

# Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee is currently examining the impact of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 since it came into effect. The focus of [this inquiry](#) is the statutory framework of the Act.

[A Call for Views](#) ran from July to September. A summary of the responses is available [here](#). The Committee will take oral evidence in November and December 2024.

In order to inform its scrutiny, the Committee is keen to get an idea of the extent of local variation on child poverty policies and governance structures at a senior level.

The Committee contacted all Scottish Local Authorities with the following survey.

**1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

**2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**

The Committee received nine responses. They are available below.

# Dumfries and Galloway Council

## 1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.

Dumfries and Galloway Council, working with NHS Dumfries and Galloway and other partners, have implemented a number of policies which address child poverty and go beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements. A recent example was the allocation of £1,997,000 of Policy Development Funding by Dumfries and Galloway Council in the 2023-2024 to support the delivery of seventeen poverty and inequalities related projects as follows:

Project	Allocation
Funding to support operation of a local Tackling Poverty Reference Group	£10,000
Additional Funding for School Clothing Grants	£45,000
Additional funding for Welfare and Housing Options Support Team to support families at risk of eviction	£165,000
Direct Support for Vulnerable People through Social Work	£64,000
Direct Payments to Vulnerable Young People experiencing hardship	£40,000
Fareshare Memberships	£56,000
Expansion of Free Period Product Scheme	£20,000
Taxi-Card Transport Scheme	£130,000
Emergency Energy Payment Assistance Scheme	£100,000
Funding to support Community Transport	£53,000
Additional Top Up Funding for the Scottish Welfare Fund	£390,000
Holiday Food Fund Payments	£220,000
Holiday Food Fund for Early Years and Nurseries	£90,000
Summer of Play Programme (to top up Scottish Government funding)	£264,000
Top Up Funding for Commissioned Services to help with increasing core costs	£130,000
Grassroots Projects including development of clothing projects	£40,000
Area Committee Grant Funding for community organisations	£180,000

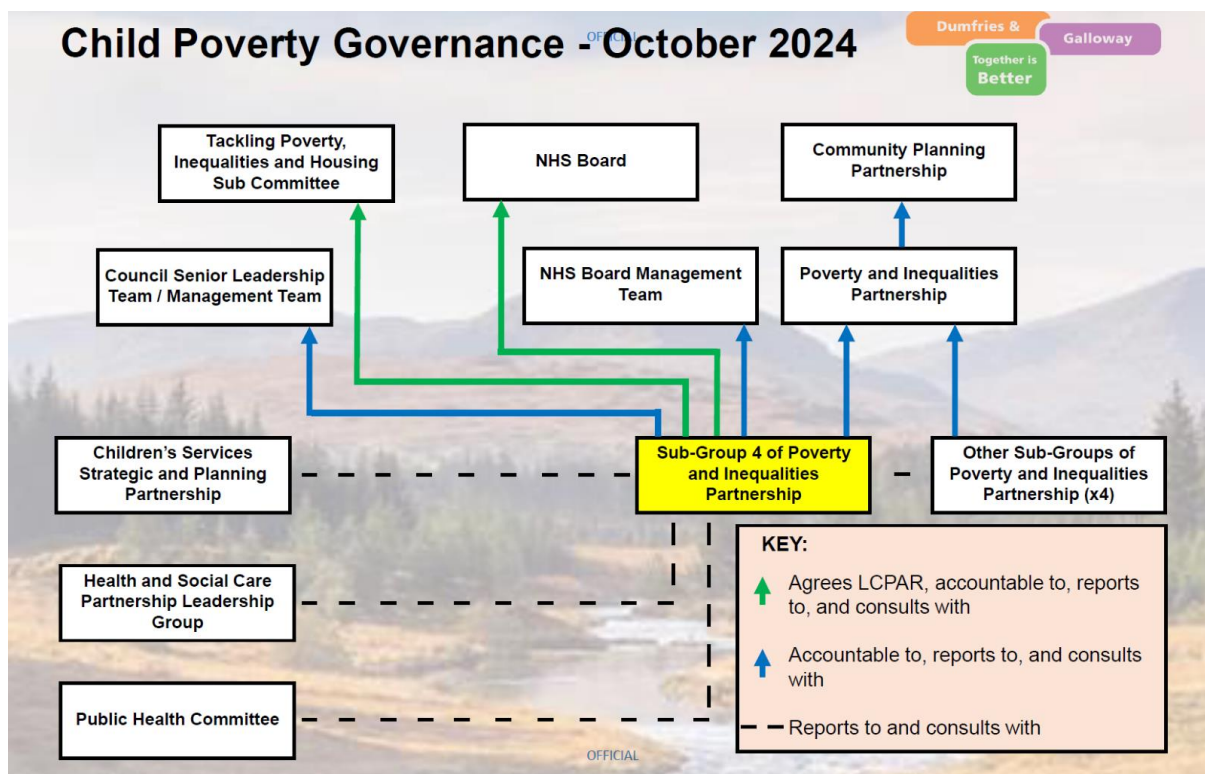
## 2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.

There is very much a focus on child poverty in local governance structures at a senior level in Dumfries and Galloway. Within the Local Authority the Executive Director of Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing acts as the organisational lead for child poverty, and a number of managers and other officers have key roles in supporting associated activity and reporting including the Service Manager - Young People who has management responsibility for the local poverty and inequalities agenda, the Employability, Skills and Partnerships Manager, and the Children's Services Manager. The Council Plan very much reflects the child poverty agenda, for example one of the key principles is to address inequalities, and separately one of the strategic outcomes

relates to providing help to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, inequality and increased cost of living, underpinning a Council-wide commitment to this area.

Separately, within Dumfries and Galloway one of the 12 Local Outcome Improvement Plan Outcomes is 'Work together as partners to eliminate child poverty', and one of the six key areas within our Children's Services Plan relates to child poverty, underlining the importance of this area within our Community Planning Partnership.

A Poverty and Inequalities Partnership sits beneath the Community Planning Partnership to drive forward the Community Planning Poverty and Inequalities Strategy through a shared Action Plan, and this involves many local partners including the third sector. Sub-Group four of the partnership has a specific focus on child poverty and this ensure congruence between child poverty activity and reporting and our wider action across the poverty and inequalities agenda. The appendix attached to this email provides a visual demonstration of local governance arrangements in relation to child poverty.



# Inverclyde Council

1. **Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

Inverclyde Council provides school clothing grants and free school meals for families on a low income who do not qualify for the statutory provision. Inverclyde Council's earnings threshold is the equivalent of working 24 hours per week at the Real Living Wage plus 0.5% which in 2024/25 is an enhancement of £402 per month (net earnings) or £5,499 pa (gross earnings).

## **Clothing Grant criteria**

- Scot Gov                      Universal credit with a monthly take home pay of not more than £796
- **Council                      Universal credit with a monthly take home pay of not more than £1,198**
- Scot Govt                    Child Tax Credit and Working Tax credit with an annual estimated income of not more than £9,552
- **Council                    Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax credit with an estimated annual income of not more than £15,051**
- A Total of 637 pupils were awarded clothing grant under one or other of the enhanced criteria shown above – which was 499 families.
- A further 88 pupils benefitted from clothing grants as they were either in Kinship care, LAAC or the family was awarded a discretionary award e.g. Ukrainians who had not received their first payment of Universal credits when they applied.
- Scottish Government minimum for clothing grant
  - £120 for primary pupils
  - £150 for secondary pupils
- Inverclyde council paid primary and secondary pupils: £150.00. This resulted in 1795 pupils benefitting from the £30.00 uplift (don't have breakdown of families)

Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group facilitated a series of local partnership workshops, with Public Health Scotland to identify methods that would have an impact on child poverty using existing funding and resources, the recommendation from these sessions resulted in developing a whole systems approach to supporting families more likely to be living in poverty. This approach has been developed with the Affordable Out of School Childcare service, offering families affordable childcare while also working with them to maximise their income from social security benefits, maximise income from employment and identify the challenges and work with them to mitigate the cost of living. Taking this approach not only places those families with lived experience at the centre of the service support, but it focusses on building relationships with them, developing trust and transparency between services and organisations and identifying pathways for parents through a child poverty lens. This is building on the strength of the Child Poverty Act taken actions beyond the statutory requirements.

**2. Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**

Addressing poverty is woven throughout the 5 themes of the 2023-33 Partnership Plan for Inverclyde Alliance. With a vision of Success for All – Getting It Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community there is alignment with the priorities outlined in the Health Board's Annual Delivery Plan and the Children's Services Plan, both emphasizing collaboration and reducing inequalities. Inverclyde firmly believes that a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach is key to creating lasting societal change and improving life outcomes for families facing poverty.

Of relevance are the Partnership Plan outcomes:

- Communities can have their voices heard, and influence the places and services that affect them
- Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced
- More people will be in sustained employment, with fair pay and conditions.
- Poverty related gaps are addressed, so young people can have the skills for learning, life and work
- Development of strong community-based services that respond to local need
- Homes are energy efficient and fuel poverty is reduced.

Inverclyde has an Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group which is chaired by Corporate Director of Education and Communities. This senior leadership provides strategic direction with other children and young people policies and legislation to ensure co-ordination and reduces duplication in a complex landscape. The Inverclyde approach is centred on a collaborative, and community codesign strategy to address the complex challenges of child poverty and inequalities. It involves a whole systems approach that tackles issues at their root by working closely with local parents and communities, third sector and public sector organisations and the private sector businesses. The Inverclyde approach will continue to create and build strong partnerships and uses local evidence, data and knowledge, to develop innovative solutions to longstanding problems. This approach emphasises prevention, early intervention, and sustainable change, with a focus on empowering individuals and communities to improve their own lives. This evidence-based approach has contributed to Inverclyde's reputation in developing effective and sustainable solutions to complex social challenges.

# Perth and Kinross Council

**1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

In recognising the complex landscape in tackling and mitigating the impact of child poverty our approach **has not been about developing new/additional policies but rather integrating actions within key strategies to gain traction**. This could be statutory and non-statutory activity. This has aided joined-up thinking to fully understand how decisions impact those experiencing poverty. Key to this has been building positive relationships with all our partners resulting in integrated planning and delivery of outcomes.

## **Strategic Landscape**

The overarching strategies set out are ambitions to mitigate the impact of poverty:-

- **Community Planning Partnership** - 3 Key Themes: Poverty; Employability; Health and Wellbeing
- **Perth & Kinross Council Corporate Plan** – sets out 7 priorities: -
  - Tackling poverty – Prevent and mitigate the impacts of poverty for children living in Perth and Kinross; Mitigate cost of living pressures for households experiencing or at risk of poverty; Maximise income from benefit entitlement and concessions for households experiencing or at risk of poverty.
  - Tackling climate change and supporting greener sustainable places
  - Developing a resilient, stronger and greener local economy
  - Enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential
  - Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people
  - Supporting and promoting physical and mental wellbeing
  - Working in partnership with communities.

All have some contribution to mitigating the impact of poverty. This demonstrates the complexities as well as the breadth of input that different council services, partners and communities have on delivering outcomes.

- **Anti-Poverty Task Force** – Is a multi-agency board which was set up initially to address the impact of the cost-of living crisis and has recently commissioned the development of a partnership poverty strategy.
- **Local Child Poverty Action Group** – This working group has been key to the delivery of our Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 and aligns to the Scottish Government's Best Start, Bright Futures; tackling child poverty delivery plan and is underpinned by UNCRC and the Promise.

