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13 May 2026

**To: Councillors Saxton (Chair), Bell, Cochrane, Ferry, Lyons,
McGinley, Scott and Weir**

All other Elected Members for information only

Dear Councillor

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL

You are requested to participate in the above Panel to be held on **Tuesday, 19 May 2026 at 10.00 a.m.** for the purpose of considering the undernoted business.

This meeting will be held in the County Hall, County Buildings, Ayr on a hybrid basis for Elected Members, will be live-streamed and available to view at <https://south-ayrshire.public-i.tv/>

Yours sincerely

CATRIONA CAVES
Chief Governance Officer

B U S I N E S S

1. Declarations of Interest.
2. Minutes of previous meetings of 10 March 2026 (copy herewith).
3. Action Log and Work Programme (copy herewith).

4. Local Performance Report: Police Scotland – Submit report by the Chief Executive (copy herewith).
5. Local Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Submit report by the Chief Executive (copy herewith).
6. Council Plan (2023-2028): Quarter 4 Update (Year 3 – 2025/2026) – Submit report by the Chief Executive (copy herewith).
7. Audit Scotland: Delayed Discharges – Submit report by the Director of Health and Social Care (copy herewith).
8. Community Learning and Development Plan 2024-2027 – Submit report by the Director of Communities and Transformation (copy herewith).
9. Thriving Economy Annual Report 2025/26 – Submit report by the Director of Communities and Transformation (copy herewith).

For more information on any of the items on this agenda, please telephone Kayley Hancox,
Committee Services on 01292 612724, Wellington Square, Ayr or
e-mail: kayley.hancox@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk

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SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes of hybrid webcast meeting on
10 March 2026 at 10.00 a.m.

Present
in County Buildings: Councillors Philip Saxton (Chair), Brian McGinley, Gavin Scott and George Weir.

Attending
Remotely: Councillors Ian Cochrane, Stephen Ferry and Lee Lyons.

Apology: Councillor Kenneth Bell.

Attending
in County Buildings: K. Anderson, Assistant Director – Corporate Policy Strategy and Performance; L. Reid, Assistant Director – Transformation; J. Tait, Acting Assistant Director – Communities; A. Mutch, Service Lead – Sport, Leisure and Golf; S. McCall, Service Lead – Transformation; D. Mackintosh, Co-ordinator – Legal Services (Litigation); S. Yeardley, Co-ordinator – Transformation (Assets) J. Chapman, Committee Services Officer and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Attending
Remotely: H. Anderson, Acting Service Lead – Thriving Communities; C. Richards, Co-ordinator – Transformation; B. Mulgrew, Co-ordinator – Transformation.

Chair's Remarks.

The Chair

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting; and
- (2) outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live.

1. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

The Chair called the Sederunt for the meeting and having called the roll, confirmed that that there were no declarations of interest by Members of the Panel in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Minutes of previous meetings.

The **Minutes** of 11 February 2026 ([issued](#)) and 26 February 2026 – Special ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

3. **Action Log and Work Programme.**

There was submitted an update of the **Action Log and Work Programme** ([issued](#)) for this Panel.

The Assistant Director - Corporate Policy, Strategy, and Performance advised

- (1) that there was one action recorded on the log, to which the Service Lead - Transformation had provided a detailed response; and
- (2) that the Work Programme was up to date; however, there was a request from the previous meeting concerning the reasons for deferral and that this information would be incorporated into the latest update column moving forward. Cleansing issues related to due dates had been highlighted and an update would be provided to the next panel.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to:

- (a) whether future meetings would proceed considering Purdah; and the Co-ordinator – Legal Services, confirmed that they would take place as normal;
- (b) providing an explanation as to why No 11 – Additional Resources Social Care Support was deferred from 13 January 2026 until June 2026; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance advised that he would obtain this information and provide it to Panel Members; and
- (c) how were the reports in respect of Item 4 -The Work Force Plan and Item 6 the South Ayrshire Golf South Ayrshire Strategy, affected by the recent budget decision; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance indicated that the Work Force Plan was deferred due to the potential impact of the Budget on it, and it would be presented to the next Panel for discussion before being referred to Cabinet. Additionally, the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf mentioned that concerning Golf, he did not expect a significant impact based on the fees, charges, and proposed savings, but he would be able to provide more detailed feedback in April or May.

The Panel,

Decided:

- (i) to note the current position with regard to the Action Log;
- (ii) to note the current status of the Work Programme.

4. **Prestwick Leisure Centre.**

There was submitted a report of 17 February 2026 ([issued](#)) by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Panel with information on the performance of Prestwick Leisure Club since reopening the facility in November 2025 following refurbishment.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to:

- (1) the figures being encouraging but how did they reflect the time of year; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf advised that a comparison from the previous year had been carried out which showed the figures had doubled;
- (2) Learn to Swim - how far was there scope to increase; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf advised that there was scope to increase by 5-10%;
- (3) what methods were used to keep in contact with customers during the closedown; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf advised that the methods used were social media, e-mails and the Leisure App which 10,000 customers used;
- (4) had accessibility improved within the pool; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf stated that the biggest change was within the changing village and that every opportunity had been taken to improve accessibility;
- (5) what engagement was there with Service Users to improve and enhance the experience; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf advised that the first 12 months was critical to understand the impact of snagging issues and that there was an ongoing detailed tracker with the contactor to resolve any issues;
- (6) had the South Ayrshire swim team and early bird sessions been re-instated; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf confirmed that they had;
- (7) what the overall annual cost of running the Prestwick Centre was; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf advised that he did not have these figures but would respond to Members following the meeting;
- (8) what the estimated annual income projection for the Prestwick Centre would be; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf stated that it was projected to be between £90,000 - £100,000 of annual membership growth with the addition of £44,000 annual energy efficiency savings; and
- (9) the effect of the Troon closure on Service Users at the Prestwick Centre was discussed; and the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure and Golf indicated that, at this point, there had been a favourable change, with Service Users opting to remain at Prestwick.

The Panel,

Decided: to scrutinise the performance report of Prestwick Leisure Club and provide feedback to the Service Lead - Sport, Leisure & Golf.

5. Thriving Communities Progress Report 2024/2025.

There was submitted a report of 16 February 2026 ([issued](#)) by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel with an update on the performance and impact of Thriving Communities during 2024/25.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to:

- (1) what the level of engagement within the activities was represented by Thriving Communities; and the Acting Assistant Director – Communities advised that Thriving Communities was actively engaged with Say It Out Loud;
- (2) what the strategic framework for the funding mechanisms entailed; and the Acting Assistant Director – Communities advised that the framework was complex and provided examples to Members;
- (3) what training opportunities were available for staff; and the Acting Assistant Director – Communities advised that a comprehensive workforce strategy was established, focusing on investing in staff to achieve CLD qualifications at University, facilitating inter-agency training, and promoting modern apprenticeships;
- (4) what areas of work/activities was being undertaken within the Kyle Ward; and the Acting Assistant Director – Communities gave a brief breakdown and advised that he would be happy to provide an update offline;
- (5) what activities were available at the Tennis and Fitness Club; and the Acting Assistant Director – Communities advised that he did not have the information but would obtain it and share offline with Members;
- (6) what activities the Bowling Clubs who received large grants were offering; and the Acting Assistant Director – Communities advised of the strategy being implemented to secure funding for the Communities, enabling them to assume control of their assets, provided an example and advised if Members required information on any specific projects he would be happy to provide this; and
- (7) Modern Apprenticeships; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy Strategy and Performance provided an update to Members.

The Panel,

Decided: to approve the report and note the activity, performance, outcomes and achievements delivered during 2024/25 (Appendix 1).

6. Shaping our Future Council.

There was submitted a report of 20 February 2026 ([issued](#)) by the Director of Communities and Transformation providing the Panel with an update on the progress of Shaping Our Future Council transformation activity.

Questions were raised and comments made by Members in relation to:

- (1) what extent the components within appendices 1 and 2 were discreet and to what extent did they overlap in terms of the activity or organisation; and the Assistant Director - Transformation and the Service Lead – Transformation offered clarification, and it was noted that future reports would include more narrative addressing interdependencies.
- (2) how many risks were represented within appendices 1-4 at page 127; and the Service Lead - Transformation advised that there were 9;
- (3) where in the list of aspects did the duration of projects and the timing of key milestones appear in relation to appendix 2, page 91; and the Service Lead – Transformation stated that this was part of the first initial high-level messaging and if it was not displayed there, it would be updated to reflect;
- (4) change management; a Member of the Panel gave his views;
- (5) prioritising of projects; and the Assistant Director – Transformation advised that year one priority meant when the project was scheduled to commence and not complete and provided examples to Members;
- (6) Solar Farm consultation; and the Service Lead – Transformation (Assets) advised that Solar Farm phase 2 had been completed and approval had been sought and granted to proceed to phase 3 by Cabinet and that Public Consultation would be part of the planning process within phase 3 of the project;
- (7) Dailly Community Centre; and the Service Lead – Transformation (Assets) stated that South Ayrshire Council did not own the Community Centre, that it was leased from a Private Ownership and would not be closed but transferred to a local Community Group;
- (8) how were the results of the consultations communicated to decision makers; and the Service Lead -Transformation explained that many of the consultations listed were not undertaken by Transformation and provided Members with examples. The Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance further advised that Transformation team was moving in the right direction regarding community consultation;
- (9) transparency; and the Assistant Director – Corporate Policy Strategy and Performance advised that within part of the Integrated Impact Assessment there was a link within the report which when clicked upon provided more detail of how the public consultation had influenced decision making; and
- (10) Scotland Excel Procurement Review; and the Service Lead -Transformation advised that this project has been taken forward by the Chief Financial Officer.

The Panel,

Decided:

- (a) to note the update on transformation activity including the 'Shaping Our Future Council' Dashboard Report at Appendix 1i; the Portfolio On A Page Appendix 1ii; Portfolio Programme Plan 1iii; Portfolio Risk Register 1iv, and Benefits Report at Appendix 1v;
- (b) to note the mechanisms and measures that had been introduced to enhance stakeholder and community engagement including the Transformation and Communications Approach at Appendix 2; and;
- (c) to note that the next update on Shaping Our Future Council will be presented to Service and Partnerships and Performance Panel in September 2026, in line with the agreed scrutiny and reporting arrangements.

The meeting ended at 11:30 a.m.

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL – ACTION LOG

No.	Date of Meeting	Title of Report	Actions	Assigned to	Update	Completed

SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS PERFORMANCE PANEL – WORK PROGRAMME

	Issue	Actions	Assigned To	Due Date To Panel	Latest update
1.	Local Performance Report: Police Scotland	Update	Chief Executive	19 May 2026	Report to this Panel
2.	Local Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Provide members with information about performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire	Chief Executive	19 May 2026	Report to this Panel
3.	Council Plan (2023-2028): Quarter 4 Update (Year 3 – 2025/2026)	Update	Chief Executive	19 May 2026	Report to this Panel
4.	Audit Scotland Report: Delayed Discharges	Update	Director of Health and Social Care	19 May 2026	Report to this Panel
5.	Community Learning and Development Plan 2024-2027 - Progress Report	Scrutiny of Report	Director of Communities and Transformation	19 May 2026	Report to this Panel
6.	Thriving Economy Annual Report 2025/26	Update	Director of Communities and Transformation	19 May 2026	Report to this Panel

	Issue	Actions	Assigned To	Due Date To Panel	Latest update
7.	Coastal Communities	Report to Panel	Chief Executive	9 June 2026	Awaiting Report
8.	Scheme of Assistance 2025-29	Annual Update	Chief Executive	9 June 2026	Awaiting Report
9.	Additional Resources – Social Care Support Finance – Revenues and Benefits Services	Update (to include outcome monitoring on the benefits of the proposals for projects and initiatives)	Director of Health and Social Care	9 June 2026	Awaiting Report
10.	Golf South Ayrshire – Strategy Update	Follow-up Report	Director of Communities and Transformation	9 June 2026	Awaiting Report
11.	South Ayrshire Inward Investment Strategy	Annual Progress Report	Director of Communities and Transformation	15 September 2026	Awaiting Report
12.	Shaping our future Council	Report to Panel	Director of Communities and Transformation	15 September 2026	Awaiting Report

South Ayrshire Council
Report by Chief Executive
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 19th May 2026

Subject: Local Performance Report: Police Scotland

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Panel with information about the quarter four performance (2025/2026) of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel scrutinises the quarter four (2025/2026) performance report of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire and provides feedback to the Divisional Commander.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Police and Fire and Rescue Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 created a national police force and a national fire and rescue service. The implications of the legislation for local authorities are that the Council will:

- Comment on SPA and SFRS Strategic Plans;
- Contribute to the preparation of the local plan for police and local fire and rescue plan and approve the plans;
- Monitor the delivery of police and fire and rescue functions in the area and make recommendations for improvement; and
- Provide feedback to the Local Police Commander and the Fire and Rescue Service Local Senior Officer.

- 3.2 The Local Police Plan for South Ayrshire was agreed by [Cabinet](#) in March 2023.

4. Detail

- 4.1 The Divisional Commander has provided the attached performance report (Appendix 1) which Panel members are invited to scrutinise and provide feedback on.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with legal requirements.

- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 If the recommendation is rejected then there is a risk that the Council is considered to not have discharged its responsibility under the Police and Fire and Rescue Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 in terms of scrutinising local performance.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority Three: Civic and Community Pride.

13. **Link to Shaping Our Future Council** Yes No

14. **Results of Consultation**

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian Connolly, Council Leader and Policy Lead for Economy and Strategy and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers Report to [Cabinet of 14 March 2023](#) - Local Police Plan 2023-2026

Person to Contact Kevin Anderson, Assistant Director (Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance)
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Susan McCardie, Service Lead (Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability)
County Buildings, Ayr
E-mail susan.mccardie@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 5th May 2026

Quarter 4 : 30th September 2025 to 31st March 2026



South Ayrshire Performance Report

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Introduction

As the Local Policing Commander for South Ayrshire, I am delighted to present the performance report for the fourth quarter of 2025/26.

Overall, incidents in South Ayrshire have decreased by 6.7% on the previous year and 11.2% on the 5-year average. Crime across South Ayrshire has risen 11.35% compared to the previous year to date and has risen 7% on the 5-year average, although this has been driven by significant proactive policing, particularly in relation to road traffic offending, however this has had a positive impact on road safety, with a reduction in serious road crashes throughout the authority. I am also pleased to report that violent crime and antisocial behaviour continue to reduce.

With summer approaching, officers and staff continue to work hard, prioritising protection of those facing the greatest threat, risk and harm, and delivering on our local policing priorities across South Ayrshire.

Policing continues to face challenges across many areas, and our teams have worked hard to meet increasing demand, maximise resources and work collaboratively with partners to achieve success. I want to thank partners for working with us to make South Ayrshire communities safer.

Chief Superintendent Suzanne Chow

Our Local Policing Priorities

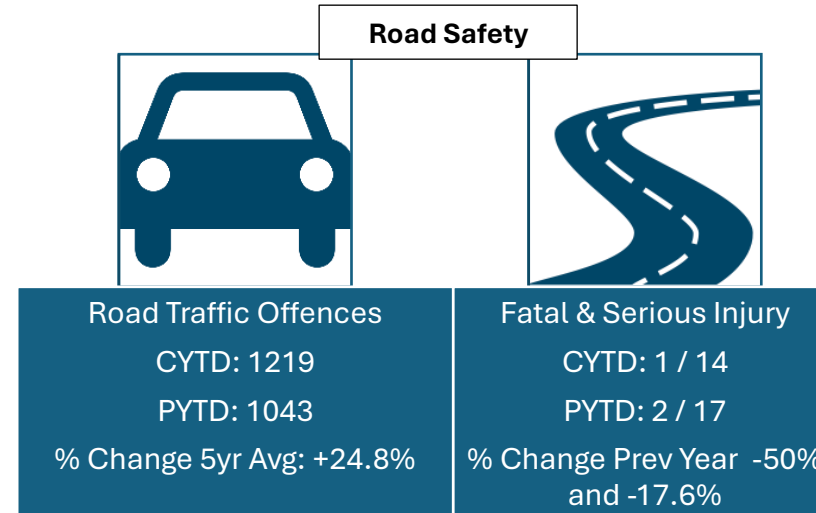
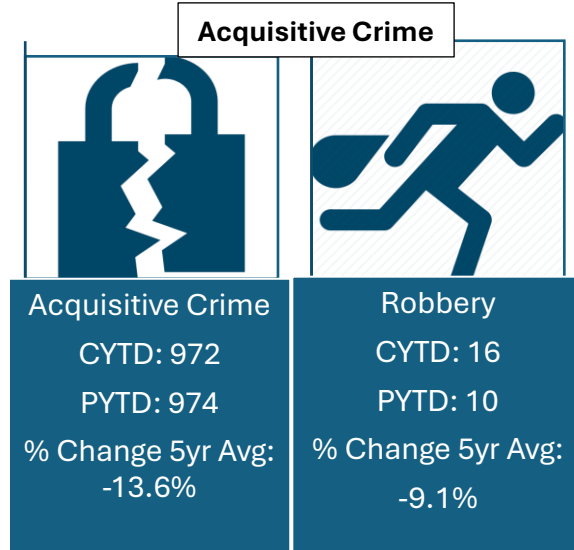
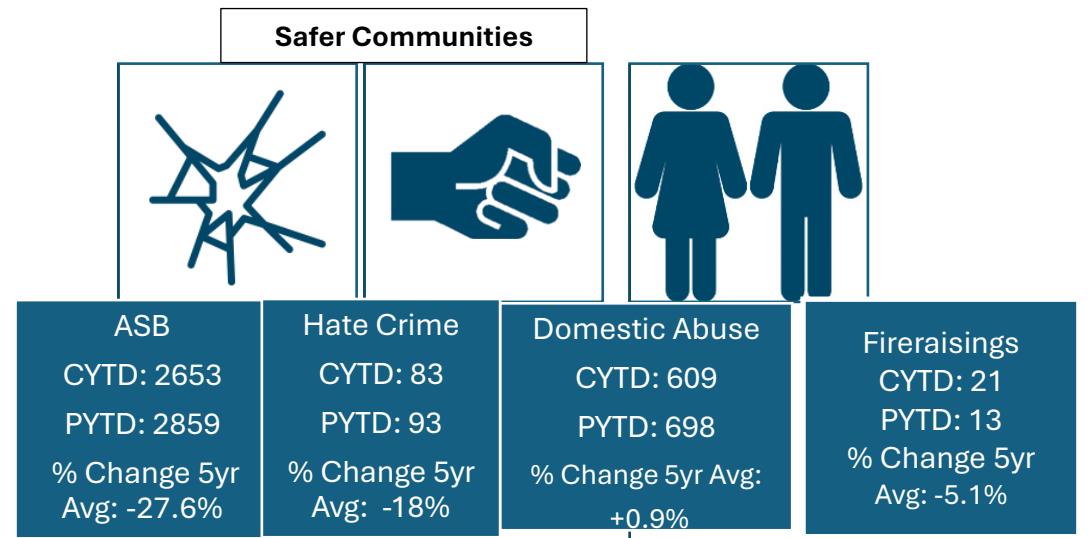
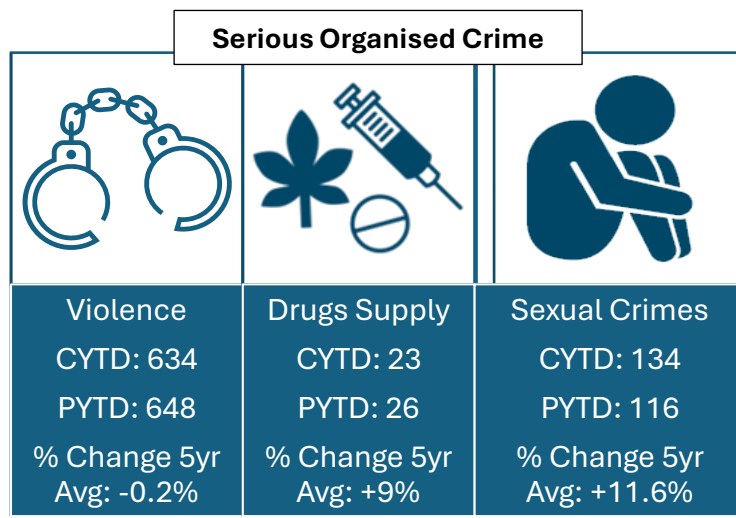
- Serious Crime
- Safer Communities
- Violence Against Women & Girls
- Community Wellbeing
- Road Safety



South Ayrshire Performance Report

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Overview

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Violent Crime overall has **decreased 2.2%** on the previous year to date and is **0.2% lower** than the 5-year average. There have been no homicides within the reporting period. There has been a slight increase in serious assaults (26) compared to the previous period (22). The overall trend remains positive, with a 4.2% reduction in serious assaults compared to the 5-year average. There has been a 5% increase in common assaults relative to the previous year to date, although I am pleased to report there has been a 37% decrease in assaults on emergency workers. We hope the implementation of Body Worn Video will continue to drive down the frequency of assaults on emergency workers.

Drug Supply offences have **decreased 11.5%** on the previous reporting period however are up 6% on the 5-year average. Within the locality, officers continue to prioritise intelligence led activity targeting individuals involved in the supply of controlled drugs within local communities. There have been 26 Misuse of Drugs Search warrants executed in South Ayrshire within the Q4 period; of these, 15 have resulted in a positive search and seizure of drugs.

Violent Crime – Four attempted murders have been recorded, with two of these detected to date and the offenders await prosecution. On all occasions, the offender and victim were known to each other. Officers continue to analyse and review data to identify locations and circumstances where violent offending is most likely to occur. This information informs targeted, proactive patrols at the relevant time and locations to prevent and deter any further incidents.

On a recent occasion, a male was assaulted to the danger of life on Whitletts Road by two suspects. Officers responded immediately, securing the crime scene, summoning medical assistance, and gathering vital evidence from CCTV and witnesses. Using local knowledge, the offenders were quickly identified and arrested – a positive result and an excellent example of the work carried out by local officers daily.

Drugs Supply – There has been a renewed focus on quality intelligence gathering and longer-term operations to tackle those causing the greatest harm to communities. This approach is integral to our ongoing efforts to reduce drug related deaths in the area. Officers continue to execute search warrants when required, alongside stop searches and the targeting of vehicles travelling into South Ayrshire which are linked to the supply of drugs.

One recent operation focused on the sale and supply of cannabis within Maybole. Intelligence gathering revealed a vacant shop premises on High Street which was being used as a location for the cultivation of cannabis. After the execution of a warrant, a cultivation with an estimated value of £200,000 was discovered. One male was arrested and awaits trial – a positive result and further evidence of excellent intelligence development and enforcement by local officers.

Serious Crime

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Sexual Crime has **increased 15.52%** compared to the previous year and is up 11.6% compared with the 5-year average. This is in line with national averages and not specific to South Ayrshire.

Rape crimes have increased compared to the previous year to date, with 31 crimes reported. The majority of these are domestic in nature, with a significant portion of these being non-recent offences. Sexual assaults reports remain consistent, with 37 offences recorded. The overall increase in sexual crime aligns with national trends, largely driven by a rise in online/internet communicating indecently offences alongside other online/cyber related offences, which account for much of the reported increase.

Domestic Abuse crimes remain consistent, with 585 in the year to date. Officers in South Ayrshire attended 1242 domestic incidents, a **reduction of 6.9%** in overall domestic incidents reported to police. This is in contrast with the national increase in domestic abuse incidents which rose 2.1%. 47% of domestic abuse incidents resulted in criminality being established.

Sexual Crime – Dedicated Public Protection officers are based in Ayrshire to investigate Sexual offences and are supported by specialist officers dedicated to helping the victims of such crimes. Rape crimes have risen 31% on the 5-year average, reflective of an increased confidence in reporting, proactive domestic abuse investigations, and sustained partnership working with support groups. Locality officers continue to work proactively to reduce the number of victims of sexual crime, collaborating closely with partners in the VAWG network to strengthen prevention and early intervention. ‘Sextortion’ offences have **decreased 14.5%** compared to the previous reporting period, however it is noted that this previous period included a significant rise in online sexual offending, which has now subsequently reduced. It is noted however that many of these offences are domestic related, are perpetrated from abroad or involve young offenders and victims, for which campus officers continue to provide online safety inputs at schools. Online offending remains a priority for officers within Specialist Crime Division, who continue to support us locally, deploying the latest technology and investigative techniques to identify and act against offenders residing in, or targeting victims across South Ayrshire communities.

Domestic Abuse Crimes remain a daily operational focus, ensuring victims are protected, supported and confident to report to police. Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) referrals in South Ayrshire for the Q4 period (90 disclosures made) continue to rise, demonstrating the commitment and effectiveness of the Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Team.

Sexual Crimes (incl. VAWG)

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Anti social behaviour incidents have **decreased 3.8%** on the previous year to date, with overall ASB calls to police reducing from 5098 to 4902 incidents, which is also down 24.5% on the 5-year average.

Collaborative working with South Ayrshire Council ASB Team continues daily. Officers have conducted 132 joint visits with SAC colleagues to problematic addresses – a number anticipated to rise significantly due to redeployment of officers into the ASB role. 886 disclosures to SAC have been carried out, with a fortnightly Multi-Agency Tasking & Coordination (MATAC) meeting held between partners to exchange information and decide on an appropriate response to issues involving ASB.

