots early years programme. In total 16 families were supported by the early years programmes. There were 11 discharges, of which 6 families completed at least 75% of the programme and 5 families withdrew at the early stages of the intervention.

As with the school age programme, there were positive changes in dietary behaviours with those who completed e.g. increase in fruit and vegetable consumption and a decrease in sugary foods and drinks. Families are also offered free leisure passes to enable the whole family to access opportunities within KA leisure.

A multidisciplinary working group was established with representation from early years education across the 3 Ayrshire local authorities, further education, PEEPLE qualifications and dietetics with the aim of delivering nutrition focused PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) groups within a number of establishments in each local authority. The group identified 3 nutrition education sessions

for each of the 3 PEEP age groups and mapped NHS nutrition resources and activities to each i.e. 9 sessions developed in total. There have been 4 groups co-delivered between dietetics and early years education over our 3 local authority areas.

The team have worked closely with a number of partners including Ayrshire College to raise awareness of early years nutrition and child healthy weight. Pilot work has focused on training all early years students to increase knowledge and skills, as well as awareness of local supporting services and resources. During January to March 2024 the team trained 89 students. In addition the team have also participated in a service wide education event with Health Visiting to update on topical issues around infant and early years nutrition. We have also had the opportunity to give an update on early years child healthy weight programmes at a head teachers event in February 2024.

In partnership with the Public Health Department, the team have been able to commission HENRY (Healthy Eating and Nutrition in the Really Young) core training programme to a variety of partners which contributes both to maternal and infant nutrition and child healthy weight programmes. This training has a strong foundation in health behaviour change thus skilling participants to take a strengths-based approach to supporting families. Over 2023-24 there have been 7 cohorts of training with over 100 participants, including health visitors, school nursing, maternity staff, early years practitioners, oral health and allied health professionals. A recent post programme survey of participants highlighted the positive impact on practice of the course and the need to provide supporting resources to further embed the learning into practice.

In order to support early intervention and prevention the team are working with an area wide group to develop a child healthy weight toolkit which will provide guidance on topics such as: weight/ BMI measurement, raising the issue of weight/ health with families, health behaviour change, nutrition, physical activity, current community programmes and training opportunities. In addition to these topics, the toolkit will also provide pathways for different professions such as health visitors, school nurses, and other healthcare professionals, as well as wider services and agencies to support early intervention and prevention.

Case Study – Dance Therapy

During the 2023 Summer holiday period, the Child and Adolescent Specialist Substance Team (CASST) ran a hip-hop dance therapy summer scheme for children and young people affected by trauma and impacted by their own or parental drug or alcohol use, teaching dance classes to aged 5–11-year-olds and over 12. The aim of the dance therapy sessions was as an intervention to help with attention and focus, to improve communication, and to reduce feelings of isolation, social anxiety, and chronic pain. Overall, 24 children and young people attended across the summer holidays. This culminated in an end of summer dance show and prizegiving for those in attendance. Feedback was gathered from young people and their parents/carers using evaluation forms and was overwhelmingly positive. 100% of the children and young people who attended reported as enjoying the dance therapy classes and expressed that if given the option, they would attend again. Three of the parent's feedback was [anonymously] as follows: *“While home life is very difficult and her sister's needs tend to take up most of my time, it has been great for her to have something so positive that is just hers. The positively and energy of the class has really given her a much-needed boost”, “I love that X has her own thing, has made friends (which she normally finds difficult) and dance improves her balance and coordination”, “Y is so happy and gets so excited when it comes to a Thursday, she said this is the best thing about the Summer holidays”.*

Due to the success of this, further dance therapy sessions have commenced, for age groups 12m - 5 years, and over 5. Dance therapy sessions are ran by our Family Worker and qualified Dance Teacher Nicola Kane.



An early years outdoor science resource was developed, led by our STEM team. The purpose of this was to link outdoor learning experiences to Science experiences and outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals. Professional learning sessions for this resource were attended by 215 practitioners. Evaluations were completed by practitioners following the training, 100% of whom agreed that using the resource has helped them to make links between outdoor learning and science experiences and outcomes, and that this would improve and extend the quality of outdoor learning experiences.

Over 100 staff attended further professional learning on outdoor learning and learning for sustainability for primary-aged children. Whole-school training sessions have been delivered in three schools and the STEM team has supported a further three schools through outdoor learning team teaching inputs.

School gardening training sessions were delivered by Ardrossan Academy staff to 10 primary schools. A school gardening handbook has been created collaboratively, with advice, guidance and good practice, and this has been shared with all schools. Finally, six of our schools participated in a successful partnership with Go Wild Scotland, to provide nature experiences for learners, linked to the curriculum.

Last academic year Active Schools supported 51 North Ayrshire clubs to engage in schools. Clubs delivered the following:

- 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

Furthermore, the progression of our North Ayrshire Community Sport Hub has gone from strength to strength. In joint partnership with KA Leisure 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.

We are very proud of the number of distinct participants we are engaging with during extracurricular. 9,425 young people have attended a variety of sport and physical activity sessions across 2022-23, over 53% of the whole young people population. Nearly 9,000 individual sessions were delivered to achieve that number with 91,246 visits being made. 98% of delivery of our sessions were delivered by volunteers – one of the highest across Scotland.

We have robust leadership pathway from P6 to S6 and beyond. Our P6/7 programme Move and Improve has 946 young people who have completed their training. Our Young Ambassador programme bolsters 118 young people from all 9 secondary schools and ASN School. Our flagship North Ayrshire Sports Academy had 189 young people as part of the programme, and they gained on average 12- 15 qualifications that will support them either into employment or onto a positive destination. On completion of these courses the young people then delivery sport and physical activity sessions within schools and communities – over 5,000 volunteer hours have been delivered.

The role of the Active Schools and Community Partnership is to work with key partners and stakeholders to remove barriers for young people and families within Care Experience to take part in Sport and Physical Activity using a Whole Systems Approach to lead a healthier Lifestyle.

Across the last year we have delivered 47 different experiential opportunities to 332 young people. The opportunities have ranged from residentials, skiing, team building days to outdoor activities. The target groups for this work are care experienced, kids on the cusp, the inactive, New Scots (42), or ASN (90 from Lockhart only). The participants are then supported into more frequent activity within their own school or community of which 67% currently have taken this opportunity on. This number is ever growing as this work is a key component of the role of the Active Schools and Communities Partnership Officers.