These are all underpinned by a range of different strategies to support the delivery of key outcomes as well as performance measures: -

Developing a resilient, stronger and greener local economy	Tackling climate change and supporting greener sustainable places	Enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential	Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people	Supporting and promoting physical and mental wellbeing	Working in partnership with communities
Key Strategies	Key Strategies	Key Strategies	Key Strategies	Key Strategies	Key Strategies
Local Economy Action Plan (in development) Strategic Housing Plan 2023 - 2027 Local Employability Strategy 2023- 2028	Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy 2024 - 2025)	Tayside Plan for Infants, Children, Young People and Families 2023-2026 Education Services Improvement Plan 2023-2024 Corporate Parenting Plan 2021 - 2024 Raising Attainment Strategy 2024 - 2027 Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2023 - 2026	Carers Strategy for Young and adult cares 2023-26 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (Home First) 2019 - 2024 Cost of Living Strategy	Tayside Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Physical Activity and Sports Strategy 2023-2028 Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25	Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027

## Supporting Initiatives

An example of initiatives outlined within our Local Child Poverty Action Plan include: -

- To tackle the cost-of living crisis and as well as mitigating actions to tackle poverty the Council invested significant funding. Our recent Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) 2023/24 highlights that we committed £8.5m to support struggling families an increase of £2.2m on the previous year. In 2024/25 to date we have committed £9.4m approx. a third of which is funded through local funding decisions based on need and priorities.
- Multi-Disciplinary Locality Working – integrated approach to tackling local issues and taking forward the place agenda and the “no wrong door” approach. One of our Transformation Projects which has recently been selected as one of the Scottish Government’s Fairer Futures Partnerships. (Funding approved of £133k - 2024/25 and provisional allocation of £247k - 2025/26).
- Whole Family Wellbeing aligned with the actions within our Local Child Poverty Action Report. Key to this is the streamlined referral process across partners agencies (tell your story once).
- Other examples of partnership work includes development of the Good Food Strategy; Cash First; Debt Management
- Initial stages at developing an economic wellbeing approach to budgeting with poverty being used as a test of change. This is supported through the Wellbeing Alliance. Connected to this but a separate piece of work is the work we are undertaking with Fraser of Allander to provide analysis around preventative spend.

In summary our approach is about integration and adapting the way we work rather than developing additional policy.

## 2) Give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures as a senior level.

From a local authority perspective each of the Council’s priorities are the responsibilities of Strategic Leads. In the case of Poverty, the Strategic Lead reports directly to the Chief Executive.

Each of the council's priorities has a themed board. The themed Board for poverty is chaired by a Strategic Lead and includes other Strategic Leads from across the Council whose service has a key contribution to the delivery of outcomes. This in turn will report to Elected Members through committee. The group is supported by operational sub-groups.

From a partnership perspective direction is provided through both the Anti-Poverty Task Force and the Community Planning Partnership. In relation to Council membership includes the Chief Executive, Depute Director and relevant Strategic Leads.





# Fife Council

## **(1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

Fife is working to tackle poverty and prevent crisis helping to break cycles of disadvantage and provide early support. This is reflected in the Plan4Fife and the inclusion of a cross-cutting theme within the Fife Children's Services Plan <https://www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023> to improve Equity and Equality.

To achieve this aim partners have developed a range of innovative practice to help break cycles of disadvantage, in a way that goes beyond the explicit requirements of legislation and national policy. This includes innovative approaches to the use of data (such as the development of a risk-based approach to modelling the impact of multiple forms of disadvantage on outcomes) to better target intervention and support.

Below are some key policies Fife has implemented beyond our statutory requirements:

### **Food Poverty**

The Scottish Government funds direct payments to families in receipt of free school meals during the school holiday period at a rate of £2.40 per child per day. Fife Council runs a holiday hunger offer called, 'Cafe Inc' which additionally provides free meals over school holidays for families. 277,112 meals were provided during the school holidays in 2023/24. This holiday hunger programme is continuing in 2024/25.

### **School Clothing Grants**

Changes to the Fife Council School Clothing Grant policy have ensured no parents lose the grant due to migrating from Tax Credits to Universal Credit.

Fife Council has reviewed the eligibility criteria for School Clothing Grants to ensure that those currently eligible within the Tax Credits system will continue to receive Clothing Grant once they have migrated to Universal Credit.

Universal Credit has a much higher threshold for school clothing grant than the Tax Credit system. Some families currently in receipt of school clothing grant would therefore no longer be eligible if a change wasn't made.

Due to the ongoing UK government's migration of existing claimants from legacy benefits, including Tax Credits, onto Universal Credit, it was identified that parents of 300 children could potentially lose entitlement when they are migrated onto Universal Credit in Fife.

The exiting earnings threshold conditions for Universal Credit, is £796 per month.

Fife Council has increased this earnings threshold to monthly earned income of no more than £1666. In making the change to the School Clothing Grant, Fife has protected those customers who migrated from Tax Credits to Universal Credit.

Additionally, those customers who had moved onto Universal Credit "naturally" from 2017 through a change in circumstances now qualify again for the clothing grant.

This will reverse the reductions seen in clothing grants awarded which have reduced between 2021 to 2024 by around 1200.

### **Debt Write Off**

Fife Council applies a "fair collection policy" towards debt recovery which aims to give support where households are identified as vulnerable.

£249,400 has been written off using the Council Tax Allowance scheme since it started in 2021.

### **Free School Meals**

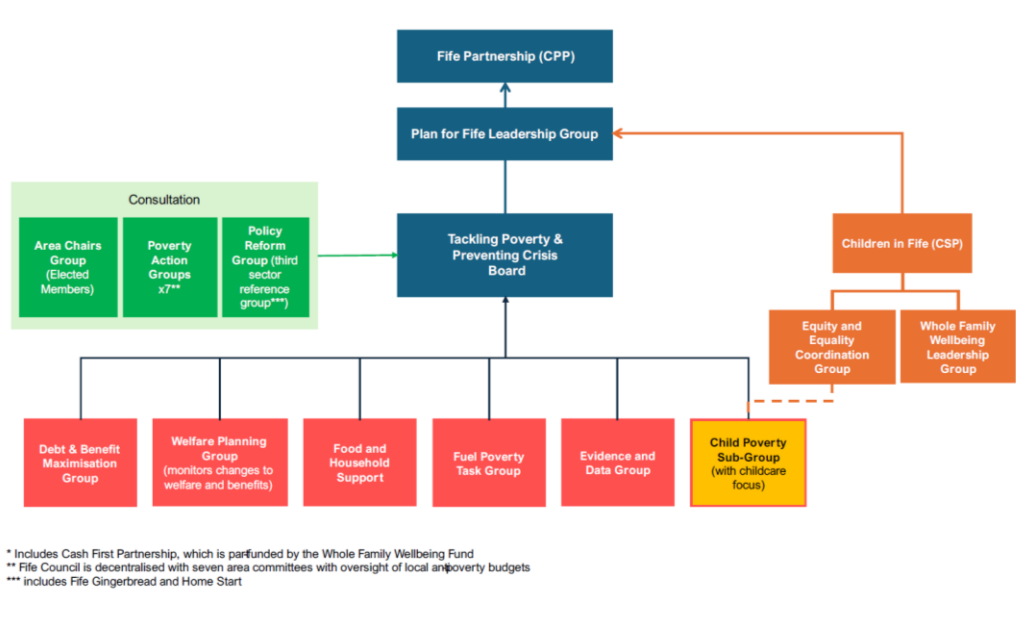
Free school meal (FSM) records for those in receipt due to low income are matched on a monthly basis with the sundry debt system to write off debt for any families who are now in receipt of FSM. The Council also takes a single view of debt for the customer and where a decision is made to write off Council Tax debt due to hardship FSM debt is also written off.

### **Cost of Living Support**

Please see the link below to the 12th of September 2024 report on the actions to mitigate the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/resources/download-document-sharepoint?siteId=b0a16c14-7250-44ae-86f0-8e50f76efb3c&listId=84f0c2e2-9406-43dc-b9c5-367fa62fed43&listItemId=83019>

## **2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**



The Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis (TPPC) Board, leads on strategic planning of the wider partnership approach to tackling poverty – a key element in the Plan 4 Fife (Fife's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan). TPPC reports to the Fife Partnership Board and includes representatives from the Child Poverty Group. The TPPC's planning and reporting encompasses local child poverty action reporting in Fife.

TPPPC works with Children in Fife, the governance group for children's services planning in Fife. It oversees children's services planning and reporting and children's rights reporting. Children in Fife leads on strategic planning of children's services on behalf of Fife Partnership Board and reports to the Board on an annual basis on progress with children's services planning. The most recent annual report is available in the link below ([https://our.fife.scot/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/612145/Tackling-Poverty-Annual-Report-2023-24.pdf](https://our.fife.scot/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/612145/Tackling-Poverty-Annual-Report-2023-24.pdf)).

# North Ayrshire Council

## **1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

The North Ayrshire Council (NAC) Cabinet recently received an update on progress being made to deliver our Child Poverty Action Plan. Within that update, a significant number of activities were referenced including most of the following:

- During 2023/24 our Money Matters Team supported residents to access over £20 million in financial gains from almost 6,000 referrals. Welfare Rights Officer provision has recently been expanded in 2024 due to significant success through putting more than £1m into the bank accounts of families in North Ayrshire since 2021. Two additional Welfare Rights Officers are joining the team from September 2024, which will enable the team to offer advice to all parents /carers from early years to secondary schools across all North Ayrshire localities.
- Our Child Poverty and Early Intervention Fund has allocated:
  - £50,000 to support our No Wrong Door initiative. In addition, we secured £78k from Scottish Government's Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund to progress work on North Ayrshire's Single Shared Assessment (NASSA) project. This will improve access to services and support a whole system approach to addressing residents' needs.
  - £61,322 to remove school meal debt.
  - £50,000 to explore initiatives to support travel for training and employment. This includes an innovative pilot to support parents who cannot afford driving lessons to help them into employment.
  - £50,000 committed to the provision of computer equipment for our communities to tackle digital exclusion.
  - £20,000 to explore sustainable childcare provision.
  - £20,000 for our targeted Active Schools programme, removing barriers to access
- To date over 7,000 households have engaged with energy advice and c.£600k has been disbursed through Emergency Support payments for households struggling with high utility bills as part of the Council's Energy Smart programme.
- 130 families are benefiting from increased household income as a parent has been supported into employment by our services.
- Active Schools' extracurricular clubs are free of charge across all school settings, supporting over 9,000 young people across the last year to be active.

An extension of our free school meals, which includes the provision of a healthy mid-morning snack for all primary school children and availability of ambient food on a temporary basis during 2024/25. This links to the next phase of national expansion of free school meals to those in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment in 2025.

- The Parental Employment Hub, which was launched in May 2023, provides a wide range of keyworker support, training and access to employment for parents from the key priority family groups. The service aims to prepare and progress parents to sustainable and positive destinations to reduce child poverty across North Ayrshire by increasing income from employment. The Parental Hub is occupied the Lennox Partnership, a third sector organisation, contracted by North Ayrshire Council to deliver specialist parental employment support who deliver the We Work for Families initiative.
- North Ayrshire Council's partnership with We Work for Families provides dedicated keyworkers who deliver person-centred interventions and support that enables parents to progress to and stay in suitable work. 350 parents are supported each year to address barriers to employment as well as develop confidence and skills to compete effectively within the labour market. A holistic approach is provided and health, housing, finance, childcare are only some of the key supports put in place. A recent example of innovative partnership working can be found in the team's engagement with North Ayrshire Council's Information and Culture Service, which provides parents with digital devices and training in libraries to engage with digital employment opportunities.

**2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**

In June 2022, Cabinet agreed to set up a new Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council and comprising senior NAC officers, representatives of the Third Sector Interface and NHS Ayrshire and Arran, to tackle child poverty. With the escalation in cost-of-living concerns this board was expanded to oversee the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis. The strategic approach to the themes in relation to child poverty and cost-of living were agreed by the Board and explored in conjunction with Community Planning, third sector partners and residents.

This Child Poverty and Cost of Living Board has helped to drive forward the work around poverty related issues and maximise the partner input to this shared agenda. In light of the importance of the work, the Board has recently recommended that it should be mainstreamed as a workstream of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), recognising its responsibility to share resources and to improve equality of outcomes. This change will include the development of a new and robust governance framework for work around both child poverty and cost of living. Reporting on progress is captured through regular updates on specific programmes of work using the Council approach to performance management, with these updates also reported through the CPP's annual performance reporting framework. The Board will also participate in regular topic-based sessions which will focus on specific areas of interest.

## **Stirling Council**

### **1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

Stirling Council established a cross-party Cost of Living Member/Officer Group in June 2022, to keep abreast of the ongoing cost of living crisis and oversee the distribution of additional, targeted resource. The Group fed back recommendations for support to be provided to Stirling residents. One recommendation, which was implemented, was to create a fund of £40,000 to write off outstanding school meal debt. All outstanding school meal debt that existed prior to 2022-23 was cancelled – a total of £36,392. Areas of improvement were also identified, to ensure there is a consistent procedure in place for managing school meal payments, including support for those families who need it. Stirling Council also pay in excess of the Footwear and Clothing grant – we pay £200 for both Primary and Secondary (SG funded at £120 and £150 respectively).

### **2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**

- In addition to the cost of living member-officer group, child poverty is integrated in reports to a number of Committees including: Community Wellbeing and Housing (where the annual Child Poverty Action Report is tabled); Finance, Economy and Corporate Support; and Children and Young People.
- Child Poverty is one of the key themes of our Community Planning Partnership.