Hate Crimes **decreased 11.8%** on the previous year to date and are down 18.6% on the 5-year average. The most common offences are racial incidents. There have been no specific repeat locations or victims identified. The most common location for hate crimes are shops, particularly licence premises. Local officers, in conjunction with the Retailers Against Crime partnership, target these premises to provide safety advice, enhance CCTV and security, and provide relevant support to victims of this type of offence.

Anti Social Behaviour – Excellent partnership work between Police Scotland and South Ayrshire Council continues to contribute to the reduction of overall ASB across our communities. A particular focus remains on locations where ASB continues to be reported. The introduction of joint visits by Police and SAC colleagues enable early intervention, addressing ASB incidents before escalation occurs. The Police ASB officer continues to work closely with partners to share information daily and to facilitate a co-ordinated and focused partnership approach to tackling anti social behaviour within the locality. This multiagency arrangement has resulted in 30 live ASB orders being in operation, with a further 3 progressing through the legal system at present.

Hate Crimes are reviewed daily within South Ayrshire to ensure all investigative opportunities are identified and the victim is supported by the police following a report of hate crime. The South Ayrshire Local Authority Liaison Officer works closely with minority ethnicity communities to provide support, reassurance, and engagement, particularly during this period of heightened concern across the United Kingdom.

South Ayrshire and national officers continue to monitor the UK policing assessment of Anti-Immigration Protests as well as increasing tension over illegal immigration. This is done to detect and reduce community tensions and ensure a proportionate policing response.

Safer Communities

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Robbery crimes have increased on the previous year to date (15 reported compared to 8 in the equivalent period last year) however are 5.3% down on the 5-year average. 72% of these have been detected and several are still under investigation, hence the detection rate may rise.

Overall Acquisitive crime has **decreased 0.2%** on the previous year to date and is **down 13.4% on the 5-year average**. Theft by housebreaking continues to reduce, with a **24% decrease** in comparison to the previous year and 49% below the 5-year average.

Thefts of motor vehicles also continue to reduce, with a decrease of 15.7% on the previous year to date, and a decrease of 13.3% on the 5-year average.

I am pleased to report that in contrast with national trends, shoplifting offences in South Ayrshire have decreased by 2% in comparison with the previous year. The current detection rate is 70%. Recently, a group of travelling shoplifters from Glasgow attended at Tesco, Ayr, and stole a quantity of food and razors totalling £900. Officers quickly responded, tracing the offenders nearby and arresting them, however, unfortunately officers were assaulted in the process. All goods were recovered and the offenders currently await trial. This was an excellent example of quick liaison between retailers and local officers, and a prompt police response leading to a successful outcome.

Robbery – Officers maintain a focus on offenders in the community. Information regarding offenders recently released from prison is shared to support proactive policing. Working closely with partner agencies, officers aim to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. We continually analyse data to ensure locations and individuals most vulnerable to robbery receive the necessary support to prevent them being a victim of robbery. Importantly no specific repeat locations or victims have been identified this period.

Recently, a male offender was identified for a series of theft by housebreaking offences to pharmacies, and the assault with intent to rob of a female in Ayr. After fully reviewing CCTV and conducting diligent enquiries with residents and retailers, the offender was traced and arrested. A quantity of stolen medication was recovered and the male subsequently remanded in custody pending trial.

Acquisitive crime. South Ayrshire officers work closely with retailers to ensure that prevention measures and security protocols are in place. In addition, South Ayrshire retailers were invited to a partnership input designed to provide up to date intelligence briefings with the assistance of Retailers Against Crime. Prolific and repeat offenders are identified and proactive preventative measures are instigated, including restrictive bail conditions and the sharing of information with retailers. The Prevention and Intervention officer for South Ayrshire continues to provide advice and guidance to retailers and vulnerable members of the community to reduce the likelihood of being targeted by offenders.

Acquisitive Crime

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Road Traffic Offences have **increased by 16.3%** compared to the previous year to date and up 24.8% on the 5-year average. This is a result of intensive proactive work by both local and Roads Policing officers, responding to community concerns. This is highlighted by a significant increase in speeding offences, up 54%, and mobile phone offences – up by 48.4%.

Drug/Drink Driving offences have increased 23.9% on the previous year to date, which is up 61% on the 5-year average.

The proactive work carried out by officers has also had a positive impact on Fatal RTC's, which have **decreased 50%**, with one fatal crash this year compared to two in the previous reporting period.

Importantly serious injury RTCs have also reduced by 22% on the previous year to date.

Road Traffic Offences are centred around the 'Fatal 5' most common factors that cause fatal road traffic collisions (speeding, seatbelt use, distractions, drink/drug driving and careless driving). Analysis of police data, local concerns and complaints ensure that officers focus policing efforts on areas across South Ayrshire where the risk is highest. Officers are deployed in response to data and community reports of poor driver behaviour and are supported by Special Constables who provide an excellent service to the community by donating their free time to assist with action plans.

Within the reporting period, complaints of e-bike use have been the focus of proactive patrols. Several e-bikes and e-scooters have been seized and riders charged with offences under the Road Traffic Act.

Fatal and Serious Road Traffic Collisions - Road policing colleagues attend all serious road collisions and fatal road collisions. Investigations are carried out to establish the causation factors and liaise with COPFS regarding the outcome of the investigations. Across Ayrshire, the most common casualty group in Serious Road traffic collisions continues to be car drivers with the second most common group pedestrians.

Road Safety

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crime, supported victims and
a thriving workforce.

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Protecting the most Vulnerable – Officers in South Ayrshire submitted 1619 concern reports for individuals in the reporting period. 655 relate to vulnerable adults and 778 relate to child concerns. Concern reports are triaged by officers and shared with various partners where required, which ensures a multi agency approach to reducing vulnerability through partnership work. 1145 such reports were shared with partner agencies during this period.

Missing People - Within the reporting period South Ayrshire officers dealt with 86 reports of Missing People. This is a decrease from 117 in the previous reporting period and utilises approximately 4,344 resourcing hours within the period. 19 of these reports related to a person under the age of 18 .

User experience & Public Confidence – Data is gathered via the ‘Your Police’ continuous feedback survey and User Experience Survey. This shows overall satisfaction with Police Scotland within South Ayrshire at 78%, which is set against a national average of 70%. This feedback is continually reviewed to focus local policing priorities and improve performance and trust and confidence in the police service.

The South Ayrshire Preventions and Interventions officer works closely with partner agencies and third sector organisations to ensure that crime prevention advice is shared. Inputs are regularly held and provided to retailers, youth groups and older persons groups. This allows the sharing of vital information to ensure that we have fewer victims of crime across South Ayrshire and those most vulnerable across society are identified, protected, and appropriate safeguarding and support can be installed.

Campus officers continue to work with the Education department to deliver inputs across schools, focussing on the key local priorities within each area. Violence, ASB and Road Safety remain a priority.

Community Wellbeing

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Spotlight – Police Scotland Youth Volunteers

Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) was devised by the then Prince Charles as a way of connecting young people (aged 13-18) in communities with the police, whilst encouraging good citizenship and providing volunteering opportunities. The first group in Scotland (the flagship) commenced at Dumfries House in Cumnock in 2013, with a further 3 Ayrshire groups added since; Ayr, Kilmarnock and Saltcoats. The Ayr PSYV group started in 2019.

The Ayr PSYV group meet on a Tuesday evening at Ayr College and consists of 19 young people and 2 adult volunteers. Both adult volunteers were previously young people in the PSYV and are using their experience to help other young people whilst studying at university, supported by the PSYV Divisional Co-ordinator, PC Fiona Gibson. Members come from all backgrounds and often include care experienced and neurodiverse young people.

Over the last year, Ayr PSYV group have completed 804 hours of volunteering at events such as the International Air Show, Troon 10k, 'Run the Runway', Race for Life and Ayr Christmas Light Switch On as well as helping with leaflet drops in Wallacetown and other areas. One youth volunteer has completed 460hrs of individual volunteering over 3 years whilst another completed 500hrs before leaving when she turned 18. Many of the PSYV work towards recognised awards, such as the Saltire Award for volunteering or Progression Awards, all of which are presented at an end of year ceremony held at Dumfries House.

Over the next year, PSYV in Ayr will recruit new youth volunteers and will continue to volunteer within communities in South Ayrshire.

Our Local Policing Priorities

- Serious Crime
- Safer Communities
- Violence Against Women & Girls
- Community Wellbeing
- Road Safety



South Ayrshire Performance Report

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Safer communities, less crime, supported victims and a thriving workforce.

South Ayrshire Council
Report by Chief Executive
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 19th May 2026

Subject: Local Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Panel with information about the quarter three and four performance (2025/2026) of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in South Ayrshire.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel scrutinises the quarter three and four (2025/2026) performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire and provides feedback to the Local Senior Officer.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Police and Fire and Rescue Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 created a national police force and a national fire and rescue service. The implications of the legislation for local authorities are that the Council will:

- Comment on SPA and SFRS Strategic Plans;
- Contribute to the preparation of the local plan for police and local fire and rescue plan and approve the plans;
- Monitor the delivery of police and fire and rescue functions in the area and make recommendations for improvement; and
- Provide feedback to the Local Police Commander and the Fire and Rescue Service Local Senior Officer.

- 3.2 The Local Fire Plan for South Ayrshire was agreed at [Leadership Panel](#) on 19 September 2017. A further review of the plan was carried out by SFRS in 2023 which was submitted to [Service and Partnerships Performance Panel](#) in June 2024.

4. Detail

- 4.1 The Local Senior Officer has provided the attached performance report (Appendix 1) which Panel members are invited to scrutinise and provide feedback on.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with legal requirements.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 If the recommendation is rejected then there is a risk that the Council is considered to not have discharged its responsibility under the Police and Fire and Rescue Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 in terms of scrutinising local performance.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority Three: Civic and Community Pride.

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council

Yes

No

14. Results of Consultation

- 14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian Connolly, Council Leader and Policy Lead for Economy and Strategy and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers Report to [Leadership Panel](#) on 19th September 2017: Local Fire Plan

Person to Contact **Kevin Anderson, Assistant Director (Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance)**
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County Buildings, Ayr
E-mail susan.mccardie@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 30th April 2026



South Ayrshire

South Ayrshire Council - Fire & Rescue Scrutiny Group

2025-26 Q3 & Q4 Scrutiny Report



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



South Ayrshire
South Ayrshire Council - Fire & Rescue
Scrutiny Group
2025-26 Q3 & Q4
Scrutiny Report

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4	Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties
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7	Non-Domestic Fires
8	Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)
9	Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)
10	Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)
11	Fire Safety Enforcement
12	Community Safety & Engagement
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About the statistics within this report

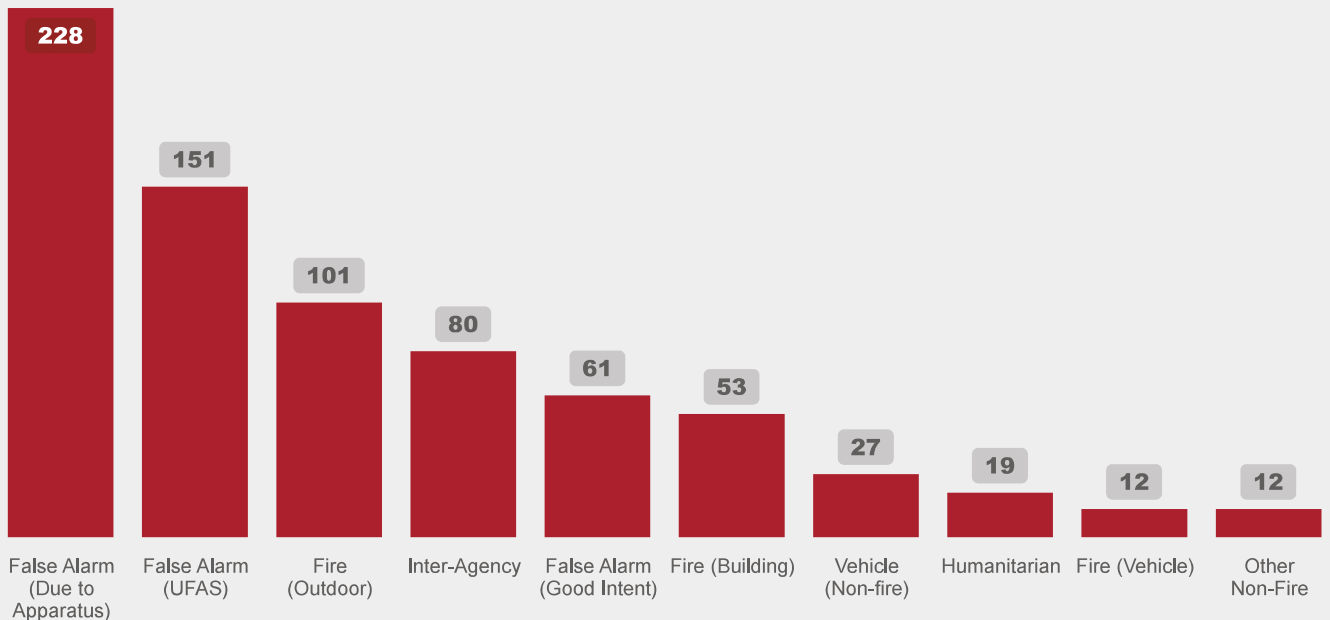
The activity totals and other statistics quoted within this report are published in the interests of transparency and openness. They are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review. Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be a difference in the period totals quoted in our reports after local publication which result from revisions or additions to the data in our systems. The Scottish Government publishes official statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

1. Summary

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

 783 Total Incidents (Incl. Incompletes)	 166 Fires	 164 Non-Fire Incidents	 449 False Alarms	 151 UFAS
 40 People Rescued by Firefighters	 6 People Receiving First Aid or Hospital Treatment (Fires)	 0 Fire Fatalities	 28 People Receiving First Aid or Hospital Treatment (Non-Fire)	 2 Non-Fire Fatalities
 247 Home Fire Safety Visits	 117 Fire Safety Audits			

Top 10 Incident Types



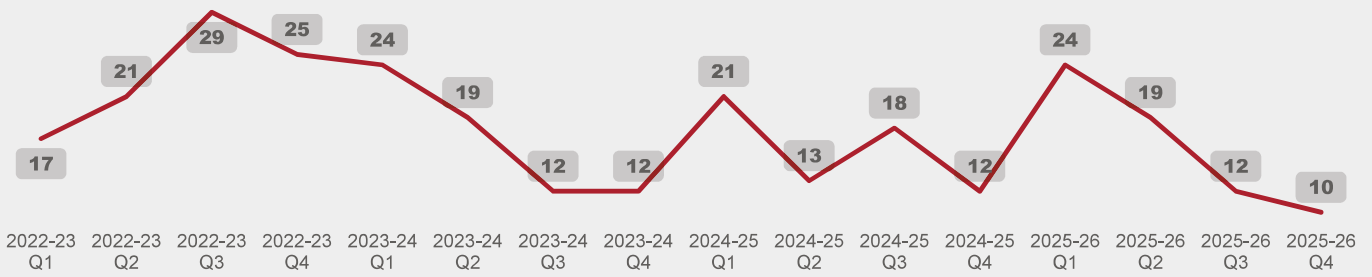
Summary Comparison For Same Reporting Period Q3 & Q4 For Previous Year -

Total number of incidents decreased from 785 to 783 = 0.25% Reduction
 Fires decreased from 209 to 166 = 20% Reduction.
 Non fire incidents increased from 151 to 164 = 8.6% Increase.
 False alarms increased from 425 to 449 = 5.3% Increase.
 UFAS incidents increased from 119 to 151 = 21% Increase.
 People rescued by Firefighters increased from 23 to 40 = 42% Increase.
 Fire related first aid or hospital treatment increased from 5 to 6 = 16.6% Increase.
 Fire fatalities remained the same - 0 Fatalities.
 Non fire related first aid or hospital treatment increased from 25 to 28 = 10% Increase.
 Non fire fatalities decreased from 4 to 2 = 50% reduction.

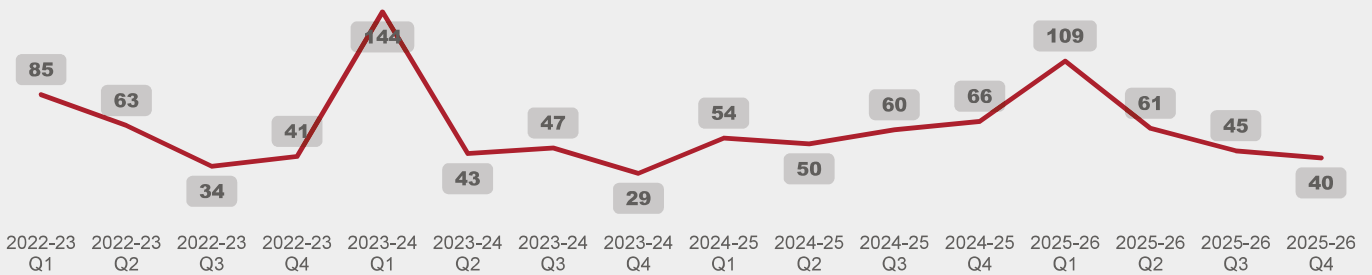
2. Trends

Previous 16 quarters (4 years)

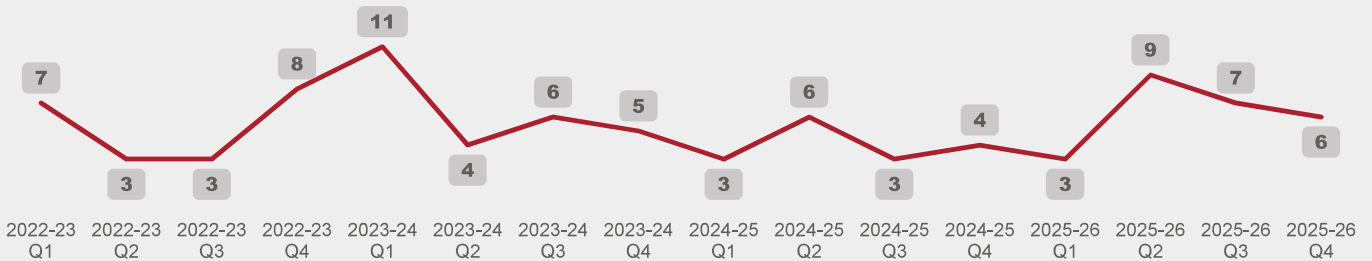
Accidental Dwelling Fires



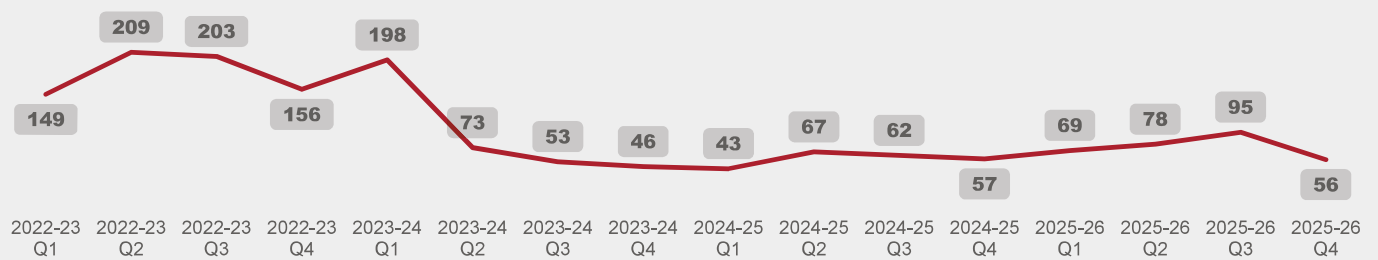
Deliberate Fires



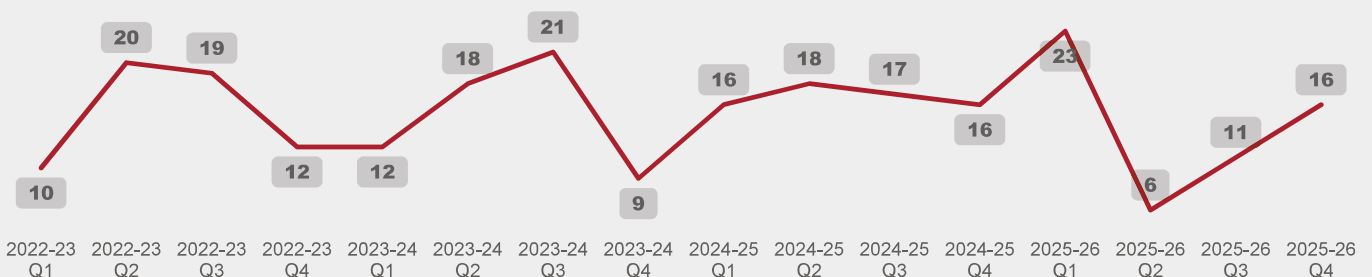
Non-Domestic Fires



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



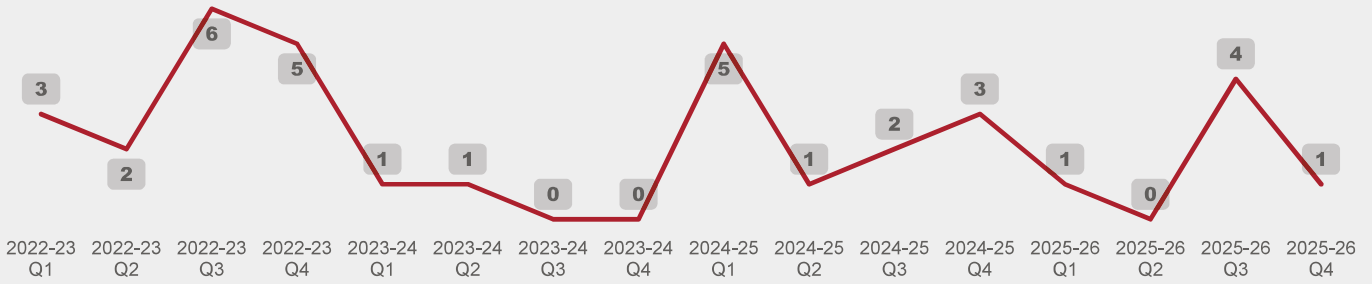
Road Traffic Collisions



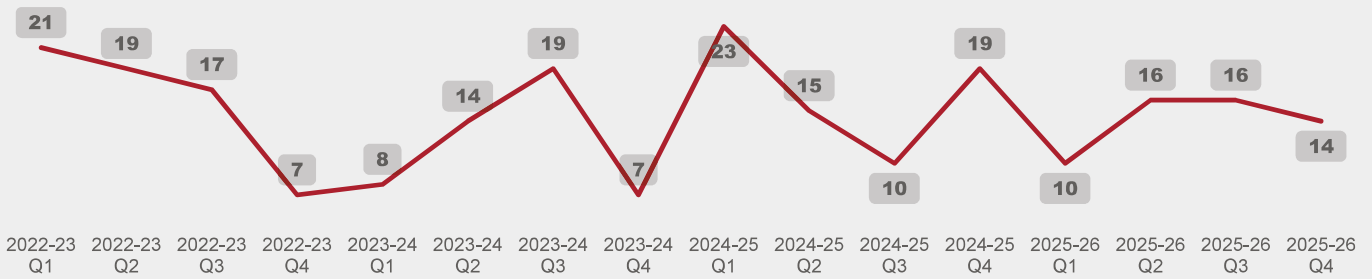
2. Trends

Previous 16 quarters (4 years)

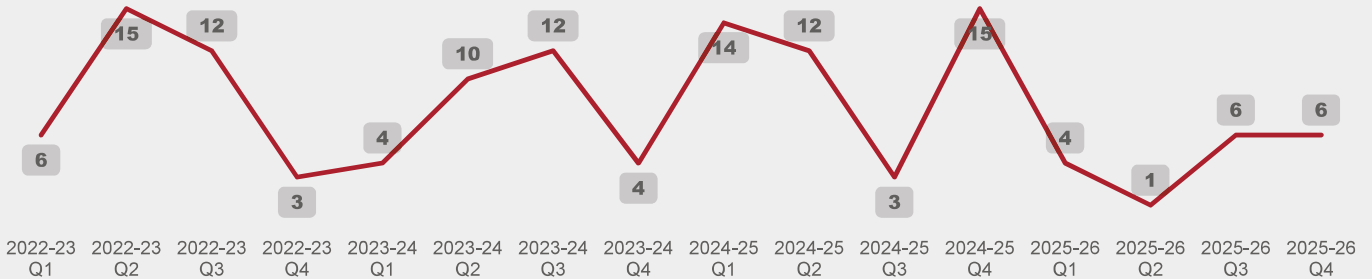
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



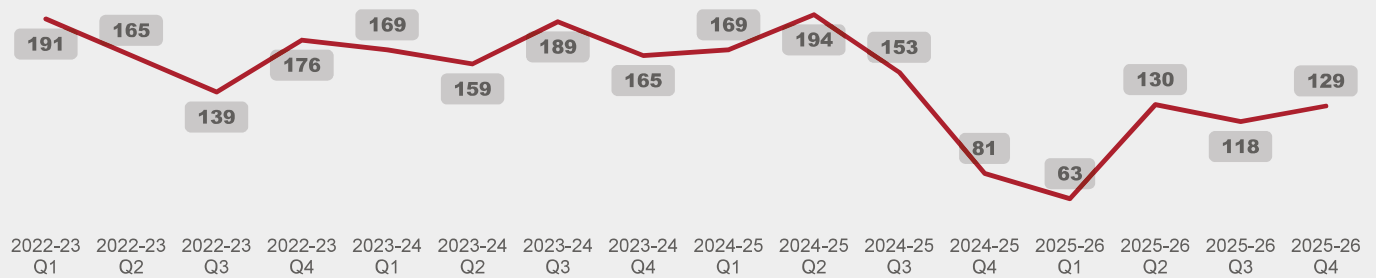
Non-Fire Casualties



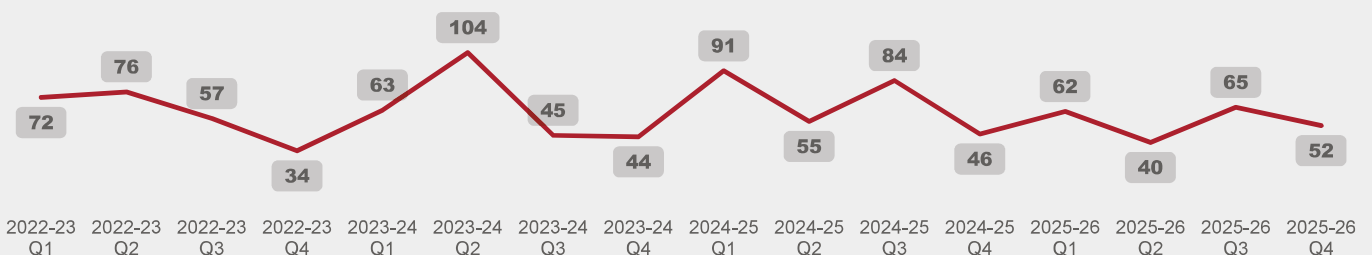
Road Traffic Collision Casualties



Home Fire Safety Visits



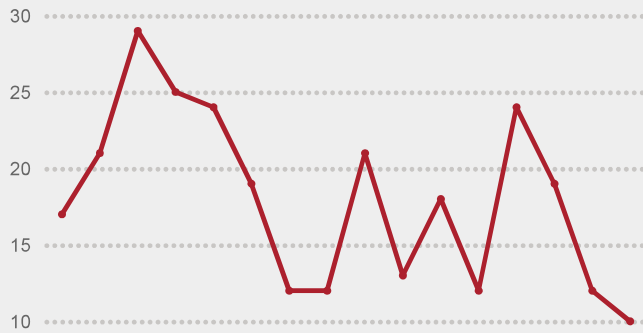
Fire Safety Audits



3. Accidental Dwelling Fires

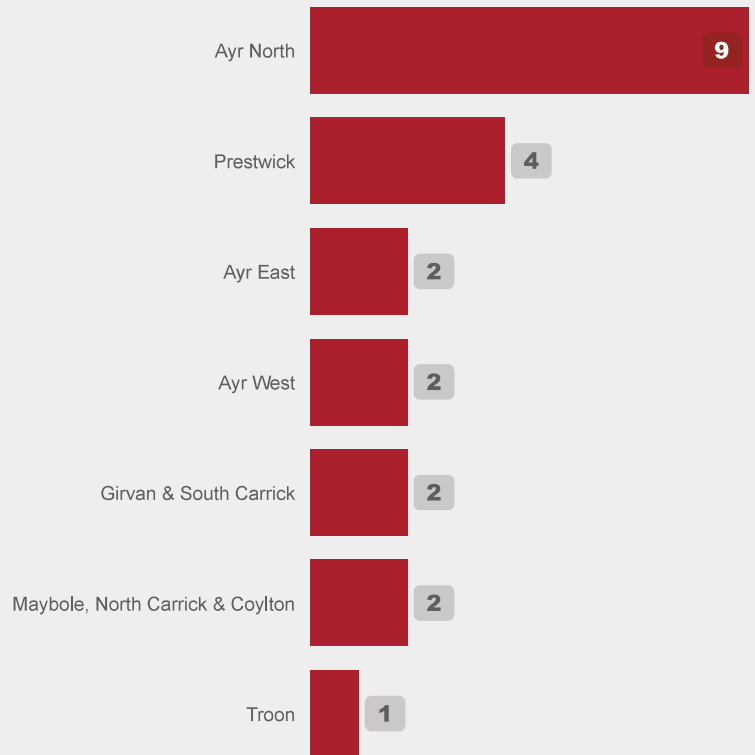
2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Extent of Damage	Incidents
Not applicable	15
Limited to item 1st ignited	4
Limited to room of origin	3

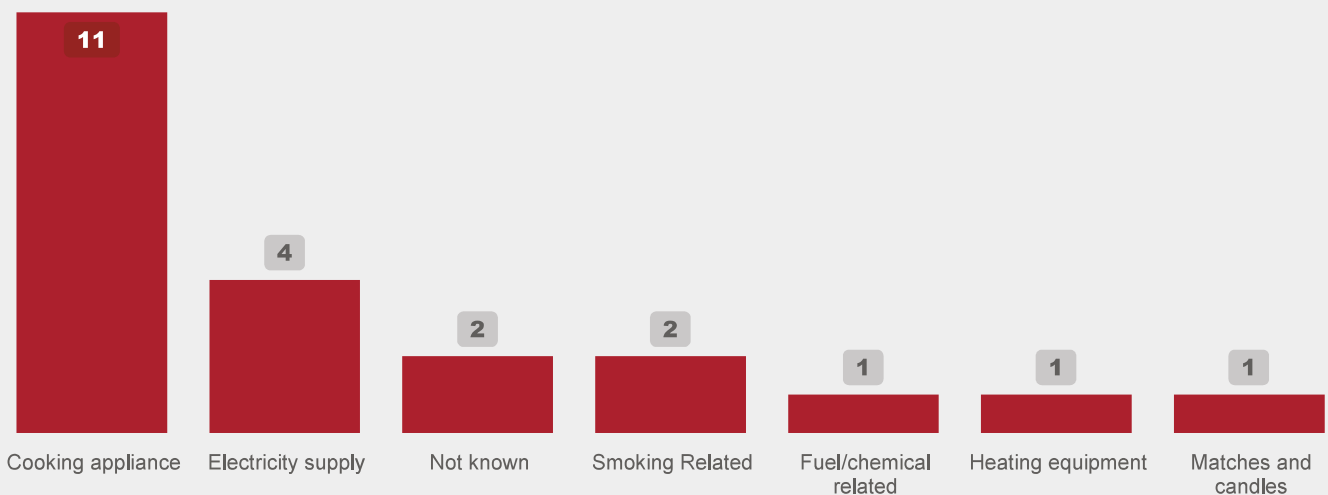
Incidents by Ward



22

Accidental Dwelling Fires in this period

Source of Ignition (Top 10)



Total Incidents 22 = 26% reduction for same reporting period Q3 & Q4 as last year.

Alarm system present for 19 out of 22 incidents
 10 of these incidents required no firefighting action.
 14 Incidents involved an Adult between ages of 18 - 65
 2 Incidents involved persons aged 65yrs and older.
 6 Incidents, age unknown.

Most common time of the day is between 16:00 and 20:00, however, no real trend on a particular day.

4. Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties

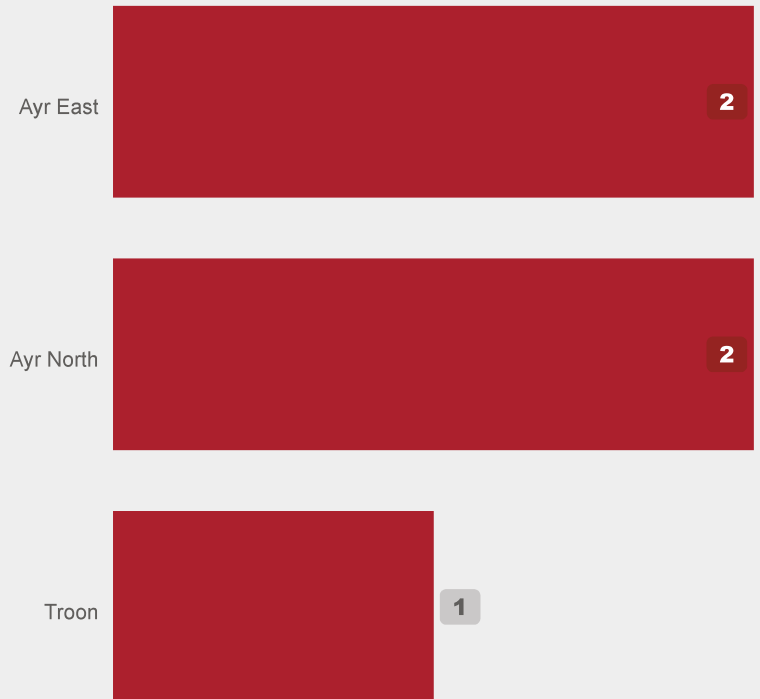
2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Nature of Injury/Cause of Death	Casualties
Overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes; asphyxiation	3
Other	2

Casualties by Ward



5 Non-Fatal Casualties

0 Fatal Casualties

5 People Rescued by Firefighters

Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)



2

First Aid Given at Scene



2

Hospital Slight Injuries



1

Hospital Serious Injuries

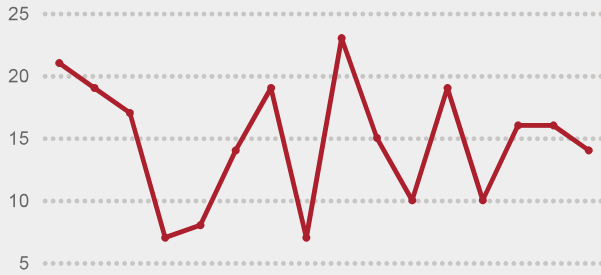
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties (ADFC) remains the same figure for the same reporting period as the previous year.

Two received first aid at scene by SFRS personnel, no follow up hospital attendance required.
Two assessed by Scottish Ambulance Service, attended hospital for precautionary check up with slight smoke inhalation.
One attended hospital for severe smoke inhalation.

5. Non-Fire Casualties

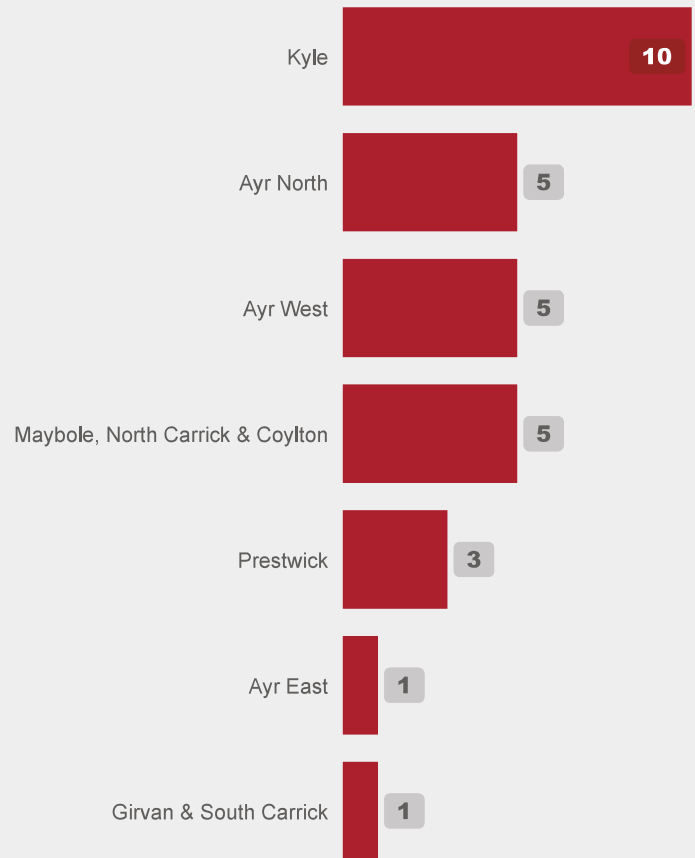
2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Nature of Injury/Cause of Death	Casualties
Bruising	5
Other physical injury	4
Back / Neck injury (spinal)	3
Other	3
Other medical condition	3
Chest / Abdominal injury	2
Collapse	2
Cuts/Lacerations	2
Fracture	2
Head injury	2
Not known	1
Unconscious, fitting or unresponsive (no other evident significant injury)	1

Casualties by Ward



28
Non-Fatal
Casualties

2
Fatal
Casualties

34
People
Rescued by
Firefighters

Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)



2

**First Aid Given
at Scene**



22

**Hospital Slight
Injuries**



4

**Hospital Serious
Injuries**

Non Fatal Casualties:

Increase from 25 to 28 = 10% Increase for same reporting period last year.

12 - Related to Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)

7 - Related to effecting entry

9 - Related to supporting other agencies, i.e slips, trips & falls.

Fatalities Breakdown:

Decrease from 4 to 2 = 50% reduction for same reporting period last year.

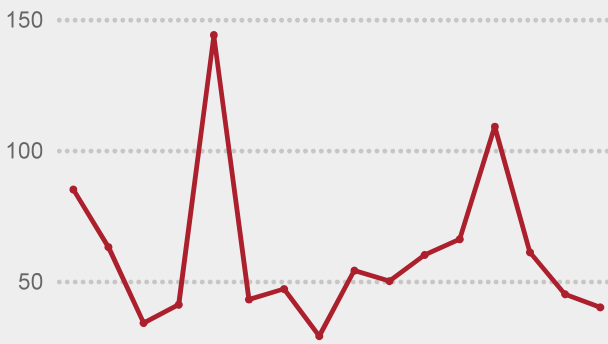
1 incident related to a fatality whilst supporting other agencies.

1 incident related to a fatality involving a railway line.

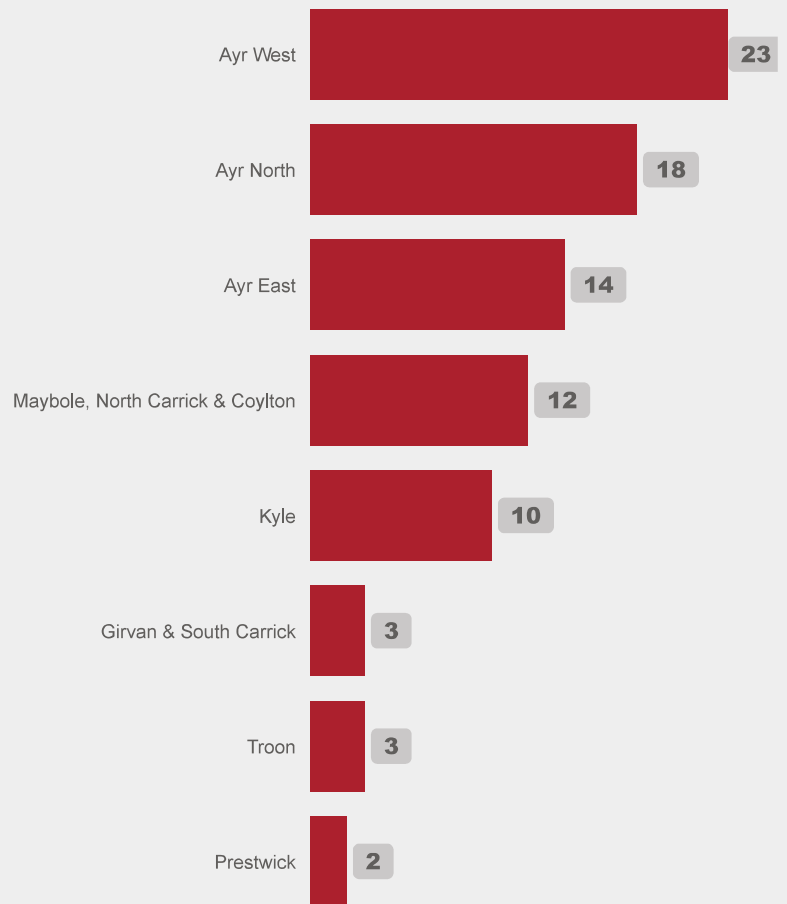
6. Deliberate Fires

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Incidents by Ward



Property Type	Incident
Refuse	39
Grassland, woodland and crops	23
Other outdoors (including land)	7
Dwelling	5
Non Residential	5
Other Residential	2
Road Vehicle	2
Outdoor equipment and machinery	1
Outdoor structures	1

85

**Deliberate Fires
in this period**

Hour of Day



Decrease of deliberate fires from 126 to 85 = 32.5% Decrease.

South Ayrshire Area continues to prioritise the reduction of deliberate fire setting with a targeted and intelligence led approach, this is delivered by both Operational Crews and the Community Action Team. Engagement with communities and partner organisations has focused on identifying local areas of concern and addressing the behaviours and conditions that contribute to deliberate fires.

Over 73% of these incidents were recorded as loose refuse, grassland, woodland and crops. The most common time of the day was between 17:00 and 20:00.

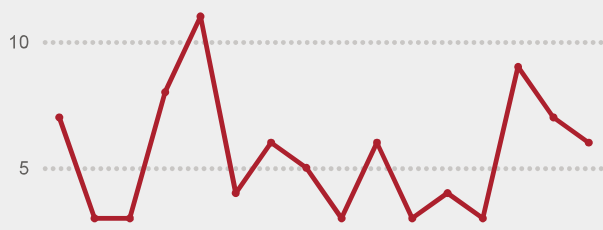
Just under 50% of these incidents occurred between a Friday and a Sunday night.

Despite November showing the highest incident activity, only 2 incidents on Bonfire night required SFRS intervention.

7. Non-Domestic Fires

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

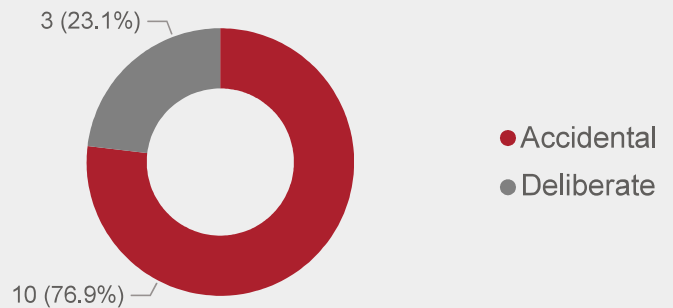
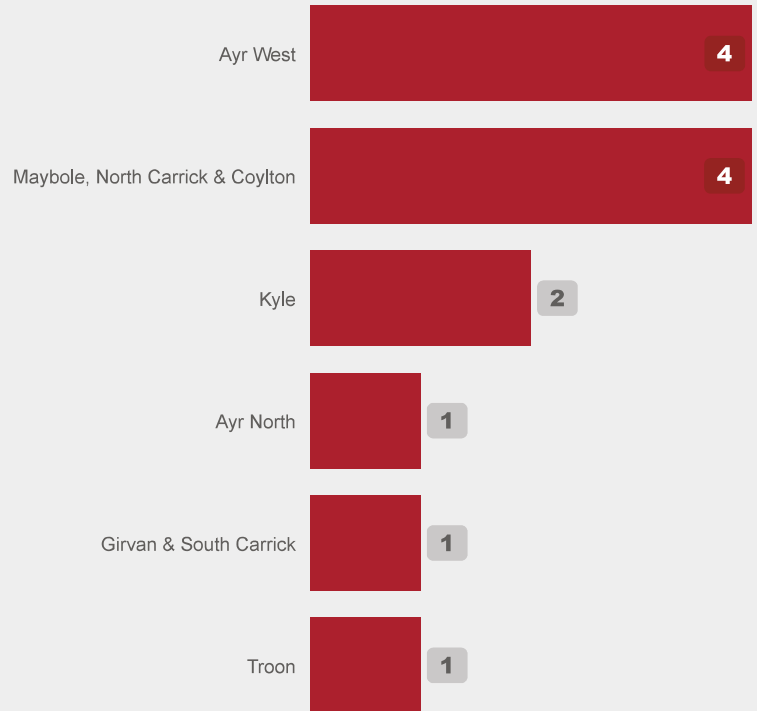
Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Top 15 Property Types

Property Type	Incidents
Residential Home	3
Other Residential Home	2
Education	1
Food and Drink	1
Hospitals and medical care	1
Hotel/motel	1
Industrial Manufacturing	1
Other buildings/use not known	1
Retail	1
Vehicle Repair	1

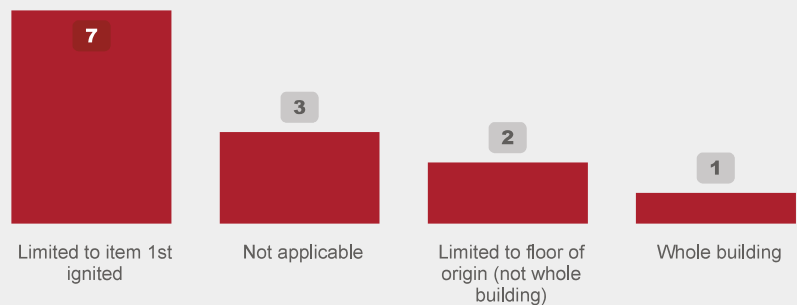
Incidents by Ward



13

**Non-Domestic
Fires in this
period**

Extent of Damage



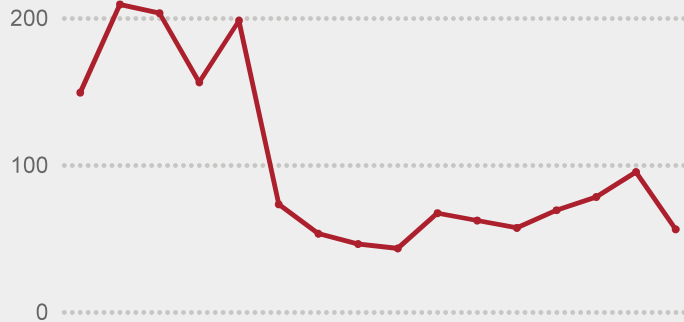
Non-Domestic fires remain in low numbers, however, there was a 46% increase from 7 to 13 for the same reporting period as last year.

Almost half of these incidents were heat and smoke damage only. With the exception of one, all of these incidents occurred in Q3.

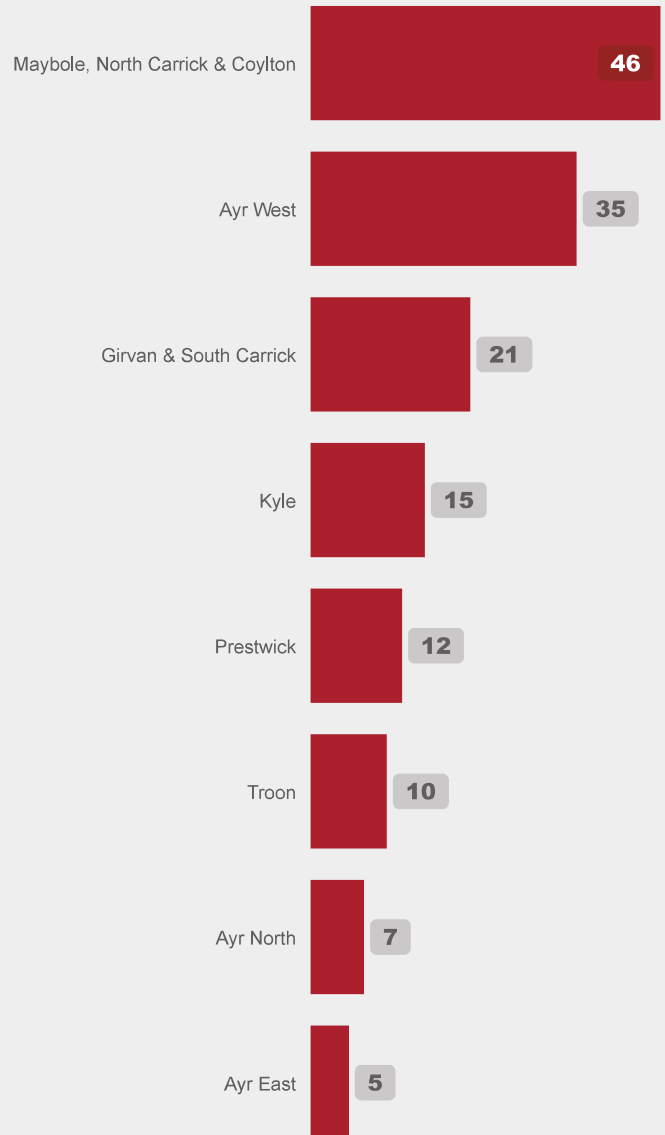
8. Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Incidents by Ward



Top 15 Property Types

Property Type	Incidents
Residential Home	52
Hospitals and medical care	38
Hotel/motel	13
Sheltered Housing - not self contained	13
Other holiday residence (cottage, flat, chalet)	6
Other Residential Home	6
Offices and call centres	5
Boarding House/B&B for homeless/asylum seekers	2
Entertainment and culture	2
Hostel (e.g. for homeless people)	2
Nurses'/Doctors' accommodation	2
Public admin, security and safety	2
Youth hostel	2
Boarding House/B&B other	1
Food and Drink	1
Other buildings/use not known	1
Sporting venues	1
Sports pavilion/shower block/changing facility	1
Warehouses and bulk storage	1

151

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals in this period

Increase in UFAS incidents from 119 to 151 — a 21% increase from the same period last year.