## **Renfrewshire Council**

**1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

Renfrewshire Council's policy around families with children at school covers a range of supports provided to families with low-incomes. We fund specific dedicated advice services for families with children both through our own Advice Works service for parents and carers of younger children, and Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau for those of secondary school age. We recognise that families applying for Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants are low-income families, who may also fit into Child Poverty Priority Groups. As part of the Free School Meals and School Clothing Grant application process, every family applying is offered advice around money and benefits and significant client financial gains have been made over the last 2 years following the implementation of this process. Our School Meal debt policy is focussed on supporting families, and we are working across services and learning establishments to ensure that a referral to the relevant advice service is agreed with parents and carers of those whose debt has reached a certain level going forward. We also provide an additional Winter Clothing Grant of £50, a cash-first approach paid automatically into bank accounts each October, for each child in families who are entitled to School Clothing Grant.

**2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**

Our Child Poverty work is under the auspices of our Fairer Renfrewshire programme. Oversight of this programme sits with our Fairer Renfrewshire Sub Committee, which is made up of elected members of all parties. This Sub-Committee makes recommendations to the Council and the Leadership Board (again made up of elected members) regarding the programme and matters relating to poverty and financial insecurity and the cost of living crisis; food and fuel insecurity; Inequalities across Renfrewshire and Alcohol and Drugs. Council and the Leadership Board make decisions on funding and the Local Child Poverty Action Report is scrutinised and approved at Leadership Board.

From an Officer side, we have a Fairer Renfrewshire Officers Group chaired by the Head of Policy and Partnerships. This group comprises Officers from across the Council as well as Renfrewshire HSCP and OneRen, Renfrewshire's charitable trust which provides culture, leisure and sporting opportunities. This allows cross service information sharing and scrutiny on matters related to making Renfrewshire fairer, and promotes a cross cutting approach intended to increase impact on outcomes for our households who are living in poverty.

Support for low-income families is one of the three areas of focus within Renfrewshire's Community Plan and has a key focus as part of Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership Executive Group, as well as across key strategic partnerships locally such as the Children's Services Partnership and Local Employability Partnership.

## **East Renfrewshire Council**

**1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

- We have established a subgroup of the Local Employability Partnership which specifically focusses on the employability needs of parents. The Parental Employability Working Group is made up of 15 key local stakeholders, including a mix of public and third sector partners within employability. The group has established some key barriers for parents to enter and/or progress in the workforce and has identified some key actions to address these. This includes a recent successful bid for Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Funding for a project focused on flexible employment opportunities, and the recruitment of a Parental Employability Advisor specifically for in-work parents.
- All families who access Health and Social Care Partnership Children and Families Services, including Request For Assistance (RFA) team, are signposted to the Money Advice and Rights Team to ensure their income is maximised especially for families where ill health, addiction, and disability is a feature.
- In 2023/24, East Renfrewshire Council's Housing Service used £50,000 of temporary funding to provide rent relief on a short-term basis to 36 vulnerable tenants. These tenants included lone parents, domestic abuse victims, care-experienced young people and families just over the income threshold for benefits but experiencing real poverty due to the cost-of-living crisis. This supported them sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness, whilst providing time for them to work with advice services.
- ER Housing Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership have worked jointly to identify a number of properties dedicated to the prevention of homelessness for Care Experienced Young People through effective transitional housing. The purpose of this accommodation is to reduce the number of Care Experienced Young People becoming homeless. 14 properties have been established, the majority of which have been used to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people to date. These properties were developed in response to the recommendations from care experienced young people as part of the 'A Good Childhood - Collaborative Approach to Service Design' report from June 2023.
- We have worked in partnership with Edinburgh University's 'Smart Data Foundry' to develop a Cost-of-Living Dashboard. This dashboard uses banking data to identify 'financial wellbeing indicators' such as overdraft use, income from benefits and living beyond means. We are using this in addition to the published poverty figures, to monitor changes in financial wellbeing in 'real time' and pinpoint areas where household finances aren't stretching far enough.

**2) Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.**

- The Community Planning Partnership is responsible overall for the Local Child Poverty Action Report and is supported by a Child Poverty Oversight Group. The oversight group has responsibility for creating a strategic environment which

cultivates step-change in relation to tackling child poverty. The oversight group is jointly chaired by the council's Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Chief Officer, and includes senior representatives from Education, HSCP, Employability, Money Advice, Environment Services, the Third Sector Interface, the Health Board, Police Scotland and partner organisations including Barrhead Housing Association and Citizens Advice Bureau. The oversight group is supported by three workstreams aligned to each of the drivers of poverty.

- The Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership (IOCYP) has responsibility for “At Our Heart – Next Steps” The East Renfrewshire Approach to Children’s Services Planning 2023-2026. One of the key priorities within this Children’s Plan is tackling child poverty. The IOCYP is jointly chaired by the Head of Children’s Services and Justice and the Head of Education (Equality and Equity), and includes senior representatives from HSCP, Education, NHS GGC, Skills Development Scotland, Children’s First and other third sector partners.
- The Council and its Community Planning partners have recently reviewed the vision for the local area, East Renfrewshire, by 2040. The vision document is built on three pillars, a future where:
  - Our Children and Young People Flourish
  - Our Communities and Places Thrive
  - We all live well.

A Place to Grow is built around East Renfrewshire’s key attributes, opportunities and challenges. Each pillar outlines our ambitions for the area and presents our partnership commitment to reducing inequalities and closing the gap, through a ‘Lifting All’ section. These sections will inform the statutory Local Outcome Improvement Plan required by the Community Empowerment Act, 2015. Data visuals dispersed throughout the document have been taken from a comprehensive data profile and needs analysis and the people and place images have been designed to reflect the strong identity and diversity of East Renfrewshire.

Whilst the document can be viewed [here](#), it will not be publicly launched until the beginning of 2025. A governance and measures framework is also in development.



## **South Lanarkshire Council**

- 1) Please give an example of a policy you have implemented which addresses child poverty and goes beyond statutory requirements and Scottish Government policy requirements.**

**Operational examples:-**

### **Person/family centred approach to tackling Child Poverty: Family Support Strategy – Family Support Hubs**

The Family Support hubs are funded through the Government's Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) which is aimed at supporting the whole system transformational change required to reduce the need for crisis intervention, and to shift investment towards prevention and early intervention.

South Lanarkshire's implementation of the Whole Family Wellbeing strategy is progressing well to build capacity to improve preventive services and early support to families. The model is part of our delivery commitment for Keeping the Promise, holistic family support and ensuring connectivity to other relevant policy areas: Community Access to Mental Health, Child Poverty, Alcohol and Drug Whole Family Support, and Shaping Places for Wellbeing.

The whole family wellbeing strategy is a partnership approach between health, education, social work and the third sector. Four Family Support Hubs have been established in South Lanarkshire to provide the early social work response to pregnant women, babies, children and young people up to 18 years of age to prevent an escalation to statutory teams by providing intensive whole family support.

The Family Support Hubs are community facing and accessible provisions based in Hamilton, East Kilbride, Lanark and Cambuslang localities. The Hub Teams consist of social workers and family support staff. Each hub also has peer workers and Children 1<sup>st</sup> workers co-located to offer families a wide range of different types of support; with a shared remit of providing whole family support that prevents crisis, reduces inequalities and improves child development, family functioning and wellbeing.

A document highlighting the progress and successes of year one is available at Annexe A (South Lanarkshire Family Support Hub Annual Report Sept 22 – Sept 23).

A case study of the Whole Family Wellbeing Peer worker approach is available at Annexe B.

### **Person/family centred approach to tackling Child Poverty: Pathfinders project**

Pathfinders was developed through discussions between the council's Education, Social Work and Corporate Resources to address social, emotional, and economical factors associated with our young people, specifically young people on the 'edge of care'.

Improving levels of pupil engagement and attendance has historically been a challenge, particularly post pandemic and this is true particularly amongst the 'Pathfinder Cohort' of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. There was an identified need to be able to

address the root causes of absenteeism, distressed behaviours (challenging behaviours), and disengagement, which requires a holistic approach involving schools, families, communities, and partner services.

The initial structure created a collaboration between YFCL Service, Social Work and the three mainstream schools in Cambuslang and Rutherglen. These partnerships were exceptionally successful and positively evaluated by an external evaluator. Therefore, subsequently the programme has expanded to seven schools across South Lanarkshire. Each school has two Pathfinders with distinct caseloads, who undertake individual one to one support, group work and parental support.

This initiative is strongly influenced by the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan (closing the poverty related attainment gap) and the Independent Care Review.

A case study provides additional information is available at Annexe C.

### **Community empowerment example:-**

#### **Place based approach to tackling Child Poverty through statutory Locality Planning approach (Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015)**

As part of its ambitions to put local communities at the centre of Community Planning, the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership agreed to implement a whole system, place-based approach to statutory Locality Planning (known in South Lanarkshire as Neighbourhood Planning). Neighbourhood Plans are community led which means that communities set their own priorities, determine the actions and deliver on them with the support of a range of partners including third sector and through participatory budgeting funding.

The latest plan being developed in the East Kilbride area, is the partnership's first thematic plan which will include specific actions to tackle Child Poverty. We believe this to be the first of its kind in Scotland.

As part of a full analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation across South Lanarkshire (5% to 20%), the communities of Crosshouse, Greenhills and Whitehills were identified as being ranked amongst the highest levels of deprivation in the East Kilbride area.

Selected datazones in the EK South Ward, covering the Greenhills, Whitehills and Crosshouse areas have higher levels of child poverty compared to the Scottish and South Lanarkshire average, with average child poverty rates running at between a quarter and a third of all children in these areas living in low income households. (Source: DWP Stat Xplore, Children in Low Income Families 2022/23 dataset).

Just under half (44%) of the data zones that rank in the most deprived 1-30% in East Kilbride are in the EK South ward (Source: Scottish Index Of Multiple Deprivation 2020, version 2).

In relation to the local foodbank in the area. Figures for the East Kilbride Community Foodbank drop in service in Greenhills for 2023-24 show that 903 households received

food, equivalent to 1,504 people fed. More than a third (36%) of the people fed were children under 16, which was the highest out of all the East Kilbride drop in services (Source EK Community Foodbank).

As of July 2024, 7.6% of the working age population in East Kilbride South are claiming Universal Credit and are also in employment. This is the fourth highest rate across all wards in South Lanarkshire and higher than the Scottish average (5.7%) (Source: WP Stat Xplore July 2023).

Following discussion with the community stakeholder group, they agreed that the plan should proceed on a “whole ward” basis, however that door to door engagement should focus on the more deprived areas within Greenhills and Whitehills. An online survey, door-to-door conversations, pop-up events and engagement sessions in local primary and secondary schools helped gather a strong understanding of experiences of living in the area and what the community would like to see change in the future. The plan is in the final stages of development however by targeting a small geographical area with higher-than-average rates of child poverty, in this way, we aim to reduce the number and percentage of children living in poverty in that area.

Aligned to Neighbourhood Planning activity are area wide Community Partnerships. The purpose of these partnerships is to strengthen local democracy through local decision making and to align with local Neighbourhood Planning activity. They aim to ensure that their community is represented, fully engaged and has a voice in community planning decision making processes. The partnerships are community led by people living in the community. Membership varies however it typically includes representatives from Neighbourhood Planning Community-Led Stakeholder Groups, local Community Councils and other key local community groups and organisations.

The Community Partnership acts as an intermediary between Neighbourhood Planning Community-Led Stakeholder Groups (which have a focus on local delivery initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities and improving outcomes) and the Community Planning Partnership Board, strengthening links between communities in the local area and the wider work of the partnership. The Chairs of these groups are also members of the Community Planning Partnership Board. These Partnerships identify local priorities and provide a quarterly progress update on progress/highlight local challenges to the Board. The following diagram sets out a summary of the dynamics between the community-led groups and the strategic board and the partnership’s whole community approach.