Common Causes: Predominantly human error or accidental activations.

Policy Impact: Since the July 2023 UFAS policy implementation, incidents continue to decline year on year.

Highest Impacted Premises: Residential care and nursing homes.

Policy Reminder: SFRS now only attends non-sleeping premises for confirmed fire indications; sleeping premises like hospitals remain unaffected.

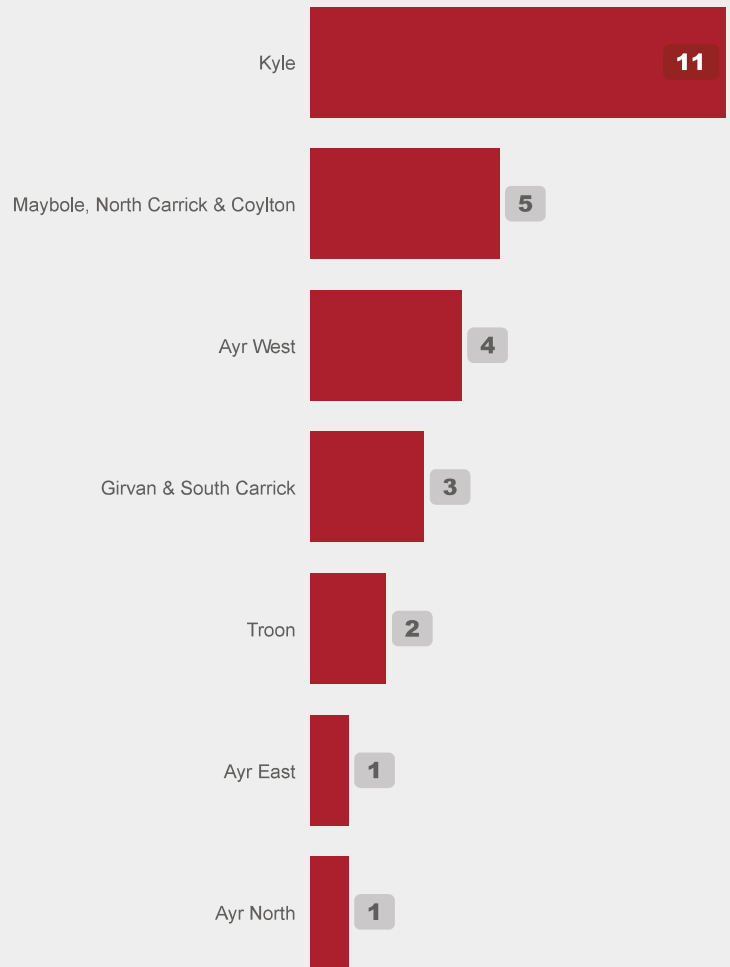
9. Road Traffic Collisions

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

Trend by Quarter (4 years)



Incidents by Ward



27

Road Traffic Collisions in this period

Property Type	Incidents
Car	23
Van	2
Highway/road surface/pavement	1
Multiple Vehicles	1

Incident Type	Incidents
Vehicle (Non-fire)	26
Fire (Vehicle)	1

12
Non-Fatal Casualties

0
Fatal Casualties

7
People Rescued by Firefighters

Extent of Harm (Non-Fatal)

 **2**
First Aid Given at Scene

 **10**
Hospital Slight Injuries

 **0**
Hospital Serious Injuries

Decrease in RTC Incidents from 33 to 27 = 18% Reduction for same reporting period last year.

From the same reporting period as last year we are seeing a decrease on non-fatal casualties from 17 to 12 = 29% Reduction. There have been no fatalities as opposed to 1 for the same reporting period last year. 40% of casualties were between the age of 30 - 49. 84% of these incidents involved SFRS making the scene safe, only 2 casualty required extrication.

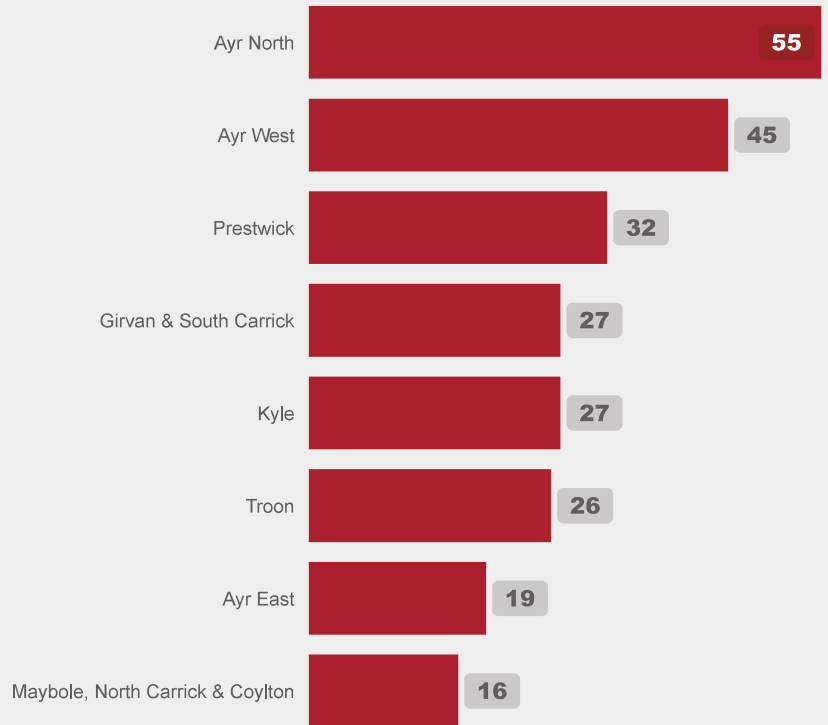
10. Home Fire Safety Visits

2025-26 Q3 & Q4

247

**Home Fire
Safety Visits**

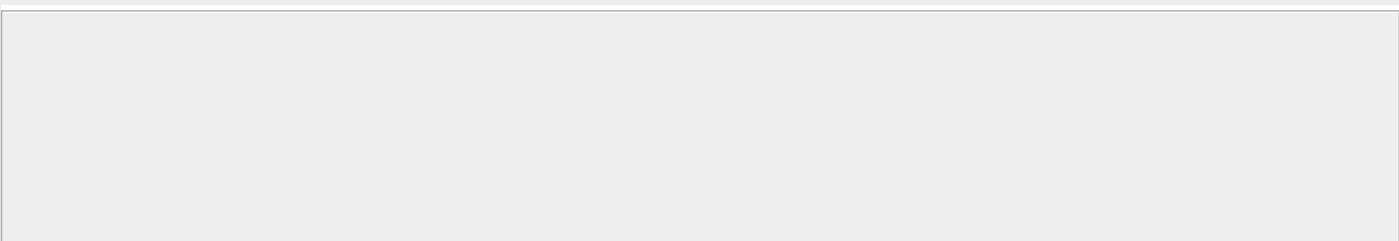
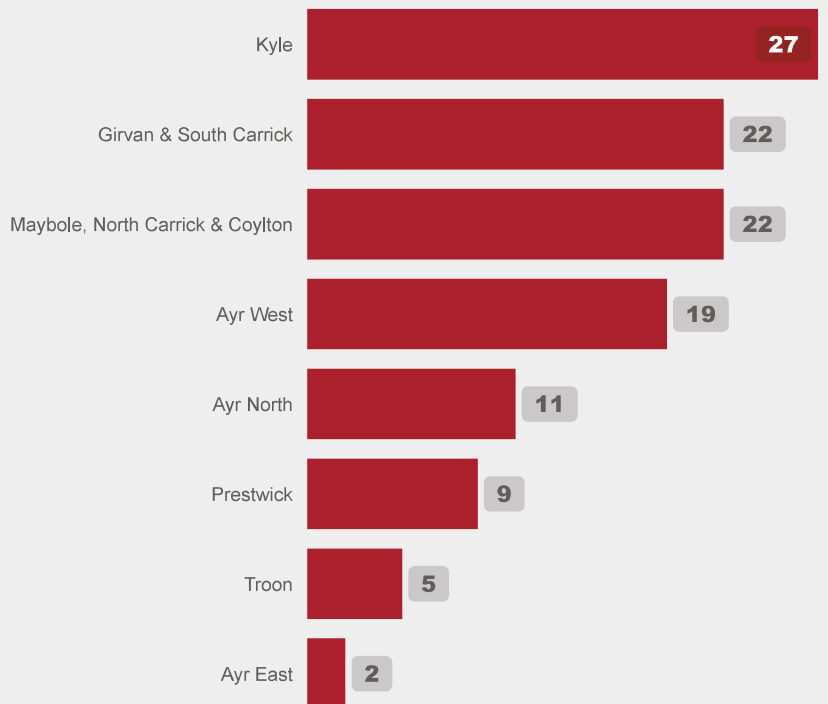
HFSVs by Ward



11. Fire Safety Enforcement

Job Type	Count
Audit	117
Consultation	107
Short Post Fire Audit	3
Specific Visit	1

Audits by Ward



Education and Community Engagement

A wide range of education and engagement activity has been delivered across the reporting period, demonstrating a strong commitment to prevention and community safety.

46 educational inputs and community events delivered.

Engagement with approximately 1,300 young people through school-based sessions.

A total reach of 1,756 members of the public across all engagement activity.

Delivery of 13 targeted inputs to schools and nurseries aligned with the Ayrshire Education Syllabus.

22 community events, including station visits, group sessions, and CPR awareness training.

The 2026 Ayrshire Educational Syllabus has been distributed to all primary and secondary schools across South Ayrshire, enabling early planning and scheduling of educational inputs to be delivered by Operational Crews and the Community Action Team. We will continue to respond to requests from all schools across South Ayrshire and deliver presentations aligned with the ENSA Education Syllabus (issued to all schools in March), which supports the SFRS Thematic Action Plan throughout the year.

Our engagement activity has focused on key themes including deliberate fire setting, road safety, water safety, and home fire safety, with a particular emphasis on early intervention with young people.

In addition, prevention activity included:

247 high-risk Home Fire Safety Visits completed.

45 Post Domestic Incident Responses (PDIRs) delivered.

82 referrals to partner agencies to support vulnerable individuals.

5 Child Wellbeing Concerns raised in line with safeguarding responsibilities.

Highlighted Initiatives

Bonfire Watch Initiative – supporting early intervention and risk reduction during the bonfire period.

Fire Skills Course (with Ayrshire College) – supporting employability and skills development.

Partnership engagement with HMP Kilmarnock, delivering fire safety and CPR training to individuals preparing to return to the community.

Delivery of the Safer Roads Programme to secondary schools, targeting young and new drivers.

These initiatives demonstrate a proactive, preventative approach, extending beyond emergency response into wider community wellbeing.

Partnership Working and Future Developments

Partnership working remains a key strength within South Ayrshire.

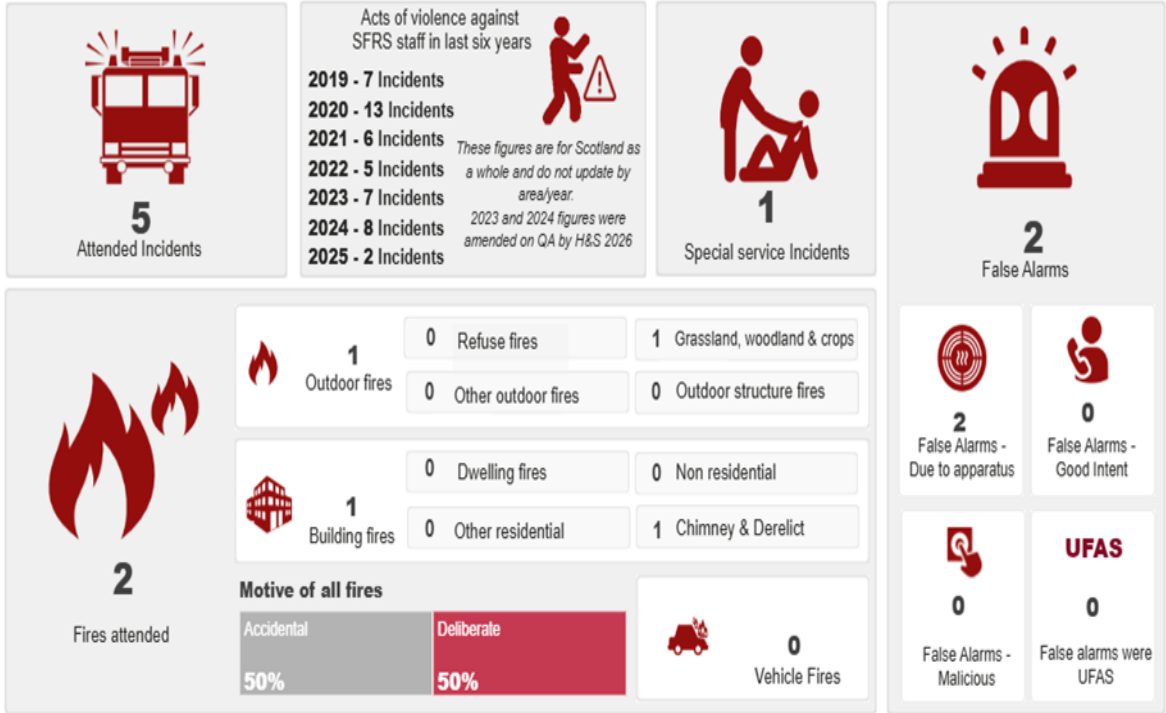
The national Partner Referral Portal has commenced a soft launch, with a small number of partners currently testing the system.

It is anticipated this will support improved information sharing and referrals once fully rolled out.

Locally, efforts continue to maintain robust referral pathways while ensuring partners will receive appropriate training and support when the new system becomes fully operational.

Bonfire Night - 5th November 2025

West (SDA) + ENSA (LSO_Area_Abv) + ... 2025



13. Glossary of Terms

Term - What it means

ADF

Accidental Dwelling Fire.

HFSV

Home Fire Safety Visit.

PDIR

Post Domestic Incident Response, a term used to indicate actions taken following attendance at a fire or other incident in the home. PDIRs include amongst things the offer of a free follow up home fire safety visit.

RTC

Road Traffic Collision.

Special Service

Calls to incidents which are not fires or false alarms such as RTCs, rescues, flooding, incidents involving hazardous materials or the provision of assistance to other agencies.

UFAS

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals. When an automatic fire detection and alarm system is activated as a result of anything other than an actual fire the activation is classed as a false alarm. If an attendance is made to such an event by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, then the event is recorded as an UFAS incident.

UFAS Policy Change

In response to COVID, on the 6th May 2020, the SFRS decided to send 1 pump to UFAS premises that did not have their own Predetermined attendance (PDA).

As of 1st July 2023, the COVID interim 1 pump response was ended and a new UFAS policy was implemented.

The new policy is to call challenge all UFAS incidents with the intention of non-attendance. Hospitals, care homes, and sleeping risk premises are all exempt and receive either 2 pumps or their premise specific PDA.



SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland



BUSINESS
INTELLIGENCE

Design, figures and charts by the Business Intelligence team.

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Executive
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 19th May 2026**

Subject: Council Plan (2023-2028): Quarter 4 Update (Year 3 - 2025/2026)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members on progress that has been made during the third year of the Council Plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel notes:**

2.1.1 Quarter 4 progress (Year 3) of the Council Plan (2023-2028) attached as Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 The new [Council Plan \(2023-2028\)](#) was agreed by Council in March 2023, and sets out the Council's framework for achieving key strategic outcomes based on three priority areas:

- Spaces and Places;
- Live, Work and Learn; and
- Civic and Community Pride.

A fourth, internal outcome: Efficient and Effective Enabling Services, is used to link all parts of the Council to the plan.

- 3.2 An updated [Performance Management Framework \(2023-2028\)](#) (PMF) to coincide with the new Council Plan was approved by Cabinet in June 2023. This framework supports the delivery of the Council Plan and its annual Council and Service Planning Cycles. The framework has been updated to reflect the recommendations made by Audit Scotland in the Council's Best Value Assurance Report 2021.

- 3.3 The PMF sets out the reporting schedule for the Council Plan noting that performance will be reported to the Council Leadership Team on a quarterly basis with Service and Partnerships Performance Panel scrutinising performance on quarters two and four each year. Elected Members can access [Pentana](#) at any time to view updates and progress on all service plans.





- 3.4 Council Plan actions for year three were [approved](#) by Cabinet on the 17th June 2025.

4. Detail

4.1 Members are asked to consider the Council Plan (2023-2028) **Year 3 Quarter Four** update that covers the period from **1st January 2026 to 31st March 2026**. Members will note the reporting format includes a front-facing dashboard, allowing easier scrutiny of overall progress against the Council objectives. In addition, the update provides:

- **An overall summary dashboard of progress against each of the plan’s priority areas;**
- **Individual dashboards for the three priority areas and efficient and enabling services; and**
- **more detailed breakdown with commentary on the actions and targets agreed by services provided on Pentana.**

4.2 Key points to note from the Quarter 4 (Year 3) update are highlighted in the table below:

PRIORITY AREA	Actions	On track/Completed	Off track/Not yet started/Re-assess due date	Overall health
Priority One: Spaces and Places	16	11 on track and 3 completed	1 – off track some concerns 1 – re-assess due date	
Priority Two: Live, Work and Learn	8	3 on track and 4 completed	1 – re-assess due date	
Priority Three: Civic and Community Pride	6	1 on track and 4 completed	1 – re-assess due date	
Efficient and Effective Enabling Services	6	2 on track and 3 completed	1 – re-assess due date	
TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIONS	36	17 on track and 14 completed	1 off track and 4 re-assess due date	

4.3 A summary of actions which require due dates to be reassessed are detailed below, however, all actions within the Council Plan continue to progress well. Further information can be found within appendix 1.

Action Reference:	Reason for Reassessment:	Amended Due Date:
PDS-CP 05 Plan and deliver Troon Early Year Centre (Scottish	Unforeseen building works.	July 2026

Government 1140 Hours Commitment).		
PDS-CP 13 Delivery of the Riverside New Build Housing Development.	Handover to SAC Housing will now be completed by 17 th April 2026.	April 2026
E&R-CP 05 Maybole Regeneration Project.	Project deadline extended in accordance with funders to align with conclusion of Priority Projects.	September 2026
PPCP-CP11 Continued Implementation of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) process.	The participation of the second service was delayed due a recent Best Value Thematic Audit.	To be confirmed with Service.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with legal requirements.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Not applicable

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- 8.2.1 There are no risks with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

- 9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report as follows:

- Appendix one allows for scrutiny of performance.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to all Priorities of the Council Plan.

13. **Link to Shaping Our Future Council** Yes No

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian Connolly, Council Leader and Policy Lead for Economy and Strategy and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers [Performance Management Framework](#)
[Council Plan 2023-2028](#)
[Council Plan Actions: Year 3 \(2025/2026\)](#)

Person to Contact **Kevin Anderson, Assistant Director (Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance)**
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E-mail susan.mccardie@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 30th April 2026

South Ayrshire Council Plan

2023-2028

Quarter 4 Report (Year 3: 2025/2026)



Overall Health

Priority One
Spaces and Places




Actions
16

On Track/Completed
11 on track and 3 completed

Off Track/Re-assess due date
1 off track some concerns
1 re-assess due date

Overall Health



Priority Two
Live, Work, Learn



Actions
8

On Track/Completed
3 on track and 4 completed

Re-assess due date
1

Overall Health


Priority Three
Civic and Community Pride




Actions
6

On Track/Completed
1 on track and 4 completed

Re-assess due date
1

Overall Health



Efficient and Effective
Enabling Services

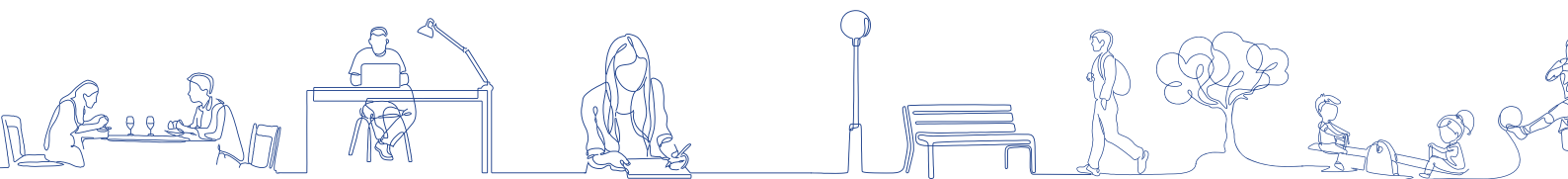


Actions
6

On Track/Completed
2 on track and 3 completed

Re-assess due date
1

Overall Health




Management Summary

PRIORITY ONE: SPACES AND PLACES

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 16 actions with 3 action complete (19%) and 11 actions on target (69%).
- 2 actions are giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- 8 actions on target are <50% progress (50%) however it should be noted that the timescales for all these actions range from March 2025 to March 2028 therefore the progress status reflects the longer-term nature of these actions.

PRIORITY TWO: LIVE, WORK, LEARN

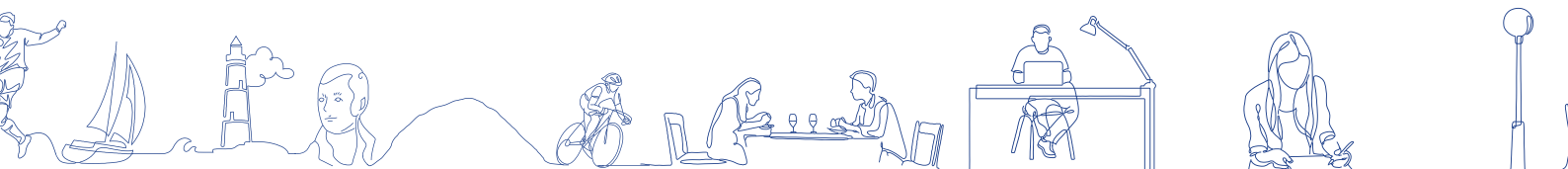
- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 8 actions with 4 actions now complete (50%), 3 actions on target (38%).
- 1 action is giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- 2 actions on target are <50% progress (25%) however it should be noted that the timescales for all these actions range from March 2025 to March 2028 therefore the progress status reflects the longer-term nature of these actions.

PRIORITY THREE: CIVIC AND COMMUNITY PRIDE

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 6 actions with 4 actions now complete (67%) and 1 action on target (17%).
- 1 action is giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- No actions on target are <50% progress.

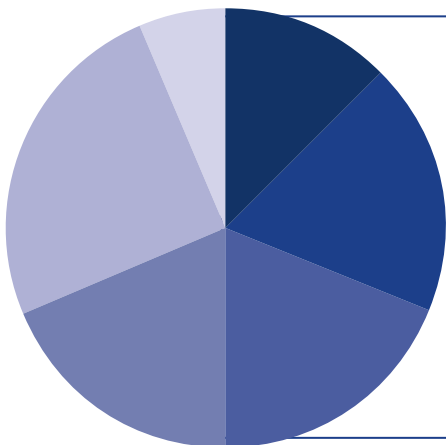
EFFICIENT AND ENABLING SERVICES

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 6 actions with 3 actions now complete (50%) and 2 actions on target (33%).
- 1 action is giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- 1 action on target is <50% progress (17%) however it should be noted that the timescale for this action is range March 2028 therefore the progress status reflects the longer-term nature of these actions.



Quarter 4 update

Priority One Spaces and Places



Services delivering this priority

■ Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	2
■ Professional Design Services	3
■ Special Property Projects	3
■ Neighbourhood Services	3
■ Sport, Leisure and Golf	4
■ Planning and Building Standards	1

Some highlights

- Prestwick swimming pool upgrade completed. A range of energy efficiency and customer focussed improvements are now in place.
- Citadel Refurbishment – main works commenced on 23rd March 2026. The refurbishment works will be carried out in phases to allow the facility to remain open throughout the works.
- Hourstons/Arran Mall – demolition is progressing and Council has approved proposals for development of the delivery model and masterplan for new housing.
- New Biodiversity Strategy completed and approved by Community Planning Board in January 2026.



Actions

21



Completed

5



Off Track

0



On Track

8



Re-assess due date

8

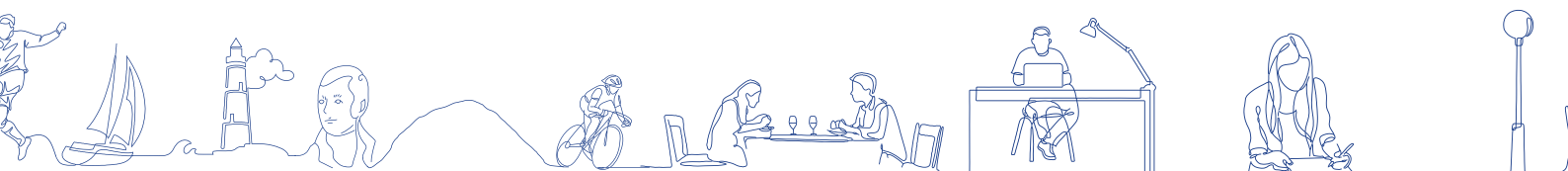


MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 16 actions with 3 action complete (19%) and 11 actions on target (69%).
- 2 actions are giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- 8 actions on target are <50% progress (50%) however it should be noted that the timescales for all these actions range from March 2025 to March 2028 therefore the progress status reflects the longer-term nature of these actions.