Diagram 1: Place-based Community Led approach to reducing inequalities

# Place

## Bringing Community into Community Planning

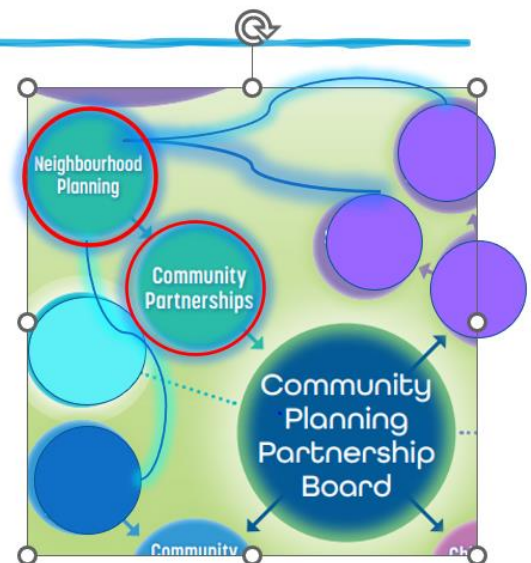
### Community Led Neighbourhood Plans

- 9 plans with 1 more in development
- **Shaping Places for Wellbeing Pilot –Rutherglen**
- Community Capacity Building and empowerment

### Community Partnerships

- Locality level partnerships
- A place on the CPP Board, regular reports

### Whole Partnership Approach to Place- *in development 2024*



## 2. Please give an example of how a focus on child poverty is reflected in local governance structures at a senior level.

### South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire approach

Given the statutory duties of the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership relating to reducing inequalities and improvement outcomes, when implementing the Child Poverty Act, both partners, in recognition of the need for a whole systems approach to child poverty chose to adopt a “whole partnership approach”. A partnership Local Child Poverty Action Report Group (LCPAR) was established. The group has 38 members who represent 15 organisations from the public, private and third sector. SLC and NHSL produce a joint report annually with input from the LCPAR group and fulfil their respective organisations internal governance and scrutiny arrangements. The Senior Officer who has the remit for the LCPAR in the council is the Director of Health and Social Care.

## Diagram 2: South Lanarkshire Community Plan 2022-2032 Priorities

### Community Plan 2022- 2032 Priorities

#### People:

We will share power to create lasting change.

We will work together to design, deliver and buy in services.

#### Progress:

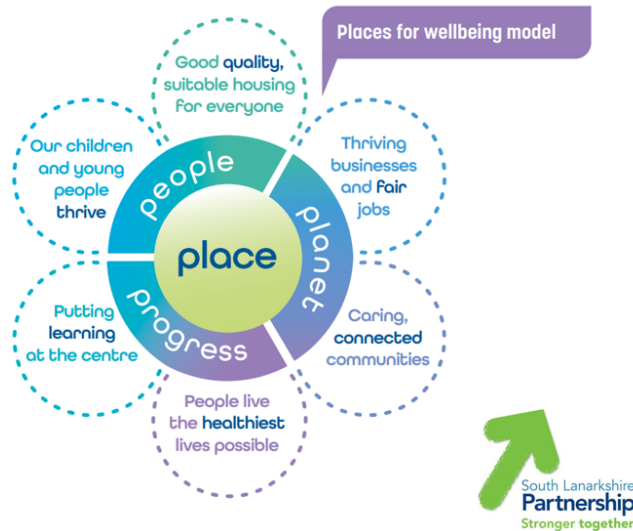
We will work together to plan quality local areas where people can live, learn, play and work.

We will look after our areas for future generations.

#### Planet:

Young people will lead the way on actions to tackle climate change and nature loss.

We will work together to help people do things that matter most to them where they live.



### Cost of the School Day in Schools and Early Years Establishments

South Lanarkshire has produced Cost of the School Day Guidance for all Schools and Early Years Establishments. The guidance was launched in March 2024 and provides excellent advice and proposals on various aspects of our Cost of the School Day commitment including:

- Advice on communicating with families
- Suggestions for grants/funding
- Suggestions for low cost/zero cost curricular trips, and
- Step by step guide to increase uptake of Free School Meals

All schools are asked to develop their own Cost of the School Day policy with pupils and parents.

### Cost of the School Day conference

On 25 March 2024 Head Teachers from all schools and Managers of Early Years Establishments came together to discuss the Cost of the School Day and get the first look at the new Guidance. Showing the high importance South Lanarkshire places on Cost of the School Day, our Conference was opened by the Executive Director of Education and closed by South Lanarkshire's Chief Executive.

Our Cost of the School Day commitments are contained in the diagram below:





## South Lanarkshire Council Governance arrangements

From the council's perspective, reducing inequalities including tackling Child Poverty is a feature of the Council Plan and the corresponding Resource Plans. It is also included in a range of other statutory and non-statutory council plans and reports where action on poverty and inequalities is a statutory requirement or has been highlighted through local community participation and engagement activity.

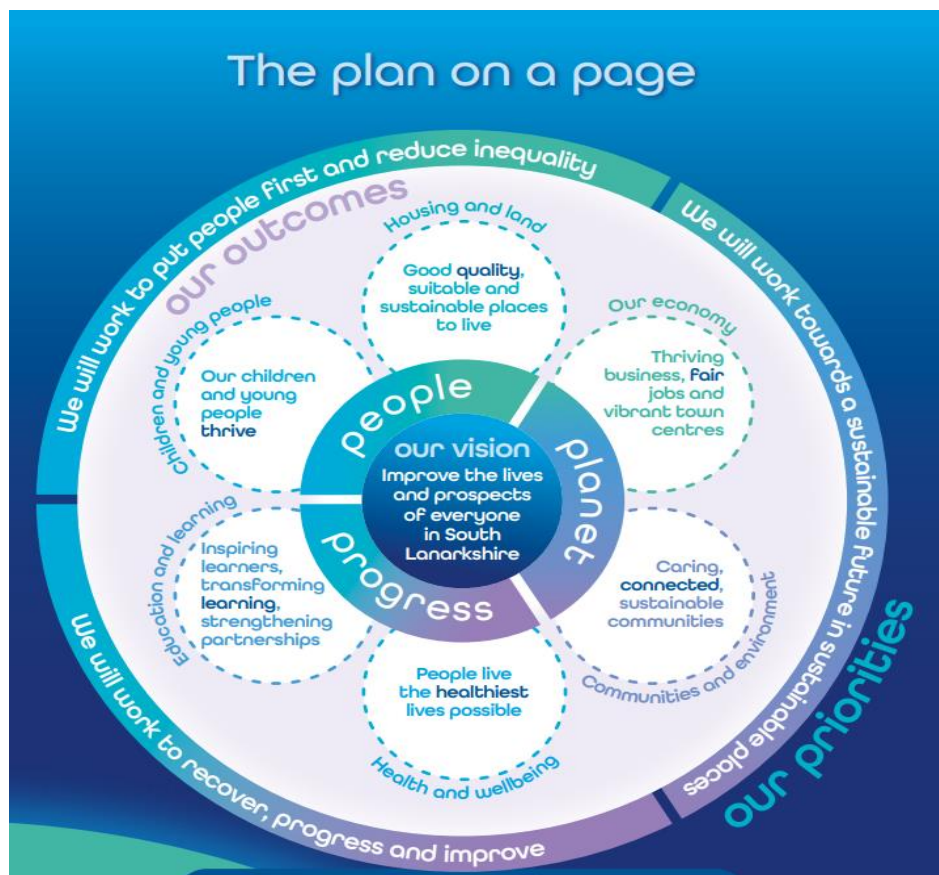
The diagram below shows all the plans that deliver on reducing Child Poverty.

**Diagram 3: Key council and partnership plans with Child Poverty action**



An overview of the council priorities is set out below. The council are currently carrying out a mid-term review of this plan.

**Diagram 4: Council plan priorities**



Progress in delivering against the actions set out in the Council Plan is reported to the Corporate Management Team every three months and to the council's Executive Committee every six months and annually to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Forum.

The range of work undertaken by the council to deliver the Council Plan is also reported to the community annually via the council's website and includes the following examples:

#### [Performance Dashboard](#)

#### Public Performance Reports

[Benefits and funding administration - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

[Children and families social work - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

[Education of children - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

[Working with communities - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

#### Annual Performance Spotlights

[Connect outcome - Children and young people - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

[Connect outcome - Our economy - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

[Connect outcome - Housing and land - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

Progress to deliver other statutory/non-statutory plans which also contain a poverty and inequalities lens will be reported through a range of decision making and scrutiny structures including: Community Scrutiny Groups, Senior Managements Teams,



Corporate Management Teams, a range of committees and forums. The findings from completed Integrated Impact Assessments are also included in these reports.

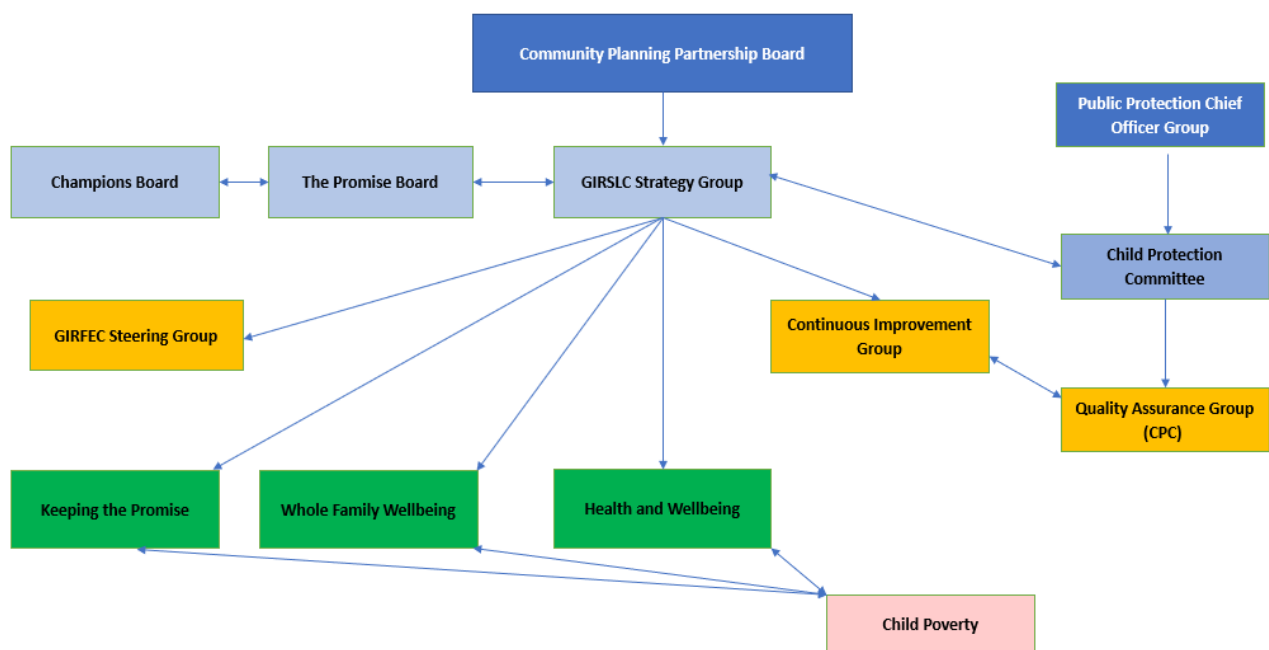
### **South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Governance arrangements**

The governance of Child Poverty through the Local Child Poverty Action Report Group is aligned to the CPP's Children's Services Partnership and a summary of their governance arrangements is provided in the extract below:-

#### **Extracted from the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Governance and Partner Commitments document 2023:-**