Spaces and Places

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
DSA-CP 03 Redevelop the two priority courses, Darley and Belleisle, to enable South Ayrshire Council to achieve the agreed strategic outcomes and increase income from visitor and members.	30-Apr-2027	Service Lead - Sport Leisure and Golf	52%	On track	<p>15-Apr-2026 As noted in October 2025, our one-off capital investment will now focus on Belleisle Golf Course only, reflecting its strategic importance and potential to deliver significant improvements for the local golfing community and visitors.</p> <p>For Darley Golf Course, improvements will continue to be delivered through the routine annual maintenance budget, ensuring the course remains in good condition and accessible for all users.</p> <p>A second round of public engagement took place during November 2025, providing residents and course users with an opportunity to review updated design concepts and share feedback. This engagement was positive and well received with the results captured through an online form. The results have now been used to inform a Council Paper scheduled for May 2026, which will set out the recommended approach for Belleisle's redevelopment and seek Elected Member approval to proceed with the Communities preferred option.</p> <p>Further details continue to be available via the dedicated microsite: www.belleisle-park-development.co.uk</p>
Target					
Increase use of the golf course by both members and non-members. Revenue increase by 5%. Baseline 2022/23.					
How will you measure progress?					
Golf courses redeveloped and operational.					



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
DSA-CP 07 Transform the Citadel Leisure Centre ensuring customers and staff are supported throughout the transition.	31-Mar-2027	Service Lead - Sport Leisure and Golf	47%	On Track	14-Apr-2026 Following a period of redesign and value engineering, the next phase of the programme of works is now well underway. The works are currently focussed on the creation of the new reception, cafe, gym, fitness studios and activity hub.

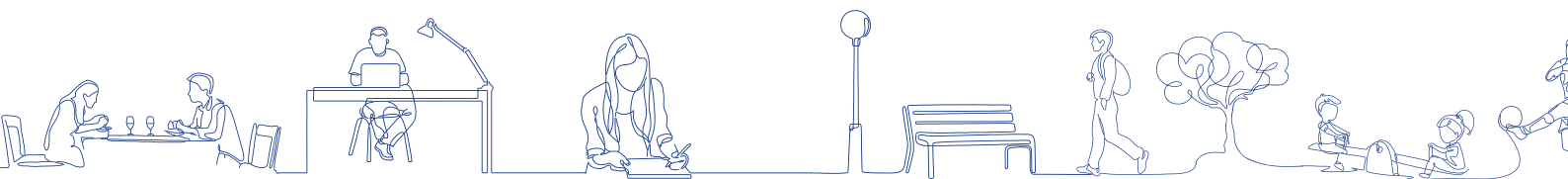
Target
Increased income and usage.

How will you measure progress?
Displaced user groups provided with alternative options.
Communication plan in place.
Customers and staff provided with accessible regular updates on progress.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
DSA-CP 08 Transform Troon Leisure Centre ensuring customers and staff are supported throughout the transition.	31-Mar-2027	Service Lead - Sport Leisure and Golf	32%	On track	10-Apr-2026 Contractors and project team are making good progress with the refurbishment which is still on track to be completed and handed over in March 2027.

Target
Works complete and operational.

How will you measure progress?
Displaced user groups provided with alternative options.
Communication plan in place.
Customers and staff provided with accessible regular updates on progress.



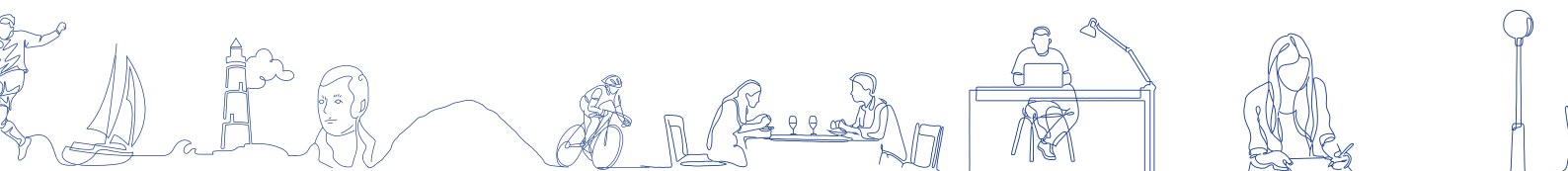
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
<p>DSA-CP 09 Upgrade the plant and fabric of Prestwick Swimming Pool ensuring customers and staff are supported throughout the transition.</p>	<p>31-Mar-2025</p>	<p>Service Lead - Sport Leisure and Golf</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>7-Oct-2025 All works are now complete onsite and the facility reopened on September 29th 2025. A range of energy efficiency and customer focussed improvements are now in place including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new roof and new exterior wall cladding. • An innovative air handling ventilation system. • An increased water supply along with improved water storage. • A new pool cover which will reduce heat loss overnight, minimise evaporation and reduce humidity. • Extensive remedial work to the tiles, grout and pool surround. • The installation of solar panels. • The addition of 16 private cubicles, including dedicated family and baby changing rooms. • A welcoming entrance foyer and reception area, which has been updated to improve their overall experience, whilst also providing staff with a modern working environment.

Target

Works complete and operational.

How will you measure progress?

Displaced user groups provided with alternative options.
 Communication plan in place.
 Customers and staff provided with accessible regular updates on progress.



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
E&R-CP 01 Deliver priority elements of Ayr Town Centre Framework.	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - Special Property Projects	30%	On Track	26-Mar-2026 Burns Statue Square development being delivered by ARA. A preferred contractor has been identified for Newmarket Street Lighting and permissions are being progressed to implement. Hourstons and Arran mall site being progressed for town centre living.

Target

Accessible Ayr Stage 4 completed, Newmarket Street ‘dressing’ and Burns Square redesigned to Stage 1 and £220,000 shopfront scheme developed and delivered. Options and associated costs identified, and report submitted to Cabinet on time.

How will you measure progress?

Achieving project plan goals outlined within Ayr Town Centre Framework.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
FL-CP 01 Continue work on the transition to ultra-low emission car fleet for South Ayrshire.	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - Neighbourhood Services	90%	On Track	15-Apr-2026 The number of ultra-low emission vehicles (EV/hybrid) remain the same however the new diesel vehicles do have engine systems that have the lowest emissions possible and are fuel efficient.

Target

80 ultra-low emission vehicles procured.

How will you measure progress?

No. of vehicles procured (80).

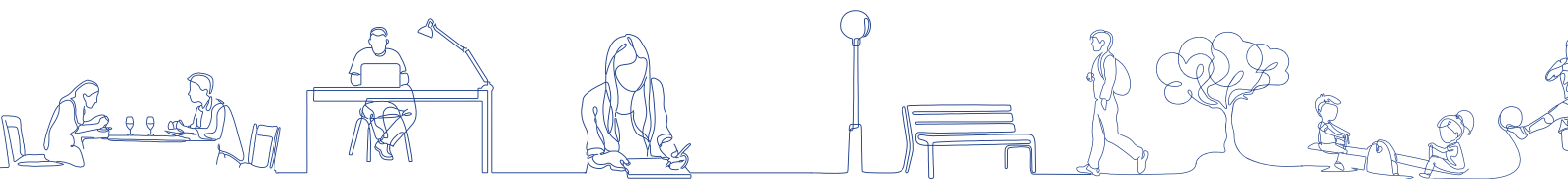
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
GB-CP 01 Delivery of Ash Die Back Plan.	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - Neighbourhood Services	46%	On Track	14-Apr-2026 Cabinet approved funding for another year to deliver the Ash Dieback Plan and Neighbourhood Services is continuing to manage ash trees in public open spaces focusing on stage 3 and 4 trees.

Target

700 per year.

How will you measure progress?

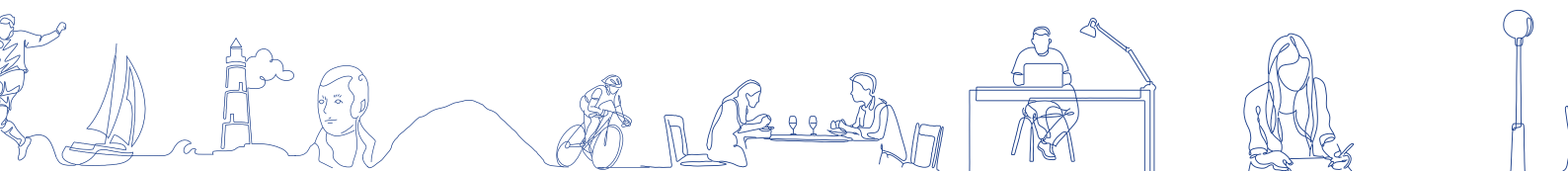
Number of trees felled.



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
GB-CP 02 Work to procure a site and licence for the treatment of all SAC green/garden waste.	31-Jul-2026	Service Lead - Neighbourhood Services	65%	Off Track - Some Concerns	10-Apr-2026 Cabinet approved the procurement of the old nursery site at Auchincruive and there may be opportunity to undertake some green waste recycling at this site. Papers have not been concluded as yet.
Target					
Procure Site by October 2024. Develop site and be operational by July 2025.					
How will you measure progress?					
Own site, obtained planning permission and SEPA licence.					

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PBS-CP 02 Continue 4-year programme to develop new Local Development Plan (LDP3).	30-Jun-2029	Service Lead - Planning & Building Standards	20%	On track	07-Apr-2026 The Evidence papers for the LPD3 continue to be prepared in line with the Development Plan Scheme.
Target					
100%.					
How will you measure progress?					
Submit for a Gateway Check by Scottish Government Reporter.					

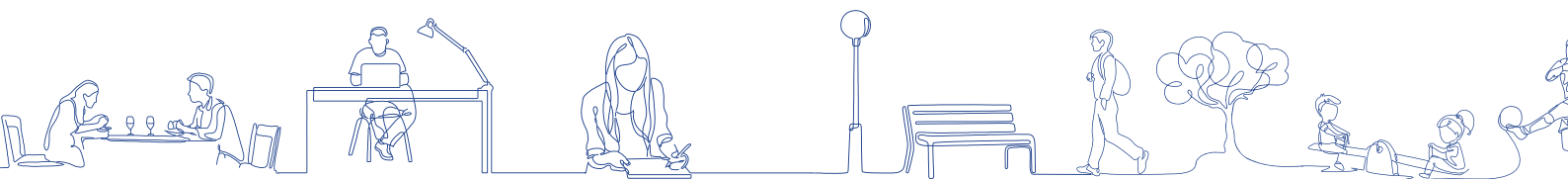
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 02 Delivery of the Citadel Refurbishment.	31-Mar-2027	Service Lead - Professional Design Services	52%	On Track	13-Apr-2026 The main works commenced on site on 23rd March 2026 and are progressing well. Tiling works are nearing completion for the installation of a mezzanine floor in the former games hall to form a gym space over two floors. The refurbishment works will be carried out in phases to allow the facility to remain open throughout the works with planned, limited closure of works areas.
Target					
Completion date.					
How will you measure progress?					
Project delivered on time and on budget.					



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 04 Plan and deliver Girvan Primary School.	31-May-2027	Service Lead - Special Property Projects	48%	On Track	31-Mar-2026 Works are progressing well on site with foundations complete and steelwork erection due to commence next.
Target					
Completion date.					
How will you measure progress?					
Project delivered on time and on budget.					

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 05 Plan and deliver Troon Early Year Centre (Scottish Government 1140 Hours Commitment).	28-Feb-2026	Service Lead - Professional Design Services	72%	Re-assess due date	14-Apr-2026 Works continue on site with steady progress being made, unforeseen issues with the existing building fabric have caused delays as previously advised. Overall completion is now scheduled in July 2026.
Target					
Completion date.					
How will you measure progress?					
Project identified and delivered on time and on budget.					

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 08 Demolition of Hourstons extension, Arran Mall and leading development options.	30-Sep-2026	Service Lead - Special Property Projects	46%	On track	31-Mar-2026 Demolition of Arran Mall is progressing, and procurement of demolition works for Hourstons will commence shortly. Council have approved proposals for development of the delivery model and masterplan for new housing, involving appointment of consultants for design, market testing and legal advice.
Target					
Completion date.					
How will you measure progress?					
Completion of demolition and agreed strategy for development.					



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 10 Delivery of the General Services Capital Programme for 2024/25 and future years.	31-Mar-2026	Service Lead - Professional Design Services	100%	Completed	13-Apr-2026 The re-profiled General Services Capital programme is complete although several projects span more than one financial year and will continue into 2026/27.

Target

90 – 100% percentage spend achieved on agreed programme.

How will you measure progress?

Percentage of actual versus budget spend of General Services capital programme as of 31 March 2026.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 07 Deliver nature networks via new Biodiversity Strategy under nature priority.	31-Jan-2026	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	100%	Completed	01-Apr-2026 The Biodiversity Strategy was approved by the Community Planning Board on 29th January 2026. Outreach to the wider community is being facilitated through the Stepping Stones project groups of which a public launch event was held on the 28th March 2026.

Target

Biodiversity Strategy Agreed and published on CPP webpage.

How will you measure progress?

Strategy approved including monitoring framework Success – functional nature networks as reflected in developed measures in strategy.

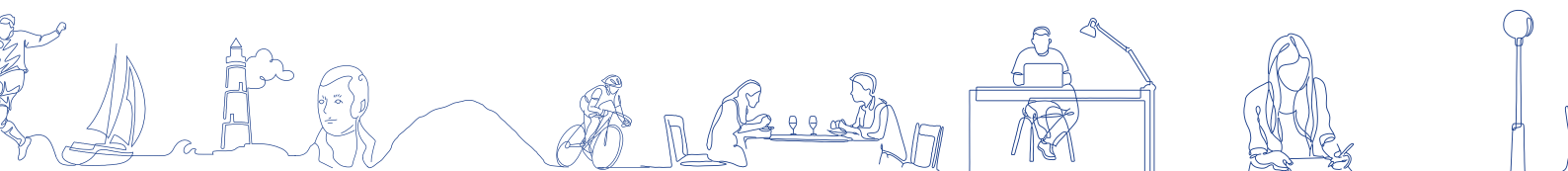
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 08 Coastal Change Adaptation Plan.	31-Mar-2027	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	45%	On Track	01-Apr-2026 The procurement process to support the Coastal Adaptation Plan is ongoing.

Target

Case study concluded with new CCAP published and other outcomes met.

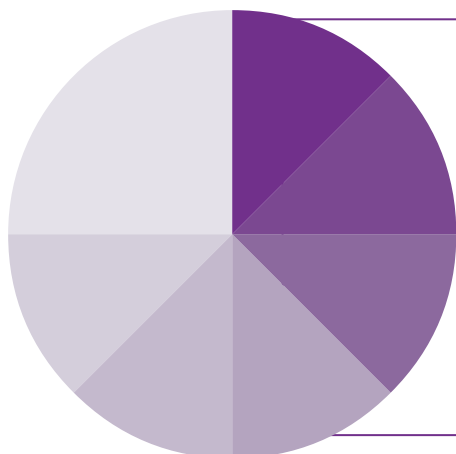
How will you measure progress?

CCAP published including monitoring framework Success – Communities engaged, and responsibilities realised for new approach including ongoing monitoring regimes in place.



Priority Two

Live, Work, Learn



Services delivering this priority

	Asset Management:	1
	Economy and Regeneration:	1
	Education Support Services:	1
	Professional Design Services:	1
	Special Property Projects:	1
	Policy, Performance and Community Planning:	1
	Housing Strategy:	2

Some highlights

- Phase 2 of Solar Farm Development complete. Budget allocation for progression to Phase 3 was agreed in February 2026.
- Riverside New Build Housing Development – handover to SAC Housing will be completed by 17th April 2026.

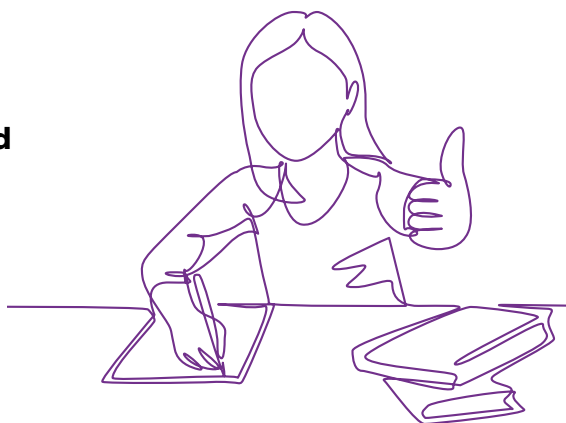
 **Actions**
8

 **Completed**
4

 **Off Track**
0

 **On Track**
3

 **Re-assess due date**
1



MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 8 actions with 4 actions now complete (50%), 3 actions on target (38%).
- 1 action is giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- 2 actions on target are <50% progress (25%) however it should be noted that the timescales for all these actions range from March 2025 to March 2028 therefore the progress status reflects the longer-term nature of these actions.

Live, work, Learn

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
AMCAT-CP 01 Solar Farm Development – Phase 2	31-Dec-2025	Service Lead - Asset Management and Community Asset Transfer	100%	Completed	01-Apr-2026 Council paper on 19th February 2026 agreed capital budget allocation for progression to project phase 3, delivery. Paper confirms that both the Auchincruive Bing and Cockhill Farm are feasible solar development projects, and that Auchincruive should be a priority. Collective Architecture has been appointed as a project team to deliver planning, site surveys, and pre-work to support appointment of a design, build, and operate contractor through a New Engineering Contract 4 (NEC4) contract route. Legal support is in place and specialist market advice is being sought to inform off-taker engagement.

Target

Completion of phase 2 (including, but not exclusively the following: surveys as appropriate (e.g. ecological, GPRS); grid connection deposit; memorandum of understanding with off-takers; planning application/permission; appointment of consultancy support (as appropriate); and financial modelling to such an extent as to put before Council to seek approval for Phase 3 (EPC, OM) and approval of funding.

How will you measure progress?

Council has sufficient information to make an informed decision on next steps to take (to continue to phase 3 or end project).

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
E&R-CP 03 Deliver the £1.4 million South Ayrshire elements of the DSIT funded 5G Innovation Regions Project.	30-Sep-2025	Service Lead - Economy and Regeneration	100%	Completed	14-Oct-2025 Original project is now complete. It is worth noting that a further six-month extension and additional funds (£400k) have been secured from Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) which will see the project run till 1st April 2026. The work undertaken during this extension period will be used to develop the ecosystem and create new use cases for the technology.

Target

Deploy fully functioning private 5G network at Spirit's Aerospace Innovation Centre. Provide improved mobile data access to large scale outdoor events.

How will you measure progress?

Implement 3 private sector use cases. Deliver improved network coverage on large scale outdoor events. Deliver enhanced educational experiences utilising digital technologies.



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
ES-CP 01 Increase the proportion of school accommodation that is in a satisfactory condition and is suitable for its current use (Category A&B).	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - Education Support Services	98%	On Track	31-Mar-2026 The Core Facts national reporting exercise for the Scottish Government is an annual task and therefore the improved 2024/25 figure of 98% will not change until this work is undertaken for 2025/26 in Q1 of 2026/27. The exercise was completed by the end of May in 2025, and Education Support anticipate timescales for 2026 will be similar.

Target

Increase the proportion of school accommodation that is in a satisfactory condition and is suitable for its current use (Category A&B) above the current figure of 90%.

How will you measure progress?

Increasing the number of A&B rated schools and reducing the number of C rated schools.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 09 Delivery of the Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2025/26 and future years.	31-Mar-2026	Service Lead - Professional Design Services	100%	Completed	13-Apr-2026 The re-profiled Housing Capital programme is complete although several projects span more than one financial year and will continue into 2026/27.

Target

90 – 100% percentage spend achieved on agreed programme.

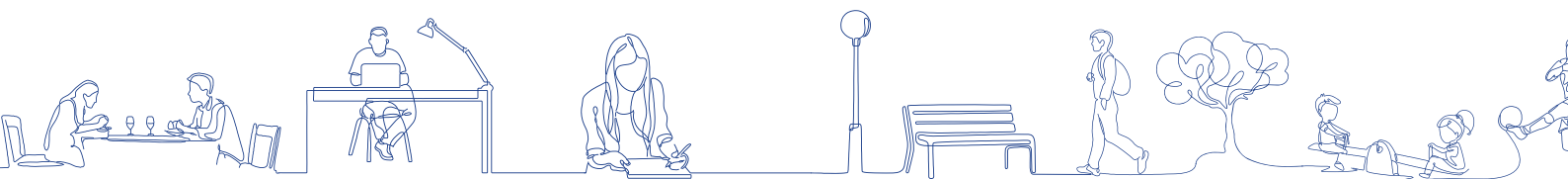
How will you measure progress?

Percentage of actual versus budget spend of Housing capital programme as of 31 March 2026.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PDS-CP 13 Delivery of the Riverside New Build Housing Development.	31-Jan-2026	Service Lead - Special Property Projects	98%	Re-assess due date	14-Apr-2026 Handover to SAC Housing to be completed by 17th April 2026

Target

Completion Date.



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 05 Development of action plans to support the priority areas identified in the Child Poverty Strategy.	30-Sep-2025	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	100%	Completed	15-Oct-2025 As per the previous update, the action plan for 2024/2025 was finalised. Updates will be used to form the Year 1 Annual Progress update which will be submitted to the Community Planning Board in September, and those actions with a longer timescale will be automatically pulled into the year 2 plan. The action plan has been shared with Public Health Scotland.

Target

Core Child Poverty Working Group will present first iteration of action plan to CP Board by October 2024 with final action plan fully implemented by March 2025.

How will you measure progress?

Action plans agreed and published on CPP webpage.

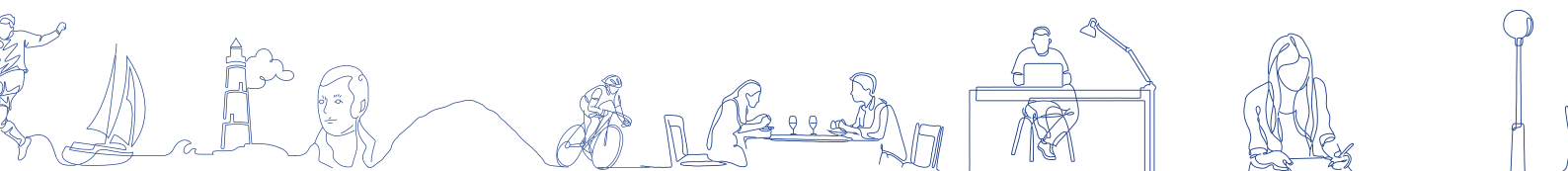
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 09 Working for Wallacetown (Housing Led Regeneration)	31-Mar-2027	Service Lead - Housing Strategy and Regeneration	35%	On Track	22-Apr-2026 Recommended candidate for dedicated post looking at Housing Led regeneration of Wallacetown - start date to be confirmed. This will link into wider work within Wallacetown as well as the project with the University of Strathclyde.

Target

This will be a multi-year project with years 1 and 2 looking at feasibility of deliverables as well as providing potential options on practical solutions. future years will be aimed at physical delivery against agreed actions.

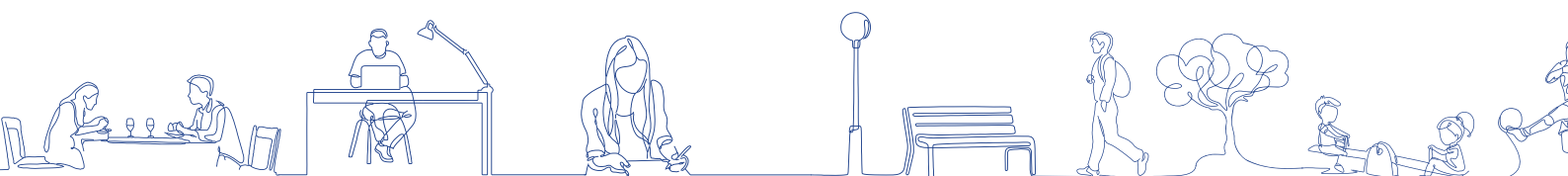
How will you measure progress?

This will be a multi-year staged programme and impact will be managed in different stages. Year 1 and 2 outcomes will be measured in creation of a delivery plan.



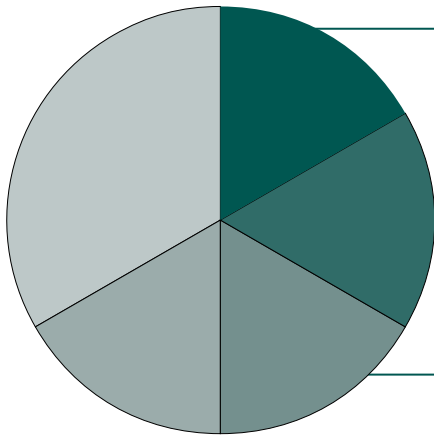
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 10 Deliver new affordable housing.	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - Housing Strategy and Regeneration	45%	On Track	<p>22-Apr-2026 Work to begin on update to Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) in coming months aiming at the Cabinet meeting in November 2026 for approval.</p> <p>Riverside handovers due 17th April 2025, 42 Buybacks completed within 2025/26 and work progressing on site at Green Street via Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partner.</p> <p>New sites being progressed in line with SHIP recommendations.</p>
Target					
Target 135 per year.					
How will you measure progress?					
Number of completions.					