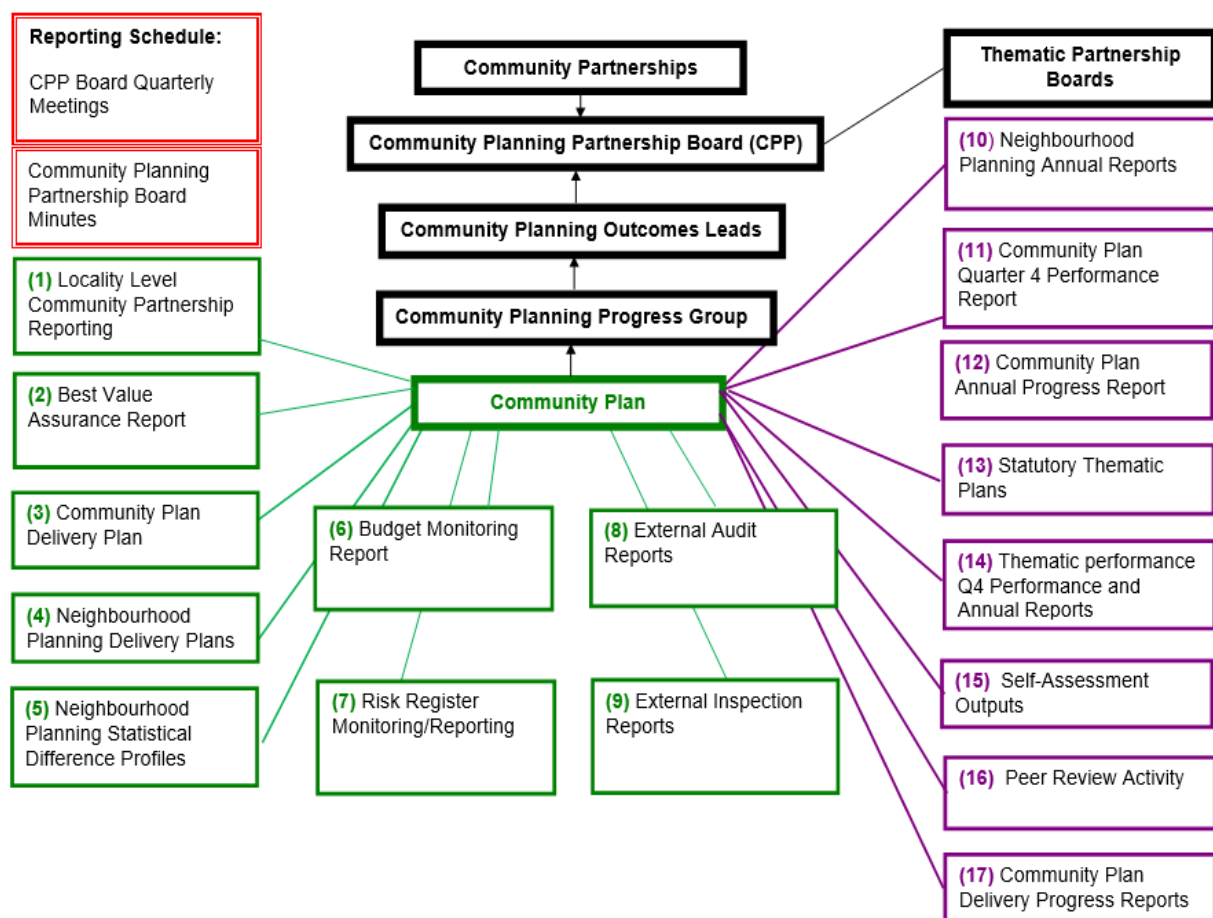
The [Children's Services Partnership](#) recognises that all children and young people in South Lanarkshire require the right support at the right time, to be safeguarded and supported to reach their full potential and thrive within their communities. The priorities of this partnership are: whole family; health and wellbeing; and keeping the promise which includes the Champions Board and the Promise Board. Key plans of this partnership are the Children's Service Plan and the Local Child Poverty Action Report. Whilst the council and NHS Lanarkshire fulfil their own statutory governance requirements. Annual reports and any policy developments are submitted to the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board.

**Diagram 5: Children's Services Partnership Governance structure**



The diagram below sets out the CPP partnership's monitoring, reporting and scrutiny arrangements:-

**Diagram 6: South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Assurance Framework**



## Annexe A

### South Lanarkshire Family Support Hub Annual Report (Sept 22 – Sept 23)

#### Background:

Social work in South Lanarkshire formally launched locality-based Family Support Hubs on 27 September 2022 following a year of testing the model on a smaller scale. The service priorities and improvement measures are aligned to the Children's Services Planning Partnership's implementation of the whole family wellbeing strategy.

The aim of the whole family wellbeing strategy is that holistic whole family support will be more readily available to families at the time of need rather than crisis. The ambition is that this will create a transformational system change within children's services that will reduce the need for child protection or looked after procedures and allow a shift in investment towards prevention and early intervention.

The whole family wellbeing strategy is a partnership approach between health, education, social work and the third sector. Most families will receive the help and support they require from universal services and third sector but for some children and young people there will be a need

for social work to respond in accordance with the local authority's duty under section 22 of the (Children (Scotland) Act 1995), to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Family Support Hubs have been established in South Lanarkshire to provide the social work response to babies, children and young people in need because local office teams are unable to provide this service due to other competing statutory demands. Instead, the Family Support Hubs respond to the referrals to social work for families in need and try to prevent an escalation to statutory teams by providing intensive whole family support.

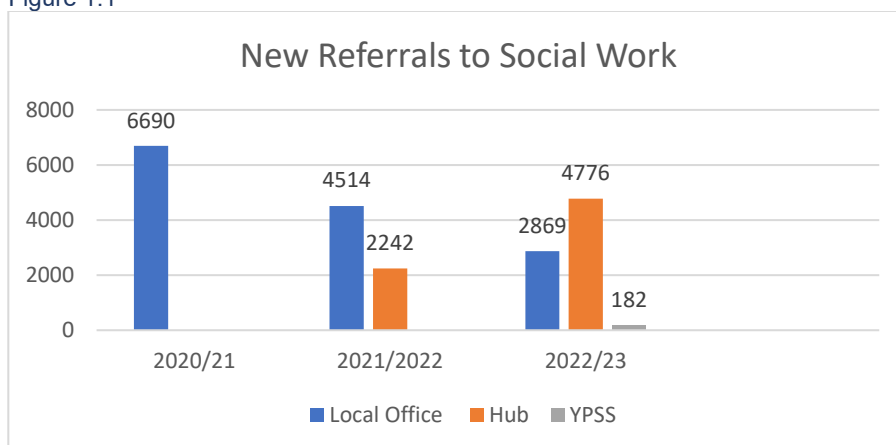
The Family Support Hubs are community facing and accessible provisions based in Hamilton, East Kilbride, Lanark and Cambuslang localities. Each locality area has 3 social workers, 7 family support workers, 2 parenting support workers, 1 peer worker and 1 Children 1<sup>st</sup> staff who offer families a wide range of different types of support with a shared remit of providing whole family support that prevents crisis, reduces inequalities and improves child development, family functioning and wellbeing.

### Service Priorities in Year 1:

1. Reduce the number of families requiring a service from Local Office Child and Family teams.

#### Referral data:

Figure 1.1



\*YPSS – Young Person's Support Service

Figure 1.1 details the referral rates to Social Work for babies, children and young people over the past 3 years and demonstrates that the Family Support Hubs have successfully reduced the number of new referrals to Local Office Teams.

Since the whole family strategy was introduced, there has been an increase in the number of referrals to social work, which is likely due to social work assessment and intervention now being more readily available to families.

In the past year, the Family Support Hubs have responded to 61% of the total referrals. This significantly decreases the volume of initial assessments being undertaken by Local Office Teams and will create more capacity within this part of the system to respond to child protection referrals.

#### Re-referrals:

There have been 1281 re-referrals to the Family Support Hubs in the past year. The main reason for re-engagement with the service was under the category of childcare concern at 45%. The second largest re-engagement reason was due to domestic abuse at 6% of the total. However, this is viewed positively as the model promotes the principle that families can re-

engage at points of need and for as long as is needed to ensure that they can get the right help, at the right time to avoid a situation escalating and there is an expectation that there will continue to be families that re-engage at different points of need.

Furthermore, given that over 60% off all referrals were consistently diverted from Local Offices at each quarterly review, this indicates that re-engagement was not due to escalation in concern that resulted in an increase in child protection referrals to our local office teams in the next period.

Figure 1.2

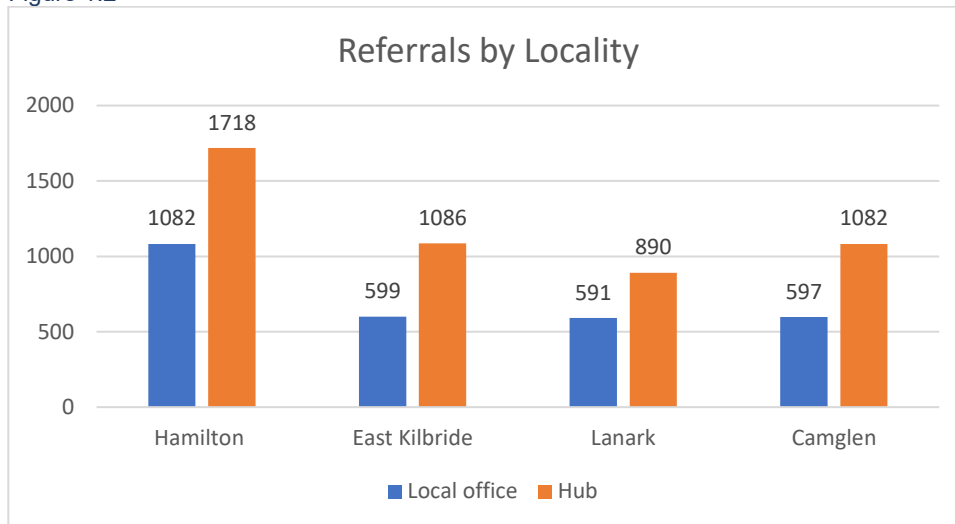


Figure 1.2 provides referral data for each locality. Please note that the Hamilton teams cover two locality areas and have higher staffing ratios.

In all localities the number of new referrals dealt with by the Family Support Hubs was at least 60% but in East Kilbride and Cambuslang the largest impact was seen with them both responding to 64.5% of new referrals.

#### Allocation data:

Figure 1.3

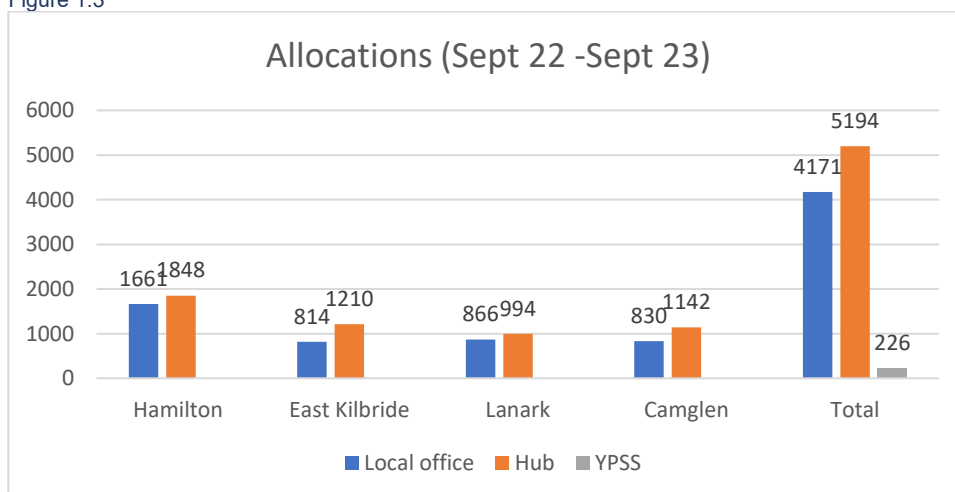


Figure 1.3 illustrates the number of children and young people allocated to the various social work teams for assessment and/or intervention and support. Allocation numbers are higher than referral figures as these include allocations to second workers and cases that have been transferred between the teams when there has been an escalation or a reduction in concern.

The current system does not monitor the exact number of cases that have moved between the teams, but manual data collection has commenced to inform future service planning.