Economy and Regeneration	3
Destination South Ayrshire	1
Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	3
Sport, Leisure and Golf	1
Special Property Projects	1



Priority Three

Civic and Community Pride



Services delivering this priority

	Sport, Leisure and Golf:	1
	Communities and Transformation:	1
	Economy and Regeneration:	1
	Special Property Projects:	1
	Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability:	2

Some highlights

- International Air Show – Festival of Flight – internal events team working on this year’s Ayr show and all arrangements on track.
- Maybole Regeneration project deadline extended in accordance with funders to align with conclusion of priority projects.
- The new SAC Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2025-2030) was approved by Full Council on 11th December 2025.

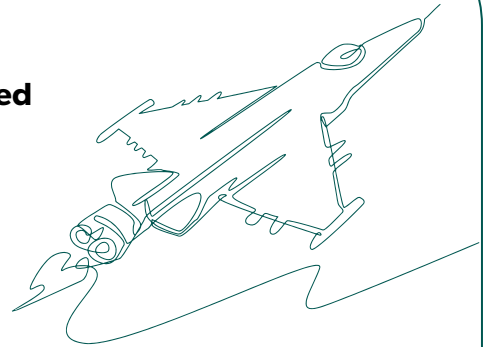
 **Actions**
6

 **Completed**
4

 **Off Track**
0

 **On Track**
1

 **Re-assess due date**
1



MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 6 actions with 4 actions now complete (67%) and 1 action on target (17%).
- 1 action is giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- No actions on target are <50% progress.

Civic and Community Pride

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owner	Progress	Status	Latest Note
DSA-CP 05 Work to promote golf tourism to area using Open Golf Championship in 2024 as a stage for publicity.	31-Dec-2025	Service Lead - Sport Leisure and Golf	100%	Completed	09-Oct-2025 The initiative to leverage The Open Championship as a platform for promoting golf tourism has delivered sustained benefits. Post-event revenue continues to exceed normal projections, supported by a marked increase in visitor rounds. The Golf South Ayrshire voucher scheme remains a successful incentive, encouraging golf tourists to experience local courses and contributing to ongoing positive engagement. This action is now complete, with outcomes demonstrating strong alignment to strategic objectives for tourism growth.

Target

An increase in visitor day passes to South Ayrshire golf courses.

How will you measure progress?

Increased visitor numbers both locally and internationally.

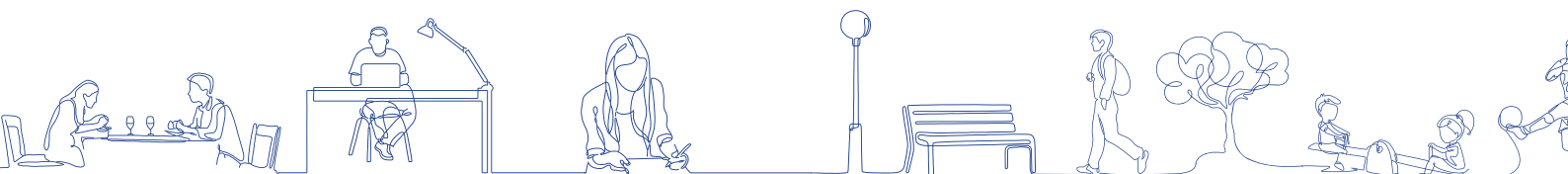
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owner	Progress	Status	Latest Note
DSA-CP 06 Deliver a safe and well attended International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight on an annual basis for 5 years.	30-Sep-2027	Director of Communities and Transformation	50%	On track	14-Apr-2026 Internal events team are working hard on the Ayr Show. All going very well and on track. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key external staff are confirmed through the Procurement process. All key suppliers are currently going through a Framework process and will be confirmed by early May. Having all staff and suppliers confirmed by early May puts the Ayr Show in a good position as never had all booked in by May previously. Festival village is now fully booked and currently being developed. Lineup is a mixture of favourites and new to keep it fresh and evolving each year. All Silver & Bronze meetings have started and going well. First draft of public entertainment licence has been sent to Licensing and timeline agreed for all documentation to be sent through.

Target

Attendances of 100,000 + per year.

How will you measure progress?

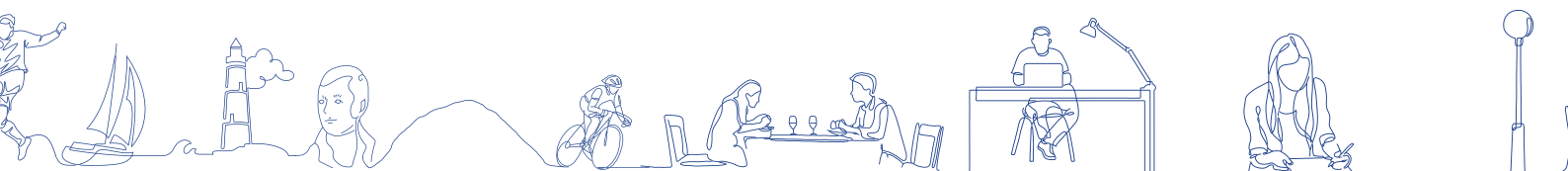
Attendance figures. No major incidents. Public Entertainment Licence in place.



Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owner	Progress	Status	Latest Note
E&R-CP 04 Girvan Regeneration Project 'Development Stage'	30-Jun-2025	Service Lead - Economy and Regeneration	100%	Completed	01-Oct-2025 Delivery stage applications submitted to Historic Environment Scotland and National Lottery Heritage Fund in August 2025. Decisions due late 2025.
Target					
Submission of Delivery Stage application to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).					
How will you measure progress?					
Complete activities required by funders.					

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owner	Progress	Status	Latest Note
E&R-CP 05 Maybole Regeneration Project.	31-Mar-2026	Service Lead - Special Property Projects	97%	Re-assess due date	26-Mar-2026 Project deadline extended in accordance with funders to align with conclusion of Priority Projects, e.g. Castle. Invitation to tender via Quick Quote issued to undertake monitoring and evaluation.
Target					
All project related activities concluded					
How will you measure progress?					
All capital projects, activities and training projects, a project evaluation and closing event will all be delivered by end of March 2026					

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owner	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 03 Refresh Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy.	31-Dec-2025	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	100%	Completed	26-Jan-2026 The new SAC Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2025-2030) was approved by Full Council on 11th December 2025. Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030.
Target					
Meeting the measures set out in the document.					
How will you measure progress?					
Approved strategy including monitoring and development mechanisms					



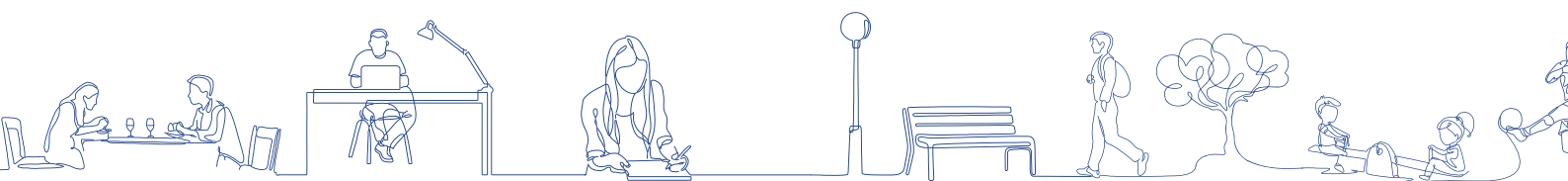
Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owner	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP10 Development of Action Plans to support year 2 of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	31-Dec-2025	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	100%	Completed	06-Oct-2025 LOIP Year 2 plans have now been developed for the period 2025/2026.

Target

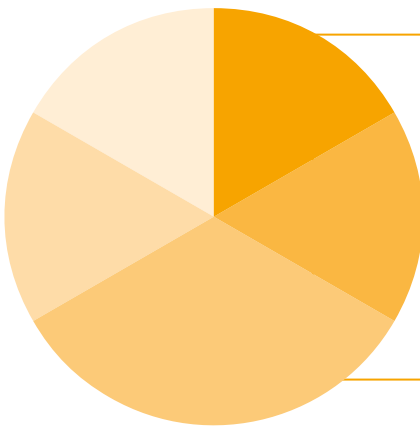
An annual performance report on Year 2 (2025/2026) of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan will be produced which will measure impact across 14 priority areas (this is in line with the CPP Performance Management Framework).

How will you measure success

Monitoring of action plans will take place as part of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Performance Management Framework via the production of an annual progress report.



Efficient and Effective Enabling Services



Services delivering this priority

■ Corporate Accounting:	1
■ ICT Operations:	1
■ Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability:	2
■ Risk and Safety:	1
■ Transformation:	1

Some highlights

- South Ayrshire Trauma Roadmap was approved by Cabinet in March 2026.
- Medium Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 to 2030/31 approved by Council in February 2026.
- A Business Continuity scenario-based event is being planned by colleagues in Civil Contingencies and the Digital Office. This will be held in May 2026 and will involve all council service areas.
- Trauma Roadmap approved by Cabinet in March 2026.



Actions

6



Completed

3



Off Track

0



On Track

2



Re-assess due date

1



MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

- Progress is taking place/has taken place across 6 actions with 3 actions now complete (50%) and 2 actions on target (33%).
- 1 action is giving cause for concern, requiring due dates to be re-assessed as they are overdue their initial completion timescales.
- 1 action on target is <50% progress (17%) however it should be noted that the timescale for this action is March 2028 therefore the progress status reflects the longer-term nature of this action..

Efficient and effective enabling services

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
CA-CP 01 Review and refresh the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).	28-Feb-2026	Service Lead Corporate Accounting	100%	Completed	09-Apr-2026 MTFP 2026/27 to 2030/31 approved by Council on 19 February 2026.

Target

Review and refresh the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

How will you measure success

Provide clear direction on how the Council will manage its financial resources in the short to medium term to ensure they are deployed effectively to achieve the Council's priorities and objectives as set out in the Council Plan.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
ICTOP-CP 02 Create a Cyber Roadmap including business continuity planning; regulatory and legislative compliance, investment levels, overall governance processes and technical security controls.	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - ICT Operations	28%	On Track	14-Apr-2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With PSN Accreditation achieved for 2025, works has now commenced for the next accreditation due in October. This remains a recurring annual activity and includes an ICT Health check which is underway. Prioritisation of applications completed by the Business Continuity Working Group and due to be approved at the next CMT Assurance meeting, which replaces the Integrity Group. A Business Continuity scenario-based event is being planned by colleagues in Civil Contingencies and the Digital Office. This will be held in May 2026 and will involve all council service areas. Recruitment of the approved Cyber resource is due to commence in the short term, starting with the L10 Cyber Engineer.

Target

Annual Review

How will you measure success

Cyber Roadmap developed and reviewed on annual basis.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP 06 Develop a Trauma Roadmap for creating trauma-informed and responsive change in line with national trauma guidance.	30-Sep-2025	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	100%	Completed	01-Apr-2026 The Trauma Roadmap was approved by Cabinet on the 17th March 2026. Trauma Roadmap

Target

Agreed within the Trauma Strategy – identify high level outcomes and priority areas.

How will you measure success

Trauma Strategy agreed by Cabinet/Full Council.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
PPCP-CP11 Continued Implementation of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) process.	31-Mar-2026	Service Lead - Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability	50%	Re-assess due date	01-Apr-2026 The second service to participate during 2025/2026 was to be Asset Management, however this has been delayed due to the recent Best Value Thematic Audit which was led by the Asset Management Team. As such, this action will require the due date to be reassessed.

Target

2 services will participate in the PSIF process during 2025/2026.

How will you measure success

Self-evaluation process completed and embedded into all strategic planning.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
R&S-CP 01 Deliver Risk and Safety / Civil Contingencies Service Plan to support Council Plan.	31-Mar-2028	Service Lead - Risk and Safety	50%	On Track	22-Apr-2026 We continue to work towards actions as outlined in our Risk, Safety, Business Continuity and Civil Contingencies service plan.

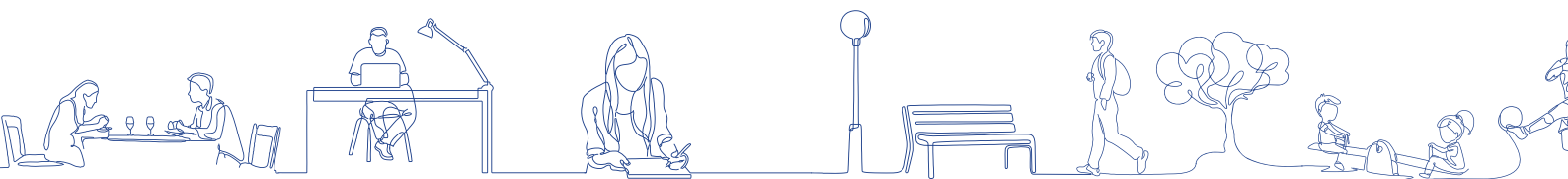
Target

Services demonstrating a reduction of incidents / accidents/ EL, PL claims / motor and property losses. Services evidencing the management of operational risk. Services well trained and prepared to respond to major incidents. Services maintaining robust Civil Contingencies and Business Continuity Plans which are tested regularly.

How will you measure success

A corporate reduction of incidents / accidents / property and motor losses therefore reducing risk to service users / employees as well as decreasing financial burden on Council of claims and premiums. Services evidencing the management of operational risk and ability to respond to major incidents or service disruption.

Action	Timescale	Portfolio Owners	Progress	Status	Latest Note
TR-CP 03 Procure and implement a new telephony system based on Service specifications to meet needs of internal and external stakeholders.	31-Dec-2025	Service Lead - Transformation	100%	Completed	09-Oct-2025 Migration to Teams telephony nearing completion with more services now switched over to this. Withdrawal of Skype imminent so focus is on the remaining service areas.
Target					
Upgraded contact centre system. Replacement system for Skype for Business implemented before Summer 2025.					
How will you measure success					
Multi-channel efficient model to contact the Council. A consolidated public contact strategy.					



South Ayrshire Council
Report by Director for South
Ayrshire Health and Social
Care Partnership to Service
and Partnerships Performance
Panel of 19th May 2026

Subject: Audit Scotland Report – Delayed discharges. A symptom of the challenges facing health and social care.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the recent publication of Audit Scotland's 'Delayed discharges; A symptom of the challenge facing health and social care' report, attached as Appendix 1.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

Considers the key messages in the report and feedback any comments to officers.

3. Background

- 3.1 Delayed discharge occurs when a patient remains in hospital despite being medically ready to leave.
- 3.2 Approximately 3 percent of all people discharged from hospital experience a delay, however each delay can have a detrimental impact on an individual's physical and mental wellbeing.
- 3.3 In addition, delays impact on the bed capacity for other individuals, staff availability and longer wait times in other parts of the hospital system.

4. Detail

4.1 Key Facts (nationally 2024/2025):

- 17,915 – number of times people experienced a delayed discharge
- 720,119 – number of hospital bed days lost due to delayed discharge
- 1 in 9 beds occupied due to delayed discharge.
- 66% of all delayed discharge bed days by people aged 75 years or above
- Estimated cost of unnecessary bed days in hospital over £440million.

4.2 Main causes of delay (nationally 2024/2025)

- Awaiting care home placement – 28%
- Complex needs – 27%
- Awaiting care arrangements – 27%
- Awaiting community care assessment – 14%
- Other reasons (patient/family related delays, funding) – 3%

4.3 The Audit Scotland report highlights that delayed discharge is a symptom of the many challenges faced by Health and Social Care Partnerships. Underlying challenges include.

- Severe financial challenges across NHS, Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Governance complexity and fragmented decision making
- Rising demand on health and social care services with the needs of an ageing population
- Significant workforce and recruitment challenges, particularly problematic in rural and remote areas
- Lack of suitable housing impacting on care, particularly in rural and remote areas
- Lengthy legal procedures for power of attorney and guardianship, particularly affecting adults with incapacity.

4.4 Reducing delayed discharge is a priority and there a number of current actions in place to support effective discharge and reduce hospital admissions by providing the right care in the right setting.

4.5 In June 2025 £92 million was allocated for unscheduled care and discharge improvement work.

4.6 Current actions in place across a number of NHS Boards, Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships are cited below.

- **Discharge Without Delay Programme** – a whole system approach designed to reduce hospital delays by focusing on early proactive planning and partnership working.
- **Hospital at Home** – providing urgent, short term hospital level care at an individual's home or homely setting, with a target of at least 2,000 hospitals at home beds by December 2026.
- **Rapid Peer Response and Support Team** – providing tailored support to Health and Social Care Partnerships, identifying issues and sharing best practices to improve performance in reducing delayed discharges.
- **Flow Navigation Centres and Integrated Clinical Hubs** – virtual assessment hubs to promote multi-disciplinary working and professional to professional advice geared towards providing care to patients more effectively and efficiently.

- **Focus on Frailty** – Early identification and management of frailty to support people to live as independently and safe as possible, and to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, re-admissions and to reduce length of stay.
 - **Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE)** – GIRFE principles developed to support practitioners to provide a more personalised and preventative approach to care, with a focus on person centred discharge planning and coordinated care.
 - **Digital Solutions** – Better discharge planning through digital solutions such as dynamic discharge app, and virtual care.
- 4.7 Recent policy frameworks such as the Population Health Framework and the Health and Social Care Renewal Framework announced in June 2025 recognise the need for a cross-sector approach to address the challenges of health and social care with a common focus on prevention.
- 4.8 The Audit Scotland report highlights key messages that impact on progress to date with reducing delayed discharges.
- Limited evaluation of national and local initiatives, making it difficult to judge what works or provides best value.
 - Limited progress on shifting balance of care from hospitals to community.
 - Persistent financial deficits amongst Health and Social Care Partnerships and a reliance of reserves for short term fixes.
- 4.9 The report highlights a number of key recommendations across Scottish Government, COSLA, Public Health Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NHS Boards, Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- Over the next 12 months development of a consistent approach to evaluating and reporting on initiatives in place to reduce delays (ALL)
 - In the next 6 months published guidance to clarify and strengthen the role of Health and Social Care Partnerships in the governance and delivery of the Health and Social Care Renewal Framework (ALL)
 - Over the next 12 months improvements on public awareness of the benefits of establishing a power of attorney or a guardianship order (ALL)
 - Over the next 12 months development and action of an implementation plan to share best practice and learning from digital solutions used to tackle delayed discharges (ALL)
 - Production of a clear estimate of total costs of delayed discharges and savings from interventions, completed within the next 12 months, updated regularly and annually reported in an annual analysis (Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland)
 - Assessment of current measures for monitoring performance in reducing delays and establishment of a key suite of indicators that are evidence based and relevant to local circumstances (Scottish Government)

- In the next 6 months, full implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 ensuring carers are involved in discharge planning from the point of hospital admission (NHS Boards, Local Authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships)

4.9.1 On conclusion, delayed discharge remains a major systemic challenge, reflecting deep-rooted challenges across health and social care. Whilst there is promise in many of the actions listed progress is still inconsistent and hampered by financial, workforce and governance constraints.

4.9.2 The Audit Scotland report has highlighted the need for a stronger focus in prevention, integration and consistent evaluation to reduce delays and improve outcomes for individuals.

5. **Legal and Procurement Implications**

5.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with legal requirements.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. **Financial Implications**

6.1 Not applicable.

7. **Human Resources Implications**

7.1 Not applicable.

8. **Risk**

8.1 ***Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations***

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 ***Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations***

8.2.1 There are no risks with rejecting the recommendations.

9. **Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)**

9.1 The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, which affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. **Sustainable Development Implications**

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy

or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report as follows:

- Appendix one allows for scrutiny of a publication by an outside body.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to all Priorities of the Council Plan.

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council Yes No

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

Background Papers Link to report - [Delayed discharges A symptom of the challenges facing health and social care](#)

Person to Contact Stewart Marshall, Head of Community Health and Care
stewart.marshall@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 2nd April 2026

Appendix 1



SPPP%20-%20Audit%
20Scotland%20Delaye

Delayed discharges

A symptom of the challenges facing health and social care



ACCOUNTS COMMISSION 

AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland
January 2026



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Accessibility

You can find out more and read this report using assistive technology on our website www.audit.scot/accessibility.

Audit team

The core audit team consisted of: Kathrine Sibbald, Adam Bullough, Naomi Ness, Nathalie Cornish and Lindsay Stother, under the direction of Carol Calder.

Key facts



17,915

Number of times people experienced a delayed discharge in 2024/25



**720,119
days**

The number of hospital bed days lost due to delayed discharges in 2024/25



1 in 9

Proportion of beds occupied due to delayed discharges in 2024/25



3.2%

Delayed discharges as a proportion of adult inpatient discharges in 2024/25



**66%
34%**

The percentage of all delayed discharge bed days occupied in 2024/25 by people aged:

75 years and above

18 to 74 years

Key messages

- 1** A delayed discharge is when someone remains in hospital despite being medically ready to leave. During the month of October 2024, Public Health Scotland reported the highest number (2,030) of people experiencing a delayed discharge at the monthly census point. The number of delayed patients has decreased slightly since the peak levels in October 2024, but numbers remain well above pre-pandemic levels and are rising again. In 2024/25, people delayed from being discharged spent 720,119 clinically unnecessary days in hospital. While the full costs to the health and social care system are likely to be much higher, we estimate the cost of hospital days alone to be over £440 million a year.
- 2** Despite only around three per cent of all people discharged from hospital experiencing a delay, each delay has a detrimental effect on the individual's physical and mental wellbeing. This includes increased risk of infections, reduced mobility and independence and can result in higher social care needs upon discharge. Delays also impact the flow of patients through hospitals, reducing staffing availability and capacity for other patients, and in 2024/25 resulted in 11.7 per cent of hospital beds being unnecessarily occupied. This means that the system cannot function as intended, and it will be challenging to meet the projected increase in demand if delayed discharges are not reduced.
- 3** While the reasons behind delayed discharges are complex and vary significantly by area, hospital and each patient, it is a symptom of much wider challenges across the health and social care system. NHS Scotland, councils, integration authorities,

as well as the third sector and independent providers, all face significant financial challenges. Demand for health and social care services continues to rise. Capacity across the system is constrained by workforce recruitment and retention problems, which are particularly acute for rural and remote areas. The priorities, strategies, cultures and systems of the many national and local bodies involved vary, creating complicated governance, planning and delivery arrangements, which can affect how efficiently patients can be discharged once they are well enough.

- 4** The Scottish Government, integration authorities and their partners, the NHS boards and councils, have actively targeted delayed discharges as an issue. This has led to some improvements, but this varies across the country. The lack of a consistent approach to evaluating initiatives makes it very difficult to understand their impact. Better analysis and transparency are needed to understand both the costs and impacts of delayed discharges, what is providing better quality of outcomes for individuals and value for money for public spending.
 - 5** Limited progress with addressing the wider challenges in the health and social care sector restricts further progress with reducing delays. Scotland's population health framework, the health and social care service renewal framework and the NHS operational improvement plan, offer an opportunity to make progress, with a common focus on prevention. But it's not clear how shared accountability and joint decision-making will be achieved, particularly given there is limited reflection of the critical role of social care, and of integration joint boards and health and social care partnerships in the arrangements.
-

Recommendations

Jointly, the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Healthcare Improvement Scotland, integration authorities and their partner NHS boards and councils, should:

- Over the next 12 months, develop a consistent approach to evaluating and reporting on initiatives to improve delayed discharges, such as discharge without delay and the Lothian Partnership, and sharing best practice and areas for improvement. Evaluation should be reported annually and include assessing effectiveness, value for money, and whether the initiatives are improving the balance of care. This evaluation should be used to update current discharge planning guidance ([paragraph 109](#)).
- In the next six months, publish guidance to clarify and strengthen the role of integration joint boards and health and social care partnerships in the governance and delivery of the health and social care service renewal framework ([paragraph 106](#)).
- Over the next 12 months, provide guidance on, and better promote public awareness of the benefits of, establishing a power of attorney or a guardianship order ([paragraph 84](#)).
- Over the next 12 months, work together to develop and action an implementation plan to share learning and practice from digital solutions used for tackling delayed discharges, early intervention and prevention ([paragraph 95](#)).

Jointly, the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland should:

- Produce a clear estimate of the total costs of delayed discharges and the savings being made through initiatives to reduce delayed discharges. This should be completed within the next 12 months, updated regularly and reported in the annual analysis of delayed discharge performance ([paragraph 111](#)).

The Scottish Government should:

- Assess the current measures for monitoring performance in reducing delays and establish a suite of key indicators. These should be agreed by working in consultation with NHS boards and integration authorities to ensure indicators are both evidence-based and relevant to local circumstances, while focused on improving hospital flow and clearly linked to improving outcomes. This should be completed within the next 12 months, regularly reviewed and reported in the annual analysis of delayed discharge performance ([paragraph 114](#)).

Jointly, integration authorities and their partner NHS boards and councils should:

- In the next six months, ensure they fully implement the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 by understanding the point of the discharge planning process where this is failing to happen, intervening with support for local areas to improve their processes for carers to be involved in discharge planning from the point of admission ([paragraph 71](#)).

Introduction

Background

1. Most patients in Scotland's hospitals are discharged promptly. In December 2025, Public Health Scotland (PHS) reported that in 2024/25, 97 per cent of adult inpatients were discharged without delay. In three per cent of adult inpatient stays, or 17,915 inpatient stays, the patient experienced a delayed discharge, meaning they remained in hospital beyond the point they were medically ready to leave.¹ This could be, for example, due to a lack of available home care services, delays in securing a care home place, or waiting for adaptations to be made to their home.

2. Delayed discharge has significant implications for an individual's wellbeing. Staying in a hospital longer than necessary can lead to deconditioning (deterioration of a person's physical/mental health), loss of independence, and a higher risk of infections.

3. Delayed discharges pose significant challenges in the health and social care systems. Prolonged hospital stays add to the cost of providing health and social care services, they contribute to bed shortages and make it harder for new people to be admitted, including those needing emergency care. Staff resources are stretched as hospitals must care for patients who no longer require acute medical care. It can also mean an increased need for social care support on discharge due to the detrimental impact on the person's wellbeing.

Health and social care were integrated to improve care and support for people and address issues such as delayed discharges

4. The health and social care sector involves a wide array of national and local bodies from the public, third and the independent sectors. Priorities, strategies and cultures vary making coordinating and leading change across the sector complex.

5. In 2016, the Scottish Government legislated under the [Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) to bring together health and social care into an integrated system to improve care and support for people who use services, their carers, and their families. This included addressing whole-system issues such as delayed discharges. This led to [31 integration authorities \(IAs\)](#) being created in Scotland that are responsible for strategic planning of designing, delivering, and coordinating health and social care services and have a key role in reducing delays in discharge.

- 6.** The size of IAs varies depending on council boundaries. Most NHS boards have two or more IAs within their boundary, but the number ranges from one to six IAs in others.
- 7.** IAs are currently structured in two ways, either through an integration joint board (IJB) or using a lead agency model. You can find more information about integration arrangements in our [short guide](#). All areas except Highland elected to adopt the IJB model. Clackmannanshire and Stirling decided to form a single IA to service the needs of both areas. In December 2024, members of the [Highland Council and NHS Highland Joint Monitoring Committee agreed to move](#) from the lead agency model of integration to the IJB model.

About this audit

- 8.** This performance audit aims to assess how well the challenge of reducing hospital delayed discharges is being addressed in Scotland. The audit provides oversight of the factors that contribute to delays and analyses the impact of initiatives put in place to address them.
- 9.** Our findings and recommendations in this report are based on evidence gathered through document review, data analysis and interviews. To better understand how local pressures and challenges are being addressed, our work focused on three IAs – Dundee City, East Ayrshire and Highland, engaging with IA officers and those within the NHS board and council partner bodies. In the report, we include examples from these sample areas. These are not necessarily examples of best practice or the only approaches being taken across the country. We also engaged with Scottish Government policy leads, chief officers of integration authorities, chairs of IJBs and a range of national organisations across the public and third sector.
- 10.** The scope of our audit focused on the reasons for, and implications of, delayed discharges and the actions taken to reduce them. The audit has looked at the impact of delayed discharges on people through secondary evidence and engagement with external stakeholders.
- 11.** This report is accompanied by [an online interactive delayed discharges tool](#) that allows users to explore the national and local performance of IAs. The tool also includes local and national contextual data from the 2022 census that illustrates the increasing population pressures nationally and the significant variation across Scotland.

1. Delayed discharges – what's the problem

Delayed discharges have a detrimental impact on the people affected and on the wider health system. They are a symptom of the many demographic, population health, workforce, governance and financial challenges faced by the health and social care sector.

The number of people delayed in hospital has decreased slightly from the peak levels in October 2024, but numbers remain well above pre-pandemic levels and are rising again

12. Public Health Scotland (PHS) collects, analyses and publishes data on delayed discharges. In the financial year ending 31 March 2025, PHS reported that people who were delayed from being discharged spent 720,119 days in hospital, marking the highest annual figure reported since current recording guidelines were introduced in July 2016.² This was an increase of almost 33 per cent from the financial year prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, where the total days delayed patients spent in hospital was 542,204. The number of people delayed from being discharged at the monthly census point peaked in October 2024 at 2,030 ([Exhibit 1, page 11](#)).

13. Of the 720,119 bed days occupied by people delayed in their discharge in 2024/25, 66 per cent were occupied by people aged 75 and over.

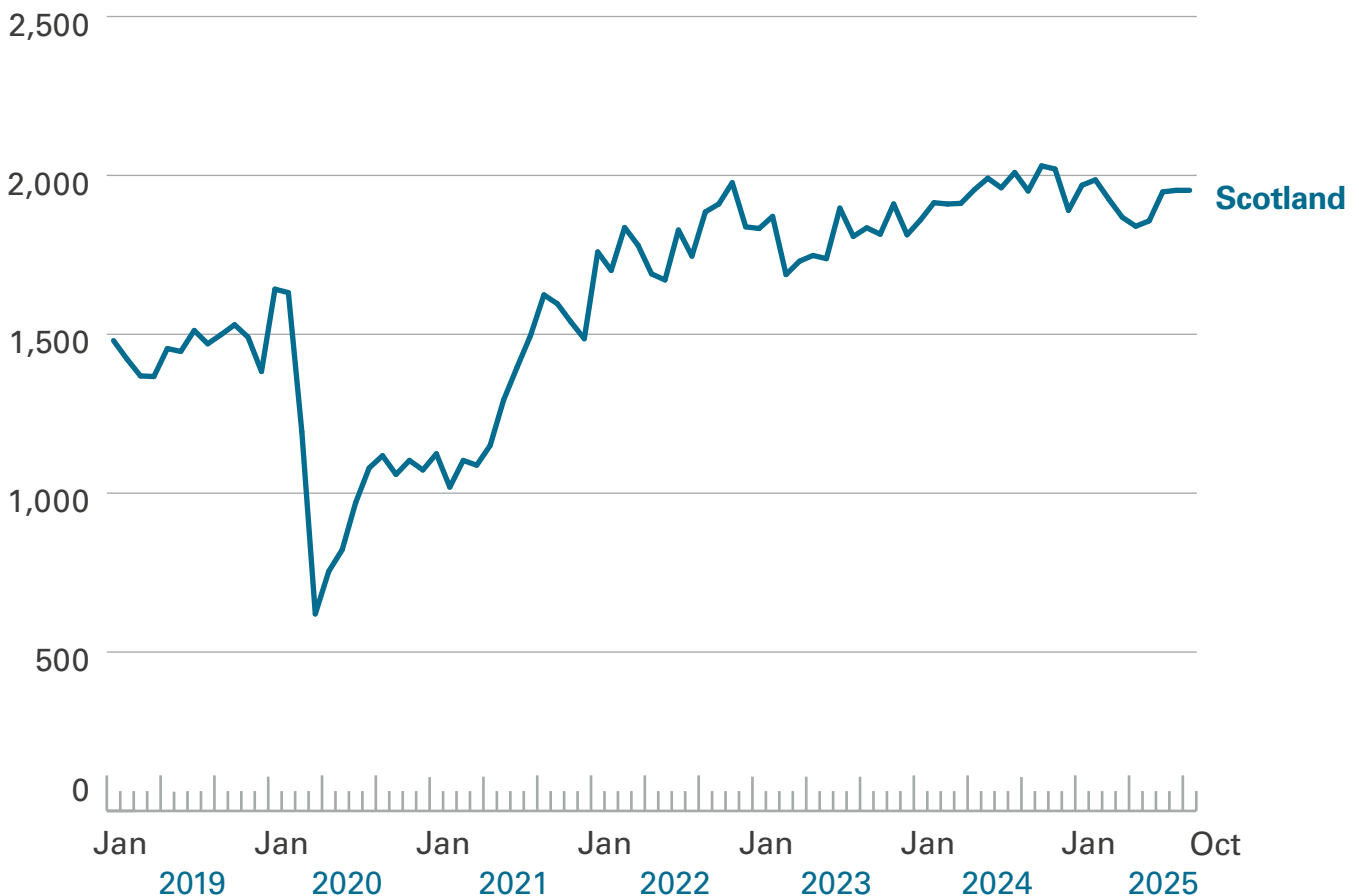
14. Following this peak in October 2024, the number of people experiencing delays each month started to slowly decrease, to 1,840 in May 2025. However, delays at the monthly census point have risen again. The most recent data, to October 2025, shows a 3.3 per cent reduction from October 2024, with 1,962 people delayed from being discharged.³

Exhibit 1.

Total number of delayed discharges in Scotland at the monthly census point, between January 2019 and October 2025

The total number of delayed discharges in Scotland at the monthly census point have risen substantially since 2020 and short-term reductions in the numbers have not been sustained.

Number of delayed discharges



Note: The large drop in early 2020 reflects the impact of special measures undertaken due to Covid-19.

Source: Delayed discharges in NHS Scotland monthly, figures for October 2025, Public Health Scotland, December 2025

15. At a local level, there is significant variation in the trends of the numbers of delayed discharges between IAs. This reflects the varying contexts, needs and challenges of different areas. Between October 2024 and October 2025, delays at the monthly census point have ranged between 3.9 per 100,000 population in Renfrewshire (September 2025) and 152.5 per 100,000 population in Eilean Siar (March 2025).⁴ Between October 2024 and October 2025, 17 IAs have reduced their level of delayed discharges, while in 14 IAs, delayed discharges have increased. The [Appendix](#) contains a table of all IAs’ performance (number and rate of delays at the monthly census point) between October 2024 and October 2025.

Delayed discharges have a detrimental impact on the people affected

Staying in a hospital longer than necessary can lead to deconditioning, loss of independence and a higher risk of infections

16. Delays in discharge negatively impact patients, leading to **deconditioning**, higher infection risks, and reduced mobility, especially in older or frail individuals. Frailty is common among those over 65 and affects over half of adults in hospitals or care homes.⁵ People with dementia and/or frailty often have longer hospital stays, worsening their symptoms and physical health. Just 24 hours in bed can reduce muscle power by two to five per cent, and up to 20 per cent in seven days, increasing fall risks and care needs.⁶ Lack of physical activity can lead to dependency and demotivation, while bright, noisy wards may cause stress and confusion.

Longer delays, typically faced by adults with incapacity, have profound impacts on the individuals and their families

17. Adults with incapacity are people aged 16 or over who lack capacity to make some or all decisions due to mental illness, learning disability, dementia or a related condition, or an inability to communicate. Adults with incapacity face risks of their human rights not being met. Their right to independent living can be affected by long stays, leading to a disconnection from family, friends and community, institutionalisation and a deterioration of mental as well as physical health.

18. Adults with incapacity generally have a longer length of delay in hospital. Patients delayed in their discharge for standard, non-complex reasons in 2024/25 experienced an average delay of ten days.⁷ In 2024/25, there have been between 146 and 180 patients at each monthly census point who have experienced a delay of over 12 weeks because of incapacity.⁸ Of these, between 35 and 65 people each month have been delayed more than six months. Delays in securing legal mechanisms like **power of attorney** and **guardianship orders** are a significant barrier to timely discharge.

19. Addressing these delays requires close collaboration between health, legal, and social care systems to ensure timely and appropriate discharge planning. Patients with a long length of stay in hospital (considered three weeks or more) tend to be in poorer health and may require more support upon discharge. They also face a higher risk of re-admission.

20. Complex and lengthy legal processes can conflict with a person-centred, human rights-based approach to care that seeks to support adults with incapacity and their carers with shared decision-making. Waiting for guardianship orders to be processed and approved by the court before more suitable accommodation and/or care arrangements are found can lead to lengthy delays. According to a 2024 Mental Welfare Commission report, the number of existing guardianship orders has more than doubled in the last ten years.⁹



Deconditioning

is the gradual decline in physical, psychological, and functional capacity due to reduced activity or prolonged immobility.



Power of attorney

is a written document giving someone else authority to take actions or make decisions on your behalf. The power of attorney details the names of the people, known as attorneys, who you want to help you and lists the individual powers that you want them to have.

Guardianship order

is a court appointment which authorises a person to act and make decisions on behalf of an adult with incapacity. Anyone with an interest can make an application for a guardianship order.

21. In February 2025, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde reported that they had over 100 people delayed due to a lack of a power of attorney, roughly equivalent to four acute inpatient wards.¹⁰ It highlighted that around a third of patients were delayed from being discharged from hospital because they did not have a power of attorney in place.

Delayed discharges increase pressures on the wider health system

22. People who are delayed in their discharge occupied approximately one in nine hospital beds in Scotland in 2024/25, considerably reducing the beds available for incoming emergency and planned patients.¹¹ This adds to existing pressures in the health system, making it more difficult to admit patients, contributing to overcrowding in emergency and assessment units and increasing planned care waiting lists.

23. A lack of available beds also exacerbates pressure across ambulance services and increases stress on the workforce. These impacts have been highlighted in our [NHS in Scotland 2023 report](#) and again more recently in our [NHS in Scotland 2024 report](#).

24. It will be challenging for health boards to increase acute hospital capacity to meet the projected increase in demand if IAs and their partners are not able to reduce delayed discharges. This will place even more pressure on limited hospital beds and may pose risks to patient safety if there is not the capacity to meet patient needs.

The cost of delayed discharges is unknown, but in 2024/25, the total estimated cost of the 720,119 bed days occupied by delayed discharges alone was over £440 million

25. There has been no published information on the costs of delayed discharges since 2019/20. PHS advises this is due to challenges in receiving patient level costs from NHS boards since the Covid-19 pandemic. In the absence of up-to-date costs relating to delayed discharges, we have used the NHS cost book to calculate the approximate cost of providing the type of hospital care a person experiencing delayed discharge may receive.

26. Based on 2023/24 costs, the average daily net cost of a hospital bed in Scotland where a patient receives nursing, allied health professional (AHP) and other direct patient care (excluding medical, pharmacy, laboratory and operating theatre-related care) is estimated at £618.¹² This compares with £144.72 per day for a publicly funded care home placement with nursing, and £126 per day for a publicly funded residential care home placement.¹³

27. Assuming a daily cost of £618 for a hospital bed, in 2024/25 the total estimated cost of the 720,119 bed days occupied by delayed discharges alone was over £440 million. This is a minimum estimated cost as it does not include wider costs across the health and social care system resulting

from delayed discharges. For example, opportunity costs associated with the reduced capacity for planned care, and the potential costs of additional care required post-discharge due to deconditioning experienced during an extended hospital stay.

28. Reducing delayed discharges would not directly generate a cash saving as it would transfer the costs to other parts of health and social care, and the hospital beds would be occupied by others in need of care. However, ensuring that a person is cared for in the most appropriate place for them may be more cost effective. The Scottish Government needs to be able to understand the true costs of patients’ delayed discharge from hospital and the savings and individual benefits being made through initiatives to reduce delayed discharges ([paragraph 111](#)).

Delayed discharges occur for many different reasons

Most delayed discharges happen as a result of trying to ensure that appropriate care arrangements are in place

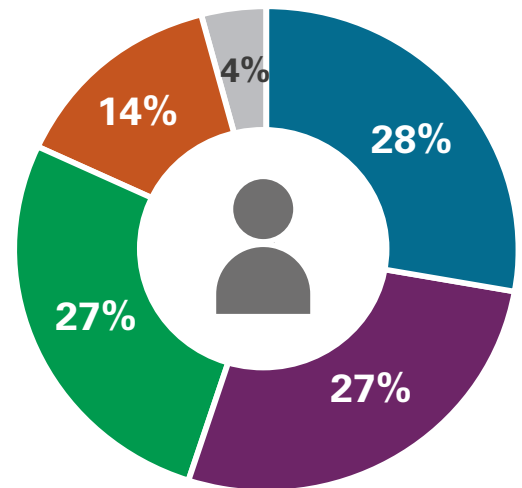
29. Once someone is medically ready to be discharged from hospital, there are a range of reasons why their discharge might be delayed and they are kept in hospital.

30. [Exhibit 2 \(page 15\)](#) shows the proportion of delayed discharges by reason for delay in 2024/25, of the average 1,967 people delayed in their discharge recorded at each monthly census in 2024/25.

Exhibit 2.

Percentage of delayed discharge reasons, average number across monthly censuses between April 2024 and March 2025

28%	Awaiting place availability: for example, waiting for a care home place.
27%	Complex delays: people delayed due to awaiting place availability in a high-level needs specialist facility, and where an interim option is not appropriate or where an adult may lack capacity.
27%	Awaiting completion of care arrangements: for example, people waiting on a care package (eg, home care, equipment support services).
14%	Awaiting community care assessment: for example, people waiting for a formal evaluation of their care needs by community-based professionals (eg, social workers, occupational therapists, or other adult social care staff).
4%	Other reasons: includes patient and family-related delays, awaiting funding and transport.



Source: Delayed Discharges in NHS Scotland, Annual summary of occupied bed days and census figures: Data to March 2025, Public Health Scotland, June 2025

Delayed discharges are a symptom of the many challenges faced by the health and social care sector

31. NHS Scotland, councils, integration authorities, as well as the third sector and independent providers, all face significant challenges ([Exhibit 3, page 16](#)).

Exhibit 3.

Delayed discharges are a symptom of the many challenges faced by the health and social care sector

Challenge area	Key issues
<p>The financial challenges facing health and social care services are critical</p>	<p>The NHS in Scotland is experiencing immediate financial pressures, as noted in the NHS in Scotland 2025: Finance and performance report.</p> <p>Scotland's councils continue to face severe financial pressures, as highlighted in the Local government in Scotland: Financial bulletin 2023/24.</p> <p>In our Integration Joint Boards: Finance bulletin 2023/24, we reported that 24 Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) reported a financial deficit in 2023/24, with the projected funding gap for IJBs worsening to £457 million for 2024/25.</p> <p>IJBs are making difficult decisions about funding and providing services, often relying on dwindling financial reserves and non-recurring savings, which is not sustainable long-term.</p>
<p>Health and social care governance is complicated, and arrangements vary making partnership working and delivery complex</p>	<p>Different priorities, strategies, and cultures among the national and local bodies involved in community health and social care, create a web of shared responsibility, complicating decision-making, governance, planning, and operational activities as we highlighted in the Integration Joint Boards: Finance and performance 2024 report.</p> <p>The NHS in Scotland: Spotlight on governance highlighted some NHS boards have created strong relationships to support better planning and decision-making, but others struggle with limited control or influence over IJB decisions.</p>
<p>The demand for health and social care services continue to grow with the needs of an ageing population</p>	<p>Rising demand and budget pressures mean Integration Authorities face challenges in providing services that fully meet the care needs of their populations.</p> <p>Health inequalities are widening, with a focus on crisis medical treatment rather than preventative measures to maintain good health and wellbeing in the community.</p> <p>Pressure on hospital bed capacity is likely to grow, with unplanned acute inpatient hospital admissions in Scotland projected to increase by 11.8 per cent from 2024 to 2034.</p>

Cont.

Challenge area	Key issues
<p>Significant workforce recruitment and retention challenges impact on the capacity to deliver services</p>	<p>Workforce shortages, high vacancy rates and challenges with staff retention have resulted in gaps in social work, social care services, allied health professionals, nursing, and general practice.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention are particularly problematic in rural and remote areas.</p> <p>These challenges have been worsened by the impacts of Covid-19, EU withdrawal, increases in national insurance contributions and changes to UK-wide immigration policy.</p>
<p>A lack of suitable housing makes it harder to provide care, particularly in more remote and rural areas</p>	<p>There is a lack of planning for the future housing needs of an ageing population. Most housing stock is not built with people's longer-term care needs in mind.</p> <p>A shortage of suitable, affordable homes impacts key worker recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Delays in housing adaptations for people with learning disabilities and complex needs result in a lack of access to independent living options and prolonged stays in unsuitable accommodation or hospital.</p> <p>Limited housing options for staff make increasing or maintaining service capacity difficult in some areas.</p>

Source: Audit Scotland

2. Delayed discharges – what’s happening

There is significant activity to reduce delayed discharge, with examples of good practice, but a lack of evaluation means it is difficult to understand the overall impact.

The Scottish Government, integration authorities and their partners have actively targeted delayed discharges, but more needs to be done to effectively measure the impact and value of approaches

32. Many of the national and local initiatives to reduce delayed discharges are still at an early stage and are too recent to assess impact and effectiveness. Some initiatives lack outcome measures or published outcomes, making it difficult to make judgements of the overall impact in reducing delays and whether they are delivering value for money.

Reducing delayed discharges is a priority for the Scottish Government, with a focus on preventative actions

33. The Scottish Government’s 2024/25 Programme for Government¹⁴ reiterated its commitment to reducing delayed discharges and the variation in practice across Scotland. It outlined activities such as ensuring that partners work together to support effective discharge and reducing hospital admissions by providing the right care in the right setting.

34. The most recent Programme for Government, published in May 2025, and the NHS Scotland operational improvement plan,¹⁵ published in March 2025, emphasise a focus on prevention, through ensuring more people can be cared for at home and reducing pressures in hospitals. This will be achieved by expanding the number of **Hospital at Home (H@H)** beds to at least 2,000 by December 2026. It also commits to ensuring frail patients with complex needs receive the wrap-around care they need to return home or into a care setting as soon as possible, improving hospital discharges.¹⁶

The Scottish Government and COSLA have a structured approach to tackling delayed discharges through regular monitoring, collaboration and targeted support, but this lacks transparency

35. The Scottish Government and COSLA place a significant emphasis on performance management and monitor the numbers of delayed discharges nationally and in each IA, engaging with local health systems to understand performance fluctuations.



Hospital at Home (H@H) provides urgent short-term hospital level care at home. This may range from one day to several weeks which would otherwise be spent in hospital.

36. The Scottish Government and COSLA gain assurance over the performance of IAs through review of weekly management information on the number of delays, alongside discussions with HSCP leaders to understand the reasons behind performance, challenges and mitigations being put in place. This intelligence is shared with other leaders within the health and social care system, and performance is monitored by the First Minister and the cabinet.

37. The Collaborative Response and Assurance Group (CRAG) is a key part of the approach. It is co-chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for health and social care and COSLA health and social care spokesperson. It brings together leaders from across health and social care to coordinate responses and ensure the delivery of effective services. It focuses on areas of concern, such as delayed discharges from hospitals, by holding regular meetings to monitor performance and implement improvement strategies.

38. The Scottish Government and COSLA intended CRAG meetings to provide local oversight and consider the reasons behind high levels of delayed discharges and why the number of delays were not improving. This was difficult for some local areas for often multiple and complex reasons. Three working groups were established:

- Working Group 1: A targeted performance and support work group – Rapid Peer Review and Support Team (RPRST) has engaged directly with the local systems and worked locally to improve performance ([paragraph 48](#)).
- Working Group 2: Focuses on delays related to learning disabilities and mental health, including adults with incapacity. The group allows for more intensive work in these areas.
- Working Group 3: Designed to look at national issues. Chaired by COSLA. It identified local case studies to highlight good practice.

39. There have been tensions with CRAG’s directional approach and how data is presented. The approach to meetings has developed over time, and general feedback is that meetings have evolved into a more collaborative space that offers a forum for sharing best practices. But there is a lack of transparency outside of the group. The Scottish Government and COSLA intend to review the remit and focus of CRAG to ensure it aligns with NHS board operational planning processes and the remit of the National Care Service (NCS) Interim Advisory Board.

40. While CRAG has established a structured approach to tackling delayed discharges through regular collaboration and targeted support, the persistence of high delayed discharge figures and significant variation in certain regions indicates that further efforts, with better analysis and evaluation of what is providing better quality outcomes for individuals, are necessary to achieve significant and consistent reductions across Scotland.

In June 2025, the Scottish Government allocated additional funding of £92 million to NHS boards to improve unscheduled care services and to support the delivery of the NHS Scotland operational improvement plan

41. Reducing delayed discharges is a national priority for the Scottish Government, COSLA and IAs. In February 2025, the Scottish Government invited all NHS boards to bid for additional funding to improve unscheduled care services, supporting the delivery of the NHS Scotland operational improvement plan.¹⁷ The Scottish Government was unable to approve the entirety of each NHS board’s plans because these exceeded the total additional funding available. Ultimately, the additional urgent and unscheduled care funding for 2025/26 were made up of:

- Hospital at Home funding – £21.3 million
- improving flow, discharge without delay, and frailty services – £39.7 million
- core unscheduled care funding – £29.8 million
- mental health/adults with incapacity/learning disabilities – £824,000.

42. The Scottish Government has set out that it expects NHS boards to consider how they use the additional funding to redesign services and realign existing budgets to fully deliver on their proposals. The allocation of this additional funding is conditional on the delivery of these outcomes. The Scottish Government has set out that it will monitor progress and identify any slippages. It is the intention for the funding for future years to be made recurrent based on activity, actual spend, and evidence of delivery of outcomes required. As not all plans or initiatives have been fully funded, NHS boards will need to consider how existing budgets can be used to support their proposals.