The data in Figure 1.3 demonstrates that the Family Support Hubs have allocated a higher number of cases in the last year than other teams, which has led to a significant reduction in the number of allocations to locality statutory teams compared to previous years. See below Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4

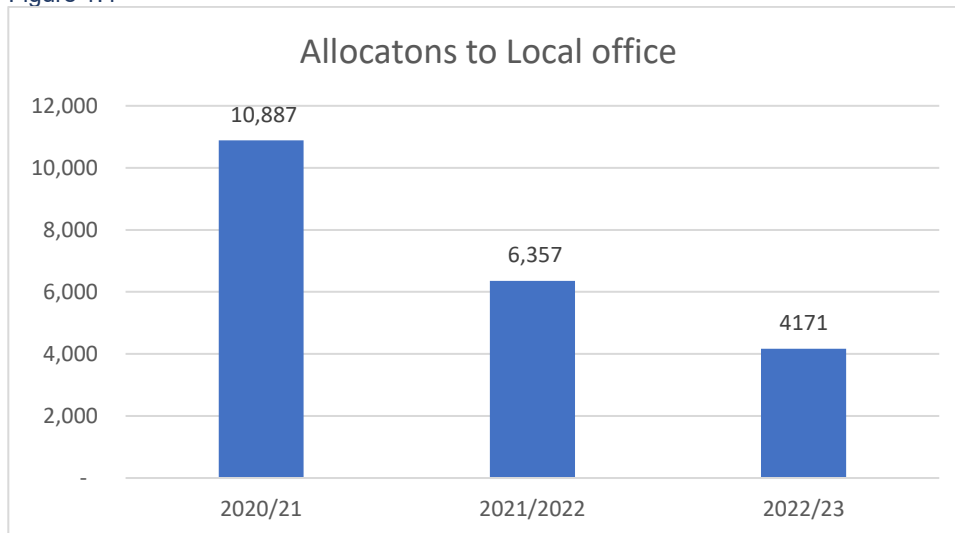


Figure 1.5

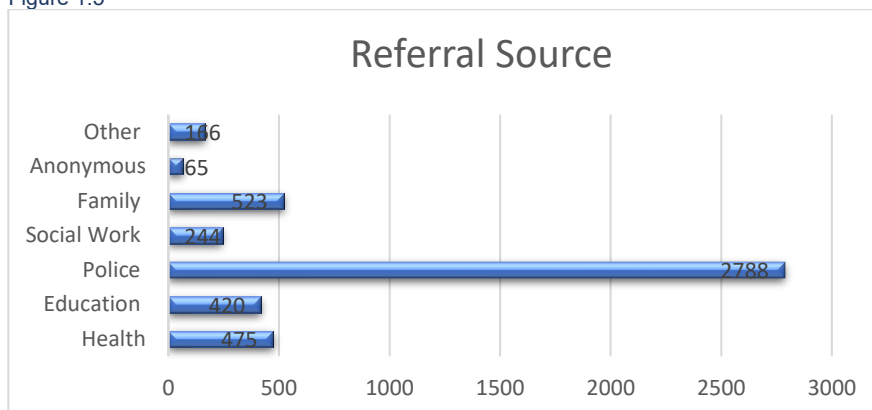


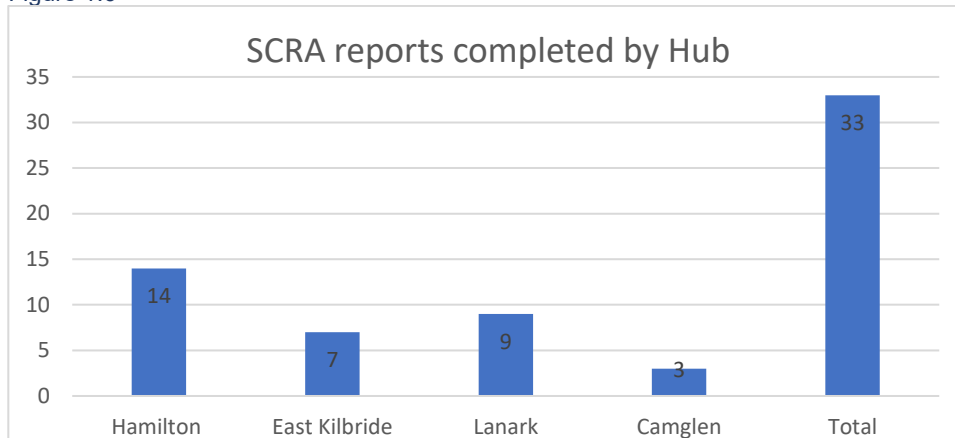
Figure 1.5 reflects the source of referrals to the Family Support Hubs. It is very encouraging that 523 families have referred themselves and are the second largest referrer to the Family Support Hubs following the Police.

The total number of Police referrals made to children's services was 3,928. 71% of these were responded to by the Family Support Hubs, 26% by Local Offices and 3% by the Young Person's Support Service.

68% of referrals made by the Police to the Family Support Hubs were under the category of childcare concern. 23% of referrals were due to domestic abuse.

This data indicates that most vulnerable families identified by the Police are being responded to by the Family Support Hubs, which evidences some initial success in diverting police concern reports away from crisis intervention to family support.

Figure 1.6



The Family Support Hubs work with families to try to prevent the need for compulsory measures. The data above details the reports submitted to the Children's Reporter to inform decision making for children and young people open to the Family Support Hubs. These have been both Initial Assessment Reports and Social Background Reports.

An area of development being tested in one Family Support Hub currently is new Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) report requests being diverted to the Family Support Hubs. The aim is that this will ensure that early help and family support has been offered to a family before compulsory measures are put in place.

The Family Support Hub team leaders attend all Joint Assessment Team meetings (JATs) convened by the council's education service. The aim of this representation is to ensure that social work services are offered to families before a referral is made to SCRA for non-attendance or disengagement from school.

## **2. Improve the pathway for vulnerable unborn babies.**

A multi-agency audit of vulnerable pregnancy cases and process mapping of the current system was completed in year 1.

A partnership steering group has been established to oversee the implementation and review of the pregnancy related improvement work.

In January 2023, it was decided that all pregnancy referrals will be held by the Family Support Hubs unless older siblings have open cases in Local Social Work Offices. The aim is that by positioning the pregnancy related work within the Family Support Hubs there will be less babies accommodated either at birth or in early infancy as more timely assessment and holistic whole family intensive support can be offered that will reduce risk and strengthen protective factors for the families.

The Mellow Bumps groupwork programme is offered by hubs to pregnant mothers, which aims to promote the wellbeing of the mother during pregnancy. There are also a number of post birth group work options available to both mothers and fathers that promote family wellbeing and parents understanding of child development.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is offered to all pregnancy cases that are allocated for assessment and intervention.

Additional support from newly appointed peer support workers is also now available. This support can be offered to pregnant mothers and their partners when there are drug and/or alcohol issues present.

All Family Support Hub resources can be utilised by the Social Work Local Office teams during pre-birth work to ensure there is a consistent offer of whole family support to all vulnerable pregnancies.

Figure 2.1

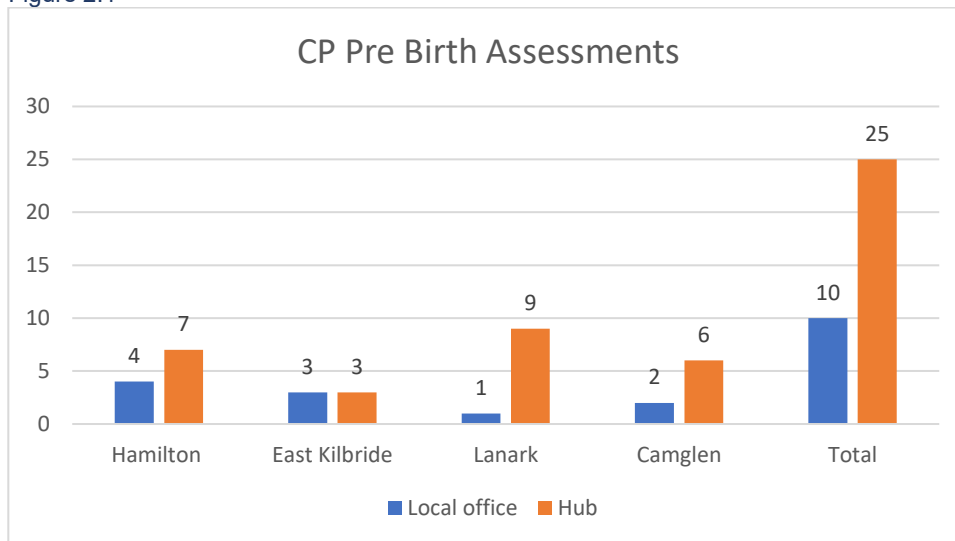


Figure 2.1 demonstrates the proportion of pre-birth work undertaken by the Family Support Hubs in the first year of operation.

From the 25 pre-birth child protection assessments undertaken by the Family Support Hubs in the first year, 3 have progressed to alternative care arrangements.

From the 10 pre-birth child protection assessments undertaken by the Local Office teams 7 have progressed to alternative care arrangements.

The care arrangement data for babies is being tracked until babies turn 1 to help us understand the longer-term outcomes of the child protection pre-birth work being undertaken within the Family Support Hubs and Local Offices.

## Parents Plan

In an effort to reduce the use of child protection procedures, the Hamilton Family Support Hub have introduced a parent plan approach for vulnerable pregnancies. This approach still ensures there is early identification and response to risk and safeguarding concerns through a robust assessment and review process using a GIRFEC approach.

This approach has been successful in reducing the need for child protection procedures in the Hamilton Locality. The team undertook 15 parent plans in the past year that would normally have met the threshold for child protection procedures. Only 4 escalated to child protection procedures and the remaining 11 continued to be supported using the parents plan approach pre and post birth.

In year 2, the parents plan approach will be implemented in all Family Support Hubs and will be regularly reviewed by the oversight group to ensure it is achieving the desired outcomes for children and their families.

### **3. Introduce Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)**

Family Group Decision Making has been aligned to the vulnerable pregnancy work within the Family Support Hubs. This was following a period of testing to determine where this approach would have most impact.

Family Group Decision Making is offered to families that are at risk of their situation escalating to child protection or looked after procedures, at the earliest stage possible. This approach is expected to empower families to make their own plan to safeguard their child. Children 1<sup>st</sup> provide this commissioned service utilising whole family wellbeing funding.

### **4. Develop a parenting group work pathway across the localities.**

The parenting groupwork pathway has been developed as a direct response to need identified in the parent survey. The pathway will provide consistency and accessibility in all four localities and will be delivered by a range of partners.

Eight Parenting Support Workers were recruited using Whole Family Wellbeing funding to deliver parenting support groupwork programs in collaboration with partner agencies, including Education, Health, third sector partners and Social Work. Their role will provide holistic support to parents through the completion of parenting support needs assessments and ensuring parents have access to appropriate support, including engagement in groupwork programs and provision of ongoing support to parents during and following their involvement in groupwork programs.

Regular Parenting Support Pathway Planning meetings have been implemented with key partners to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting parents via groupwork programs, and robust evaluation of impact. Parents will be invited to contribute to this process to ensure 'lived experience' is included in the ongoing evaluation of the Parenting Support Pathway. The Parenting Support Pathway is supported by the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP) through regular PoPP Coordinator meetings and accessing staff training in accredited evidence-based programs including Incredible Years Pre-School, Incredible Years School Age and Group Teen Triple P.

The revised Parenting Support Pathway has been expanded to include support for parents with children aged 0-18 years. These programs include evidence based and accredited programs and for those parents not requiring additional or intensive groupwork programs, the pathway has been expanded to include Family Support Hub specific groupwork programs to provide general parenting and wellbeing support, a positive social experience and an opportunity for parents to engage with their local Family Support Hub.

### **5. Embed peer support within the model**

During consultation, families said that staff with relevant lived experience should be embedded within the Family Support Hubs. An application was submitted to the Corra Foundation's Child and Family Fund and £487,340 was awarded to recruit 3.5 full time equivalent peer workers for a minimum of 5 years with the overall aim of reducing the impact of parental drug or alcohol use.

In 2023, 3.5 peer support staff were recruited and are based across the 4 Family Support Hubs. Their remit within the team is to try to reduce the impact of parental substance use by providing support to parents to address any barriers to their recovery. The initial ambition was that the peer workers would support 50 parents within the first year but have already exceeded this number within 6 months due to it being received positively both by parents and social work colleagues.



The first year is currently being evaluated and the report will be available before the end of the financial year in April 2024.

## **6. Family support buildings to be accessible within each locality**

Adapting four sites has brought significant challenges in the first year of operation, but in each of the localities a Family Support Hub is now open and accessible to families and partner agencies.

Each site is well used by families, social work staff and partner agencies and feedback is that they provide a welcoming, psychologically informed environment that is accessible to the local community.

## **7. Support the workforce during a period of transformational change**

The creation of the Family Support Hubs has necessitated large scale, systemic change in how children's Social Work services are organised and delivered in South Lanarkshire. The vision promoted by the whole family wellbeing strategy and adopted by the Hubs is one of transformational early action system change to create better outcomes for children and their families.

During the first-year, communication with our workforce has been a key priority. The transformation process and rationale for change ideas has been communicated to the workforce and reassurance given that they will be supported to build confidence in new tasks and delivery methods. Regular updates have been shared with staff teams, senior managers, and partners to ensure change has been transparent and inclusive. It has been important to ensure regular opportunities for staff to share the challenges they've faced at the frontline and their ideas for improvement. Staff have been included in planning and have made valuable contributions to the development of the service.

Staff report being invested in the vision of providing responsive and holistic family support that prevents escalation in risk and concern and report that they can see the positive impact being made for families already.

A challenge for staff has been managing transitions smoothly for families when support provision is moving between the Family Support Hubs and the Local Social Work Office. This has particularly been when there has been an escalation in risk and concern or looked after procedures are required. Therefore, a significant amount of work has taken place in year 1 to ensure that the interface between the teams is positive and transitions are managed in the best interests of children and their families. The team leaders in the localities meet regularly to discuss case transfers and an interface meeting also takes place regularly to consider ideas for further improvement.

### **Reflective and Trauma Informed Practice**

To continue to support the workforce and ensure trauma informed practice is embedded, funding has been used from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to recruit a Reflective Practice Co-ordinator. The Reflective Practice Initial Evaluation report below outlines the progress of this provision for staff, which commenced in June 2023.

Recruitment of a Trauma recovery Counsellor is currently being progressed using community mental health funding to work directly with children and families who have experienced trauma. This provision will contribute to the realisation of delivery of preventative whole family support. Families will have access to this specialist intervention before the situation has escalated. The counsellor will work directly with families, as an early intervention approach in line with local and National priority.

## Feedback from families in Year 1:

My hub worker helped me and my daughter get through a traumatic experience of domestic abuse by spending time with us, being available when we needed her and having a caring and supportive approach.

I have found the approach to be more supportive than my previous experience of social work and I'm planning to also take up the option of attending the parenting groups offered.

"You were there at the right time when I needed someone to talk to and you have helped me get the right support for him"

"I would not have managed over the past few months without having the emotional support. It has got me through a very difficult period, and even if I didn't call one week, just knowing someone was there for me if I needed it was great"

"The support helped me to improve mine and my children's situation, not only their environment but wellbeing too. My perception of Social Work has changed as a result."

"The support from the hub has helped me overcome all obstacles in my way and helped get my confidence back as their kind words has reminded me of the person who I truly am throughout my healing process."

"I have noticed a massive improvement in my daughter's attendance in school and her emotional and mental health. Before she was very withdrawn and hardly spoke to myself. Since working with the hub worker she has become more open to express how she feels and seems happier. I also received a lot of help regarding my issues within my home."

**Plan for Year 2:**

- An evaluation framework to be developed that ensures that evidence of impact is consistently gathered and there is a sound evidence-base for improvement actions for all aspects of the Family Support Hub provision.
- Quality assurance to be embedded within the model to ensure service standards are consistently high.
- Improvement actions identified for the vulnerable pregnancy pathway to be implemented and reviewed.
- Increase Hub capacity to respond to SCRA referrals with the aim of diverting more families from Children's Hearings and reducing the application of statutory orders.
- A trauma counsellor to be recruited and begin to offer therapeutic interventions to children and families.
- Further develop partnerships with other agencies that promote access to earlier help and support for families in their local communities.

## **Annexe B**

### **South Lanarkshire Whole Family Wellbeing – Peer Support Workers**

#### **Background**

In 2022 Family Support Hubs were launched in South Lanarkshire that aim to provide accessible whole family support to families in need. In 2023, peer support workers were recruited using Corra funding with the aim of having staff with lived experience embedded within the model and part of the offer of support. Each of the Family Support Hubs now have a peer support worker aligned to a particular locality area and after an initial period of induction the peer support workers began receiving referrals for parents who might benefit from peer support as part of the plan to support the whole family.

#### **Challenges**

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) has been confirmed until 2026. The Corra funding aligned to peer support is over 5 years. Both these funds have contributed to the whole system transformational change required to reduce the need for crisis intervention, and to shift investment towards prevention and early intervention. Sustainability of the model(s) may require new investment or disinvestment in other areas in the future.

#### **Collaborative Partnership working**

Children's Social Work Services are the lead agency for the family support hub model and for the peer workers. However, the Hubs implementation and ongoing operation is supported by a multi-agency steering group who meet regularly to identify and respond to systemic challenges and opportunities.

Being positioned in the Family support hubs has supported peer workers to establish links with universal, and third sector partners.

Children 1<sup>st</sup>

NHS Lanarkshire

South Lanarkshire Council Education Services

South Lanarkshire Council Housing Services

South Lanarkshire Council Money Matters Advice Service

South Lanarkshire Council Youth Family and Community Learning Service

South Lanarkshire Council, Social Work Service Reflective Practice Coordinator

[The Beacons Recovery Hubs](#)

Other Third sector, groups and services within each locality

#### **Resources (financial and people)**

Corra Grant – 5 years covers staffing costs of 3.5 posts. Cost of direct financial or in-kind support to families is met by Hubs and accessing funds and supports via partners. Income maximisation is promoted via referrals to Money matters.

#### **Performance monitoring**

Performance monitoring and reporting is in line with the grant award from the Corra foundation. The grant is over 5 years with an annual report being provided. The annual report details use of the grant including the number of parents supported and the impact of support. Numbers of parents accessing support are recorded by the family support

hubs and impact is measured by evaluation of interventions including feedback from parents.

In total 72 parents have been supported in the first year. This number is likely to be higher in year 2 as the workers are now more confident in their role but it has been important to give them the time and space needed to develop their confidence and an approach that ensures they are offering a good standard of support to parents and their families.

### **What has worked well?**

Parents overwhelmingly report satisfaction with the peer support provision within the Family Support Hubs to their allocated workers, partner agencies and management. Many parents and carers have told us that this is the type of relational support they have always needed but couldn't access previously from traditional child and family services.

- 100 per cent of the 14 parents who were recently surveyed said that the peer support provision has been very helpful for them.
- Partner agencies and colleagues within social work also report satisfaction with the response from the Family Support Hubs to referrals they have made for peer support for a parent. We recently surveyed 14 partners and colleagues, and they all said peer support was an effective way to offer support to vulnerable parents.
- All peer support staff report satisfaction with their ability to be responsive to a family's needs.

When it is identified that a parent could benefit from peer support, they are allocated quickly as there are no waiting lists and the peer support worker starts to develop their relationship with the supported person in a person centred, responsive manner by listening to what the person says they need from the service and spending time getting to know them. A parent told us 'it has helped knowing someone is there for me without judgement'.

In the first year we have been able to make social work staff and partner agencies aware of the benefits of peer support and how to access this for families they are working with. Making contact with other teams has been an important part of the peer support workers role and will continue to be a feature of their work. They have already developed good relationships with a number of services and helped child and family social work have an improved interface and visibility within recovery and treatment services. All of the peer support workers have developed a good knowledge of treatment and recovery services and other community based resources. They are confident in sharing this information with families, colleagues and partner agencies.

The initial plan was that the peer support workers would provide support to parents referred to Social Work's Family Support Hubs, however, during the first year of operation access to the peer support provision has widened to statutory child and family teams being able to access this provision. The feedback from statutory teams has been very positive and there has been significant benefits noted in the peer support provision being available to parents during child protection and looked after processes for their children. One social worker commented "the parents improved wellbeing has impacted positively on the children's sense of security and wellbeing" and another social worker commented "the peer support was life saving for a parent who was very low". It has also been noted that the peer support workers remaining involved with parents following decisions to remove children has been very helpful.

### **What can be improved on jointly?**

- Sharing learning of the peer support model and utilise the benefits of lived and living experience in shaping service delivery.
- Continue to strengthen links to locality partners with peer support staff to prevent escalation of need for parents and facilitate access to appropriate community services.
- Hubs learning from other partners utilising lived experience in their own service provision area.

### **Unlocking potential using the Carnegie Trust's 8 stage approach**

#### **1. Get out the way**

The peer support staff group are all individuals with lived experience. Lived and living experience is beneficial in understanding what works and what does not for people accessing services and supports.

#### **2. Give people permission to take control**

The peer staff work closely with other partners to empower parents – who are experts in their own lives, influence the type of support they receive that is individual to them. Feedback gathered from parents being supported should highlight areas of good practice and also influence future service delivery and targeted areas of improvement.

#### **3. Help people to help each other**

The model promotes a community strength-based approach grounded on relationship practice. feedback from parents who have received support should help identify themes and commonality in need to shape services and practice.

#### **4. Help people to do more**

The peer model assists parents to build on their own strengths and abilities to increase confidence and autonomy. Parents are supported to develop new skills and complete tasks to build confidence in undertaking these independently in the future.

#### **5. Give people more rights**

The peer model encourages parents to know and exercise their rights with confidence. By building parents knowledge of their individual rights and their rights in their community they should feel supported to share their views to influence policies and practices that affect their lives and the lives of their children.

#### **6. Enablement is the new normal**

The peer support model embraces 'enablement as the new normal'. The peer workers aim to increase a parent's potential and means to improve their circumstances for them and their children.

#### **7. Invest in disadvantaged communities**

The CORRA funding has been utilised to recruit 3.5 peer support workers to directly support vulnerable parents. The support aims to reduce inequality, increase access to appropriate service to prevent escalation in need.

## 8. Tangible focus on wellbeing

Peer support connects people with shared lived experiences to create a safe space and a feeling of being accepted and understood to access supports. It enables people to develop skills, increase knowledge and confidence to self-manage difficulties and times of adversity in their lives that may impact their health and wellbeing.

### Peer Support

#### Sara's Story

Sara was referred to me following a period of emotional crisis. She uses cannabis to deal with her mental health and is significantly affected by her partner's alcohol use. Establishing the relationship from the start was slightly difficult as Sara didn't feel she could trust services due to being let down with her previous service from social work. I had initially formed a relationship over the phone with Sara for about two weeks, as her having someone to speak to when she was feeling most on edge and anxious was reassuring for her to feel comfortable and understood before I managed to visit her in her home.

I had shared my lived experience with Sara, we had so much in common with certain life events growing up which we could relate together, we could then navigate the emotions and triggers to a point of acceptance to allow Sara to move forward with life again, being able to relate to Sara has helped strengthen the working relationship between ourselves. I helped Sara link in with Clydesdale resource network – mental health team in Lanark, also supporting Sara to contact the doctor for referrals to her Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN) and councillor for ongoing support. There was quite a lot of barriers at the start as Sara has felt misunderstood in the past from her CPN and councillor, the experience had caused her to disengage from the services and her mental health had spiralled into an emotional dark place.

Working together to build up Sara confidence and self-assurance has improved Sara mental health and day to day living. Sara is more driven and motivated to embrace day to day tasks and follow through with her routines for the children and herself. Sara's confidence has now increased, and she is learning to play the ukulele and piano and going to join a local music group.

Levels of stress within the family home have reduced significantly, now the supported person is much more confident in lifting the phone and seeking appropriate supports from mental health services, family and friends and social work. Relationships with family members have also improved.

I have learned in this experience that crisis can come at any time but so can solutions, and being able to problem solve with Sara has been effective. I feel pointing out Sara's strengths and talents crossed out her negative self-concept and gave me great fulfilment knowing what work I was putting in was being reciprocated as both Sara and I were reaching goals together.

#### Feedback from Sara:

*Charlene has been amazing. When we started, she said her goal was to help me get to a point where I don't feel like I need to move away to solve my problems. Didn't think that was likely but was wrong. It's helped to have someone safe to talk to and to feel like I have someone on my side. It's been easier to maintain the house and focus on moving forward again instead of feeling overwhelmed and frozen.*

*I'm almost grateful for what happened before now because I doubt anyone else would have been able to help as much as she has.*

**\*Names have been changed**

## **Annexe C**

### **Youth Family and Community Learning Pathfinders in South Lanarkshire Schools**

#### **Current challenges**

Despite intensive work being undertaken by schools and partners, disparities in educational participation and attainment continue to exist, this is particularly emphasised in areas where students are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Which can be due to varied factors, e.g. access to resources, socioeconomic status of the family, and the level of support given at home.

It has been noted by partners within our education establishments that there is an increased level of disengagement from vulnerable young people in school, and increased incidents of pupils requiring assistance with barrier removal to successfully engage with supports in education.

Lack of engagement by young people and families has made it difficult for schools to identify appropriate support structures required for individuals and families.

#### **Background**

Pathfinders was developed through discussions between Education, Social Work and Corporate Resources to address social, emotional, and economical factors associated with our young people, specifically young people on the 'edge of care'.

Improving levels of pupil engagement and attendance has historically been a challenge, particularly post pandemic and this is true particularly amongst the 'Pathfinder Cohort' of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. There was an identified need to be able to address the root causes of absenteeism, distressed behaviours (challenging behaviours), and disengagement, which requires a holistic approach involving schools, families, communities, and partner services.

The initial structure created a collaboration between YFCL Service, Social Work and the three mainstream schools in Cambuslang and Rutherglen. These partnerships were exceptionally successful and positively evaluated by an external evaluator. Therefore, subsequently the programme has expanded to seven schools across South Lanarkshire. Each school has two Pathfinders with distinct caseloads, who undertake individual one to one support, group work and parental support.

There are no formal statutory requirements related to the initiative, but it is strongly influenced by the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan (closing the poverty related attainment gap) and the Independent Care Review.

#### **Intended outcomes**

##### **Broad outcomes**

- Prevent escalation through the care system for young people on 'edges of care' using an early intervention approach.
- Development of collaborative partnership between key agencies, placing young people at the centre of all decisions.



- Development of a service that addresses inequalities and improves life chances.

### **Narrow outcomes**

- Improve meaningful attainment and attendance within learning environments.
- Identify and implement solutions to background issues that create trauma.
- Develop a secure base within our learning establishments that is ready and able to react to immediate needs of our young people.

### **Collaborative Partnership working**

- Aberlour
- Buttle Trust
- CAMHS
- Education/Secondary School Partners
- MCR Pathways
- NHS Lanarkshire
- Police Scotland
- Secondary schools: Trinity, Cathkin, Stonelaw, Calderside, St. Andrews and St. Brides, Lanark and, Carluke
- RegenFX
- Social Work Services, South Lanarkshire Council
- Whole Family Wellbeing Strategic Group, South Lanarkshire Council
- YFCL Universal Connections, South Lanarkshire Council
- Young people and families

### **Resources (financial and people)**

The Pathfinders Programme is currently embedded within seven schools in South Lanarkshire, with 14 Youth, Family and Community Learning Pathfinder Officer posts. Currently, Pathfinders is deployed in seven schools: Cathkin High; Trinity High; Stonelaw High; Lanark Grammar; Calderside Academy; St Andrew's and St Bride's, and Carluke High. This is funded through a mix of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) and Pupil Equity Funding.

### **Performance monitoring**

In 2023/24 the programme set a target to engage with 350 young people and families, providing support and sustained engagement that meets identified needs. At the end of March 2024, Pathfinders had worked with a total of 534 young people and families, which exceeds our target by 52.5%.

Impact is recorded through agreed fixed Community Learning and Development (CLD) impact measures that are reported directly through the South Lanarkshire CLD Plan. In addition, a range of Pathfinder specific progressive indicators have been developed to record participation levels and impact. The following data demonstrates progress against stretch targets set for the year 2023/24.

- Target 5% increase in meaningful participation in school or learning in their social skills. Actual 88%.
- Target 5% increase in young people who recognise a positive adaptation in their behaviour, Actual 18%.
- 5% increase in young people who identify positive development in their Health and Wellbeing. Actual 24%.

- 5% increase in meaningful participation in school or learning. Actual 12%.

In addition, the Pathfinders report all relevant facts and interactions about each young person through an interactive database system. All meaningful engagements with young people/ families/ other agencies are recorded, which offers us longitudinal insight into impacts, challenges, concerns, and support networks, etc.

### **What has worked well?**

The initiative has been subject to a rigorous longitudinal research programme, through an independent evaluator, which has recently been completed and is due to be published. In this report the evaluator Elizabeth King, former Principal Psychologist, Education Resources, Psychological Services, South Lanarkshire Council, has looked at the impact of the Pathfinder Initiative on the life outcomes for the vulnerable and marginalised young people and families that participate. This was the third of three research reports. This implementation support and longitudinal research programme has been informed by qualitative research methodology and by methods including collaborative inquiry and action research. An extract from the reports key findings follows. Analysis of the extensive data which has been gathered would indicate a number of key findings:

- The caring, compassionate, and empowering relationships which Pathfinder establish with young people, create a safe, secure and growth promoting environment which can have a transformative impact on the lives of young people.
- Pathfinder contributes to building resilience in local communities by working collaboratively with parents and carers, providing unstinting emotional and practical support, ensuring their voice is listened to and heard, empowering them, and building confidence.
- Pathfinder adopts a holistic approach and through that they gain a very broad understanding of a young person's life and the complex systems of relationships and layers within a young person's environment.
- In the schools where they are based, Pathfinder have quickly become highly valued and embedded as part of the school community, and they are increasingly becoming integral to how schools achieve their improvement aspirations.
- Mutual respect and esteem between school and Pathfinder staff is rooted in the establishment of shared vision and values, and the combined effort creates a power and momentum which can lead to creative and transformative thinking.
- Pathfinder are playing a pivotal role in widening the curricular opportunities for young people and extending the range of formally accredited qualifications.
- Pathfinder are contributing to improvement and change in the systems of assessment and planning for vulnerable young people.
- The work of Pathfinder is strengthened by working in collaboration with the wider Youth, Family and Community Learning service.
- An appreciation of the Community Learning and Development foundational principles, values and practices, is of great importance when understanding the 'how' and 'why' Pathfinder is making such a significant positive difference at the individual, family, school and wider systems level'.

### **What can be improved on jointly?**

- Pathfinders will be undertaking further training on the negative effect of unmet attachment needs and trauma. The further roll out of this training with partners is currently being developed. This will be supported by the Education Resources

Attachment Strategy, the Attachment-Informed, Trauma Sensitive South Lanarkshire Good Practice Guide and Accreditation Toolkit.

- Involving relevant school head teachers in interviews for Pathfinders.
- Youth, Family and Community Learning Service re-designing referral documents and aide memoir guides which support in identifying and referring appropriate young people.
- Four information pamphlets to be co-created/designed with partners regarding the initiative to inform schools, partners, young people, and families about the initiative to set expectations regarding support from the outset of identification.
- Pathfinders Strategic Partnership Group to be re-established in May 2024, to examine findings of report and look to the future of the initiative.

## **Delivering change and improvement using the Christie Commission four principles**

- 1. People:** Empower individuals and communities by involving them in the design and delivery of the services

At onset of initiative an independent researcher was commissioned to engage directly with beneficiaries, both young people and wider family network. The consultative research approach allowed beneficiaries to informally influence and direct the structure of the provision. From this research, priority needs were identified that influenced the adaptation of provision to match young people's needs. In addition, pathfinders have recently established a young person's committee that will conduct a peer-led consultation around UNCRC and children's rights. With the objective to inform future policies and practices in relation to this peer group.

This element of the programme has three distinct phases:-

1. Skills development – to allow the participants the opportunity to develop the key skills and knowledge to actively influence the programme and services they receive.
2. Consultation - the participants will develop and deliver a series of consultation events with their peer groups.
3. Conference/Youth Summit – young people involved will host a conference for key partners, sharing life experiences, barriers to participation and evidence of need to shape future policies.

- 2. Partnership:** Public service providers must work more closely in partnership, integrating service provision to improve their outcomes

The Pathfinders initiative was developed via a multi-agency planning process. From this a strategy planning group was developed to ensure a collaborative approach to the implementation and delivery of services. Additionally, by placing Pathfinders staff within the schools on a full time basis, strong partnerships have been established within a network of support, which has developed a joint outcome approach.

- 3. Prevention:** Expenditure must be prioritised on public services which prevent negative outcomes

Pathfinders is a joint funding initiative between the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund and school directed Pupil Equity Funding. By adopting this joint funding approach it

ensures both streams of funding support a key pathfinders concept of preventative practice via early intervention, and ensures we are committed and required to meet outcomes for the client group most in need of intervention.

- 4. Performance:** The public services system, public, third and private sectors must reduce duplication and share services to become more efficient

The development of the Pathfinders strategic planning group which includes partners across services and the third sector incorporates all relevant local partners. This ensures that agencies are working collaboratively and makes best use of agencies services, skills and resources.

### **Case Study - Rose's Story** (\*name has been changed)

\*Rose lives with her mum, dad and siblings. She has experienced different challenges within her life and has a range of significant learning needs. She requires additional time to process what has been asked from her and to plan her response, actions and communications.

Rose has a ADHD diagnosis and struggles to keep focused and at times disengages in education and learning. She has found herself in vulnerable situations and has taken part in risk related behaviours within the community.

Rose was referred to Pathfinders by her Pupil Support Teacher. He had worries about her safety during school and out with the community. Rose often skips classes and at times leaves the school grounds. The hope is that learning opportunities would be provided to help her progress in her learning and prevent them from putting themselves in dangerous situations.

It was identified that practical learning opportunities would support Rose's learning needs. Health and wellbeing supports including LIAM provided to support their mental health and wellbeing and to increase her confidence and self-esteem. Additional supports and opportunities had to be open and communicated to Rose as her involvement in risk taking behaviours had to be addressed. Rose finds key transitions within her life a challenge.

Through building and maintaining a trusting relationship with Rose, she was able to be open around her daily life challenges, her confidence and wellbeing. To best meet her needs, there were verbal consultations with her, and she was able to take part in taster workshops. This showed she enjoyed a practical learning environment which included baking, hair, and beauty.

A programme was developed in partnership with a local cake design business delivering workshops around baking and designing a range of different cakes. She engaged in these workshops on a weekly basis with some her peers. This allowed Rose time to develop positive relationships with peers, develop a new skill and work together as a team as well as complete tasks on an individual basis. Rose

reported back to share her learning and build her confidence in communicating in front of her peers.

Rose also has completed an eight-week hairdressing placement at a local hairdressers and has now started a new work placement in a hairdressers. This has provided the opportunity for her to experience how different workplaces operate, adapt, and be flexible in different working environments, whilst building her resilience. Pathfinders supported Rose prior to starting these work placements helping her be prepared on what to expect in the world of work, skills and qualities. Pathfinders also supported her to attend work placement meetings before starting the work placement. She has had a day out of school while attending this work placement.

Rose has also completed her Certificate in Professional Beauty Standards, Gel Nails and Gel Nail Art. The training and certificates that the young person has recently completed are recognised by employers within the beauty industry. This opportunity could be used as another career path for this her. Rose has mentioned that this has helped build her confidence and has given her a focus. In addition, she has mentioned this has helped with how she has been feeling as it distracts her from what she is thinking and feeling when she is focused on carrying out the different steps.

Rose has also taken part in different groups, football events and trips out with school and during holiday periods. This has help divert the risk taking behaviours and vulnerable situations that she at times found herself in.

Rose also receives one to one support as and when required. She often comes round to Pathfinders as she has mentioned she finds it a safe place to talk and when she is having a bad day or needs time to then re-engage back in class. A variety of wellbeing supports have been communicated and Rose has taken part in, that have been organised by Pathfinders, for example, the Let's Connect workshops delivered by SAMH.

### **Feedback**

'Work placement has given me the opportunity to go do something I like and want to do as a job when I leave school.

Football is a hobby and has given me something to do during the holidays. Pathfinders have included me in the Football events during summer. I have met people and friends there.

The different opportunities Pathfinders have given me I have been more open to go and trying new things than saying I don't want to do the stuff. I have done that before.

Pathfinders have helped me talk to people more about how you feeling helping with my feelings. I can go round there when I am having a bad day or need someone to talk to.'

**Rose**

'My daughter has been receiving support from Karis at Pathfinders. My daughter has struggled with the transition to secondary school and at the end of fourth year, still finds school life difficult to navigate. Having Karis as a support has been immensely helpful to my girl, Karis does all she can to make time for her when she needs someone to give her the encouragement and the support she needs to get through the school day.

My daughter has a personalised timetable and Karis has been instrumental in ensuring that the timetable is tailored to my daughter's needs. My girl struggles with academic studies and Karis has ensured that she has had opportunities to let her artistic side flourish and in doing so, has built her confidence enormously.

Work placements in two hairdressers have helped my daughter prepare for the workplace and have shown her she can work with others and interact with customers and staff. The cake decoration class and nail design course have been perfect for her. Having ADHD, being able to immediately see her success in a project has been a brilliant experience for her whilst learning new skills.

Karis and Pathfinders have had an enormously positive impact on my daughter's life. To have someone who will always be there to support and reinforce that she has talents has been very important to my daughter, to have someone who can provide opportunities which fit her needs, talents and interests has been life affirming for her. Karis has been pivotal in bringing my daughter back to a place of happiness after the struggles she has had and my husband and I are eternally grateful to Karis.'

**Parent of Rose**

'I've had the pleasure of teaching Rose in the nail training course. Rose has been a very polite and attentive student who has undertaken instruction exceptionally well. On top of this, Rose has also encouraged her fellow peers and shown lovely manners. She has been a pleasure to teach and I wish Rose well in all future endeavours.'

**Michelle, Nail Course Trainer**