43. The Scottish Government has a long-standing commitment to shift the balance of care from secondary, acute health services to primary and community services. Our 2016 report on [Changing models of health and social care](#) noted that the continued focus on challenging secondary care targets and short-term funding was making shifting the balance of care difficult. These issues remain, and the Scottish Government has recognised the continued need to make a long-term shift in the balance of care in its health and social care service renewal framework.¹⁸ It aims to do this by focusing new resources on building capacity and service improvement in primary and community care, leading to community services receiving an increasing share of investment over time.

44. Within IAs, there are opportunities to maximise the impact of financial resources by organising services around people’s needs, rather than traditional service/professional boundaries. However, current financial challenges make this difficult and it requires collaborative leadership.

The National Care Service (NCS) Advisory Board has a remit to provide advice and suggest where improvements can be made to social care, social work and community health services. Hence it has a key role in supporting the sector to reduce delayed discharges

45. The NCS interim advisory board was set up in May 2025 to provide advice and suggest where improvements can be made to social care, social work and community health services. The aim of the interim board is to help ensure services are consistent, fair and high-quality across Scotland hence it has a key role in supporting the sector to reduce delayed discharges. The board includes people with personal experience of accessing and delivering social care, social work and community health services. It is important that the NCS advisory board is aligned with the existing groups and adds value by advising on embedding lived experience into system design, strengthening collaborative governance, developing approaches for wider participation and providing agile, evidence informed advice, rather than adding a further layer of governance, which could result in further complexity, lack of transparency, and unclear accountabilities.

The Health and Social Care Delayed Discharge and Hospital Occupancy Action Plan has encouraged local areas to focus on adopting best practice, with 11 boards embedding discharge without delay

46. The Scottish Government’s Health and Social Care Delayed Discharge and Hospital Occupancy Action Plan (the Plan) was introduced in March 2023. It builds on the principles of its best practice discussion paper, transforming urgent and unscheduled care – optimising flow – discharge without delay, published in August 2021, and aimed to promote known good practice in terms of discharge planning and whole-system working ([Exhibit 4, page 22](#)).

47. IAs are required to complete annual self-assessments against the Plan and submit these to the Scottish Government. IAs are now on their third iteration of self-assessment. Some IAs have reported action plans against these self-assessments, but the Scottish Government has not finalised an overall summary of these self-assessments or detailed how IAs are progressing against the Plan, which makes it difficult to evidence whether the self-assessments are driving improvement.

Exhibit 4.

Health and Social Care Delayed Discharge and Hospital Occupancy Action Plan delivery actions

The Plan focuses on three delivery actions:



1. Good practice

Has focused on ‘getting the basics right’ by using the Discharge without Delay (DwD) programme, see [Case study 3 \(page 31\)](#). The DwD collaborative has developed guiding principles for boards to follow, and there are now 11 boards signed up that are at varying stages of embedding the DwD programme.



2. Data Management

A Whole System Pressures Dashboard has been developed through a collaboration between NHS National Services Scotland, Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government. It provides a weekly summary of current pressures across the health and care system, with the aim of supporting strategic decision making. The data includes weekly discharge data, summary counts of people delayed by Health and Social Care Partnership, split by delay reasons. It also includes other data related to planned care, unscheduled care, the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), and other parts of the system. The usage of the dashboard can be tracked, and over 800 users have access to the dashboard. What is not clear is how individual IAs are using this data, and it is difficult to assess, as they all have different processes for analysing performance.



3. Workforce

Has looked at addressing labour shortages in social care through recruitment campaigns such as ‘There’s More to Care than Caring’ and ‘You Can Make a Difference’. But challenges remain with the workforce, and many IAs and independent care providers still face recruitment challenges across the health and social care sector in Scotland, see Exhibit 3.

Source: Audit Scotland

The Rapid Peer Response and Support Team has provided targeted support to IAs struggling with persistent delayed discharge pressures, and has been positively received, but lacks evaluation to understand the overall impact

48. The Rapid Peer Response and Support Team (RPRST), initiated by the Scottish Government, has provided tailored support to NHS boards and IAs that have faced challenges in reducing delayed discharges. They collaborate with IAs to identify issues and share best practices to improve performance in reducing delayed discharges.

49. The RPRST has worked closely with a variety of HSCPs to scope out bespoke packages of support. It focuses on problem identification and solving, encouraging peer support, and avoiding duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy. Some examples include:

- The Aberdeenshire HSCP worked with the RPRST to map patient pathways following discharge from hospital. Following the mapping exercise, the RPRST has worked with the Aberdeenshire HSCP to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for facilitating the discharge of patients from Aberdeen Royal Infirmary to home or via community hospitals in Aberdeenshire to home or a homely setting. The Aberdeenshire HSCP is currently working with the RPRST on implementation of the SOP.
- With South Ayrshire HSCP, the RPRST helped scope Local Support Intelligence Team support from Public Health Scotland, which has enabled South Ayrshire to access data on the most frequent A&E attenders and updated trend analysis on single- and double-handed care.

50. The RPRST shares local intelligence and learning with CRAG and escalates any barriers or issues that cannot be resolved by the local area and RPRST. It maintains a network of peers to provide peer support. There has been positive feedback from boards that have been involved with the team, but there has not been any evaluation to assess the success of these initiatives and the direct impact they have had on improving performance in reducing delayed discharges.

Hospital at home is a nationally supported model that can prevent hospital admissions, but there is no analysis of its cost-effectiveness in relation to other models of community or home-based care

51. The Hospital at Home (H@H) programme has been implemented as a strategic response to alleviate delayed discharges by providing acute-level care in patients’ homes. This initiative aims to reduce hospital stays, free up bed capacity, and enhance patient outcomes.

52. H@H has prevented an estimated 15,811 hospital admissions from April 2024 to March 2025, representing a ten per cent increase in the number of patients managed by H@H between April 2023 and March 2024.¹⁹

53. The 2025/26 Scottish Budget included a £100 million fund to support various reform and improvement measures, including reducing delayed discharges and expanding the capacity of H@H.²⁰ Some of this £100 million has already been earmarked for other purposes, such as a new cardiovascular service in general practice. In June 2025, the Scottish Government informed NHS boards of the funding arrangements for H@H, allocating £21.3 million for 2025/26, and confirmed the funding for future years will be made recurrent based on activity and actual spend incurred and evidence of delivery of outcomes required.

54. Health boards have highlighted that the requirement for H@H to be a secondary care consultant-led service can make it unaffordable. There is also a risk that finite resources are taken away from other areas, putting an additional burden on carers. While there is some evidence that H@H can be more cost-effective than hospital-based care, the Scottish Government or HIS have not completed a full assessment to analyse the cost-effectiveness of H@H in relation to other models of community or home-based care.

55. The Scottish Government has commissioned PHS to develop consistent national data on H@H activity. PHS plan to publish statistics quarterly from spring 2026 alongside updates by HIS on H@H improvement work. HIS and PHS should consider including metrics on the costs of H@H services, to allow assessments on the cost-effectiveness, relative to other models of care.

Flow Navigations Centres, Integrated Clinical Hubs and Pathways Hubs are virtual assessment hubs that help direct patients more efficiently and effectively

Flow Navigation Centres (FNCs)

56. FNCs are part of the Scottish Government’s national initiative to improve access to urgent and unscheduled care by ensuring patients receive the right care, in the right place. They offer an opportunity for professional-to-professional advice with direct referrals from primary care, NHS24 and SAS with an aim to improve coordination of patient flow. This can contribute to reducing the number of people requiring hospital care by identifying alternatives to hospital admission, such as community-based care, specialist outpatient services, home treatment options and hospital at home services. Examples of the use of FNCs:

- NHS Lothian – With funding from the Scottish Government, NHS Lothian enhanced its flow navigation service by directing provision to consultant-led flow centres. The service has 11 consultants from acute medical and emergency medicine, offering a Monday to Friday 9am-6pm referral service. The new model aims to minimise the need for transfers to hospital, identify unmet need within the system and protect any one part of the system from becoming overburdened. Funding constraints means they are not currently able to operate a 24-hours-a-day, seven-day-a-week service.
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde – Operate an enhanced FNC+ model, bringing together a multidisciplinary team to provide assessments and navigate patients to access alternatives to hospital admission when appropriate. Central to this development is the creation of a virtual hospital, which will provide 1,000 ‘virtual beds’ across NHSGGC. Patients suitable for this model of care will be supported at home using remote monitoring technology and clinician-led interventions, allowing hospital-level care to be delivered without the need for a hospital stay.

57. FNC models and levels of expertise vary across Scotland, and it can be difficult to replicate for smaller boards who may have less resource to staff FNCs as well as access and capacity in the community. There is also no unified data set collected by PHS, which makes it difficult to compare activities and outcomes.

Integrated Clinical Hubs and Pathways Hubs

58. Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) Integrated Clinical Hubs allow SAS to remotely assess and consult with patients avoiding unnecessary ambulance dispatch and hospital admissions and readmissions. The Pathways Hub is a single point of contact for SAS clinicians to access a range of proactive and preventative pathways.

59. The Integrated Clinical Hub has a remote multidisciplinary team of clinical advisers, advanced practitioners and GPs who engage with patients that would benefit from clinical assessment and review. The Pathways Hub provides pathways for those not requiring urgent or emergency care into preventative services such as falls prevention, alcohol and drug services, Distress Brief Intervention or social services, or refers patients to third sector providers that can best suit their specific needs.

60. Through the introduction of Integrated Clinical Hubs and Pathways Hubs, SAS manages around 50 per cent of emergency calls outwith acute emergency hospital settings. Patients can be supported at the point of call or by SAS clinicians on scene, reducing the need for hospital conveyance and potential admission. In June 2025, SAS highlighted that over 175,000 patients have been supported through the Hub, with more than 55,000 ambulance journeys being avoided.²¹

There is a focus on early identification, assessment, and management of frailty

61. Early identification and management of frailty through the provision of community frailty services is important to allow people to live as independently as possible, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, readmissions, and reduce length of stay, if hospital admission is required.

62. Having a clinical focus on frailty at the ‘front door’ (the part of the hospital where patients initially present when unwell, such as an emergency department) and early comprehensive geriatric assessments can ensure that patients are supported by the most appropriate services.

63. The Scottish Government has set a target for every emergency department in Scotland to have direct access to specialised frailty teams by summer 2025, to support early identification, assessment and management of frailty at the hospital front door.²² HIS has developed [ageing and frailty standards](#) and set [foundations for front door frailty](#), which sits alongside its [foundations for community frailty services](#) and [key steps to setting up a front door frailty service](#) to help organisations implement the ageing frailty standards.

Getting it Right for Everyone principles have been developed to promote effective discharge planning and help prevent delayed discharges

64. Getting it right for everyone, or [GIRFE](#), launched in May 2025, is a Scottish Government multi-agency approach to care that focuses on working together around the person. It responds to frustrations people have with the current system, such as repeating their story multiple times, navigating complex information and attending multiple appointments with different professionals. The Scottish Government worked with nine pathfinder health and social care partnerships, professionals and individuals receiving and providing care between 2022 and 2024 to develop the GIRFE approach.

65. A GIRFE toolkit has been developed to help practitioners apply a more personalised and preventative approach to care. The core principles focus on person-centred discharge planning, multi-agency coordination and, taking a consistent and ‘whole-life’ approach to ensuring an individual’s needs are considered and necessary support is in place before discharge.

Discharge planning and processes vary across the country with many improvement programmes and initiatives evident

66. When a person attends a hospital for clinical care, an initial assessment should be completed to determine if their care needs can be properly met in any setting other than a hospital. The assessment should establish the best place for the person to have their clinical healthcare needs met. Where appropriate, they should be discharged to a suitable community setting, home with no ongoing support, home with support, a care home or supported accommodation.

67. If a person is admitted to a hospital, the discharge planning process should start immediately, to ensure the right care is available in the community at the time of discharge. This discharge planning process should be carried out by the responsible consultant, informed by the multi-disciplinary team (MDT), in partnership with the patient, family or carer, with their views and wishes being considered.

68. The approach to discharge planning varies across the 31 IAs. Some areas have embedded good practice involving collaboration of MDT, while others face challenges due to workforce shortages, limited resources and varying levels of cooperation and joint working

Unpaid carers are often involved too late in the discharge process

69. With an ageing population, people living longer with multiple complex health conditions, and care being brought closer to home, caring is likely to be a feature of most people’s lives in the future.²³

70. The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 was introduced to provide carers in Scotland with additional rights. [Part 4, section 28](#) of the Act provides unpaid carers the right to be involved in planning for discharge when the cared for person is admitted to hospital. In 2019, Health and Social Care Scotland published a practical guide for health and social care practitioners involved in discharge planning from hospitals.²⁴

71. Involving carers early in the discharge planning process leads to smoother discharge and reduced delays. Readmissions are less likely as carers are better equipped to provide ongoing support, and their involvement leads to better informed care assessments. Despite this, there is still a lack of communication with carers, leading to assumptions around what support is or is not needed, and carers being often involved too late during the discharge process.

72. IAs are having to make difficult decisions on how to allocate limited budgets, and as a result some services are increasingly having to tighten eligibility criteria, such as for packages of home care. This means that people may have to rely more on family support and unpaid care.

73. An example of effectively involving carers as part of the discharge planning process is the collaboration between East Ayrshire HSCP and [East Ayrshire Carers Centre](#).

74. East Ayrshire Carers Centre supports carers of all ages and recognises the need to involve families and carers from admission. They currently have two hospital discharge carer link workers based in University Hospital Crosshouse and University Hospital Ayr, as well as linking in with East Ayrshire Community Hospital and Biggart Hospital, working closely with the discharge without delay teams. They advise and support unpaid carers through the hospital discharge process and help identify what support they may require to continue to provide care and support for their loved ones after discharge, giving a more accurate picture of the patient's needs and available support.

Care packages are commonly cancelled on admission; changing this can reduce delays to discharge but is challenging to do

75. When someone is admitted to hospital, any existing care at home package will likely be cancelled as not being required, during the period of inpatient stay and restarted, if required, on discharge. This can save on costs and resources but impacts the continuity of care.

76. Keeping care packages open can speed up discharge. For example, in East Ayrshire IA, they try to keep care packages open for up to four weeks; this allows the continuity of care to be maintained, and it is less likely that this becomes a reason for a delayed discharge, but because of financial constraints and increasing demand, this is becoming more difficult. However, when care packages are kept open while an individual is in hospital, if demand for care packages exceeds capacity, this could mean that someone could be awaiting services in the community, so there is a delicate balance that needs to be managed.

Some IAs have used financial reserves to address delayed discharges in the short term, but this is not a sustainable option

77. Using reserves to address challenges such as delayed discharges, for example, to pay for interim care placements or boosting social care capacity during peak times, can have a positive impact on performance, but this is not sustainable.

78. In our [Financial bulletin on IJB finances 2023/24](#), we reported that IJB reserves decreased by 36 per cent in real terms (adjusting for inflation) between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Contingency reserves, which are not earmarked for a specific purpose, decreased by 49 per cent in real terms. Some IJBs have used reserves to improve performance in reducing delays ([Case study 1](#)).

Case study 1. Focusing on finances and reserves for reducing delays

Falkirk IA has experienced an increasing number of delayed discharges and struggled to maintain short-term improvements in performance. In 2023, Falkirk sought to understand the reasons behind increases in delays. The findings highlighted a lot of care at home waits, so the Health and Social Care Partnership focused on targeting specific blockages within the care at home service, using reserves to invest in care services to bring down delays. This resulted in an improvement from 87 delays at the April 2024 census point to 65 delays at the October 2024 census point, but the increased focus and spending resulted in a budget overspend.

Falkirk quickly introduced control measures to reduce spending, and the number of delays increased. Part of the control measures were to have two people come out of a care home bed before one person could go in, and a limit on care at home hours. Analysis of care at home demand showed that the investment resulted in the lowest level of unmet demand in the community in Scotland, essentially meeting all care needs. However, as reserves were utilised and with control measures in place, delays again increased.

Source: Falkirk Integration Authority



Local whole-system and multidisciplinary approaches reflect the complexity of delayed discharges

79. Individual approaches may improve specific aspects of the discharge process locally and have a positive impact on the levels of delayed discharge. However, as set out in [Part 1](#), delayed discharges are a symptom of wider challenges within the health and care system, involving many different factors, services and professions. To have a significant lasting impact on the level of delayed discharges requires shared accountability and a collaborative approach from all stakeholders, at all levels, which is built on evaluation and uses data to support decision-making.

80. There are some examples of **whole-system** and multidisciplinary team initiatives which have had a positive impact on delayed discharges. For example, the Lothian Partnership unscheduled care improvement programme is a local application of a whole-system approach. This aimed to enable transformation of models of care to ensure long-term sustainability and has resulted in reducing delays ([Case study 2](#)).



A whole-system approach looks at all aspects of how a system operates, the role of each part within the system, and how they are connected. This can help understand how things can be done differently to improve systems.

Case study 2.

Lothian Partnership – unscheduled care improvement programme

In autumn 2024, there was a wider concern about the level of pressure across the whole system in NHS Lothian, with high hospital occupancy levels, especially in acute hospitals, and accident and emergency delays were very high. This was caused by several factors, including delayed discharges. The Scottish Government approached NHS Lothian to explore options to improve unscheduled care (USC) performance.

The programme initially focused on the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and aimed to create a whole-system approach to enable the transformation of care models, ensuring long-term sustainability. The programme looked to move towards better partnership working, home-first approaches and a seven-day USC staffing model. This included discharging patients every day of the week and shifting care from acute to community services.

The programme goals included reducing attendances, admissions, bed occupancy and length of stay in hospital, with data being used to support accountability and decision-making. It provided several benefits in respect of patient flow through the hospital, and although there was no focus or specific targets on delayed discharges, at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, NHS Lothian reported a reduction in delayed discharges at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh by 17 per cent and Western General Hospital by 32 per cent. Staff morale has improved, along with collaborative leadership and a belief in a whole-system approach.



81. Multidisciplinary team (MDT) collaboration brings together health services, social care, housing, and community providers to coordinate care, share information, and streamline patient transitions. When these partners work closely, they can identify and resolve barriers more quickly, ensure appropriate support is in place post-discharge, and improve outcomes for patients. Strong, sustained collaboration fosters a more integrated system, reducing delays and improving overall efficiency. The Discharge without Delay (DwD) programme is another example of a collaborative, multidisciplinary, whole-system approach ([Case study 3](#)).

Case study 3. Discharge without Delay (DwD) programme

The DwD programme was built on principles developed in Tayside and is a whole-system initiative designed for frail older people currently accessing hospitals in Scotland. It integrates best practices, individual services, and care pathways into a model that prioritises delivering a comprehensive geriatric assessment of the patient promptly, ensuring that patients experience no negative consequences from their hospital stay, while facilitating a smoother transition from hospital to home.



The DwD programme has four key integrated workstreams:

- **Planned Date of Discharge (PDD) and Integrated Discharge Hubs Workstream** – A single point of referral for complex discharges, setting a realistic planned date of discharge, supported by a MDT approach.
- **Discharge to Assess (D2A)/Home First Workstream** – The completion of social care assessment post discharge. Enabling people to return home without delay, through services that offer responsive community-based home care support.
- **Community Hospital and Step-Down Rehabilitation Units Workstream** – Enhanced use of these facilities to care for frail individuals requiring rehabilitation and extended assessments.
- **Acute Frailty Unit Workstream** – Frailty units early in the admission process in acute hospitals provide early comprehensive geriatric assessments for frail older people.

The DwD collaborative meets fortnightly and now has over 50 members across 11 boards in Scotland. All boards in the DwD group have undertaken a needs assessment aligned to the guiding principles set out by the DwD collaborative that will support the development of a comprehensive action plan to guide service, workforce, and budget planning for the year ahead and inform the respective annual delivery plan 2025/26.

The DwD collaborative has agreed on four key targets to reduce delayed discharges and their impact (detailed in paragraph 115). There are early signs that the DwD programme is now having an impact in reducing delays across some boards that have implemented the new principles, but boards are at varying stages of implementing service changes, and the principles will take time to fully embed.

Source: Discharge without delay collaborative

Power of attorney and guardianship orders can be a lengthy, complicated process with long waits for legal aid

82. In December 2024, Health and Social Care Scotland funded the development of a power of attorney stakeholder toolkit and associated media campaign around a national power of attorney day to raise awareness of the importance of having a power of attorney in place.

²⁵ As for many, especially those on lower incomes, having a power of attorney in place is not considered a priority. In more rural areas, this can be challenging, for example, in Highland, there are very few solicitors who accept legal aid due to capacity. According to the [Scottish Legal Aid Board](#) (SLAB), in 2024–25, adults with incapacity cases accounted for 47 per cent of all grants, up from just two per cent in 2005–06.²⁶

83. There may be opportunities for IAs to target proactive support for patients who are most likely to require a power of attorney. For example, East Ayrshire HSCP has been supporting dementia patients to set up a power of attorney. Working with Alzheimer’s Scotland, they are supporting individuals and their families to put in place a power of attorney during dementia post-diagnostic support, while they still have capacity. A range of teams across the HSCP are engaged in supporting power of attorney discussions at the earliest opportunity across the wider population. Work is under way to ensure there is a shared approach to identification, promotion, and provision of power of attorney, including market testing to explore improved access to quality assured legal partners.

84. Our stakeholder engagement has highlighted that better public awareness of power of attorney and guardianship orders is needed, and support for those on lower incomes may be useful to ensure families have them in place before they are admitted to hospital.

85. The Scottish Government is considering changes to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 to better protect people’s rights and dignity, and the 2024/25 Programme for Government, published in September 2024, committed to bringing forward a Bill amending the Adults with Incapacity legislation. Between July and October 2024, the Scottish Government carried out a consultation on its proposals, publishing analysis from these consultations in January 2025.²⁷ The responses to the consultation will inform the development of that legislation and the accompanying guidance and revised codes of practice.

The third sector is a key partner in tackling delayed discharges, especially in community-based interventions and carer support

86. Many IAs rely on third sector organisations to deliver social care services, including care home and care at home services. They also rely on the third sector to deliver services that enable timely discharge, such as housing support, befriending, and palliative care.

87. For example, the British Red Cross (BRC) supports health and social care across the UK, providing services in hospitals, primary care, social care and in the community. Their services include home from hospital support, assisted discharge, reablement, patient transport and discharge to assess, enabling faster, safer discharges and reducing the likelihood of readmission:

- In East Ayrshire, the BRC is a key delivery partner offering assisted discharge, transports such as oxygen and stretcher transport, and non-regulated support services such as practical and emotional support to people for up to 12 weeks after discharge.
- In partnership with Ninewells Hospital and Dundee HSCP, the BRC has co-developed a D2A model. Assessments are done in the person’s own home, and the Red Cross can provide wrap-around care and support during the assessment process for up to 21 days.

88. The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) reported in April 2025,²⁸ that overall, there had been local examples of good practice with health and social care integration across IAs, but these are yet to be adapted and implemented at scale. The ALLIANCE further reported that effective partnership working and collaboration between the third and public sector are undermined by financial challenges, negative attitudes toward the third sector, and complex organisational processes.

89. As significant contributors in the delivery of community health and social care services, the third sector and, where appropriate, the independent sector, should be involved in developing approaches to whole-system change.

Digital solutions are playing an increasingly vital role in tackling delayed discharges

90. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technology is a powerful tool that can transform access to healthcare, improve efficiency and support long-term savings and better integration:

- Remote and virtual care with enhanced online accessibility reduces the need to travel and virtual assistants can provide health advice, triage symptoms, and guide patients to appropriate care 24/7.

- AI can help hospitals and health professionals allocate resources more efficiently and streamline administrative tasks. Our [Tackling digital exclusion](#) report gives examples of how digital options can improve access to services and help save money, such as the Near Me video consulting service.

91. An example of where digital technology has improved efficiency and supported better discharge planning by improving the interface between acute and community teams has been the launch by NHS Highland of a dynamic discharge app.

92. It follows the planned date of discharge principle of discharge without delay. The app links together multidisciplinary decision-making teams in both acute and community settings, improving communication to help ensure patients are put on the correct pathway as early in the process as possible. Upgrades to the app have included a clinical frailty scale, and a chat function to improve real-time communication to support the flow of patients through the hospital.

93. There is potential for AI and technology-enabled care (TEC) to support people to live more independently at home, including supporting the elderly and those living with dementia. Digital connections form part of East Ayrshire HSCP’s longer-term strategic plan to align the Home First model of care to a Digital First principle promoting the use of TEC for independent living.²⁹ Recent innovations include the East Ayrshire smart hub which showcases different smart home technologies and is part of the [Smart Supports initiative](#), using technology to provide services which can help people live independently within their homes and communities.

94. In our [Community health and social care performance report](#), published in January 2026, we note that the Scottish Government has encouraged, through a number of workstreams, the growth of TEC. Although preventative initiatives to keep individuals in the community, such as the use of community alarms and telecare, have been used across IAs, the estimated number of people receiving community alarms and/or telecare is relatively static.

95. With the growing challenge of an ageing population, workforce shortages and rising costs, IAs should work together to share learning and best practice from these digital initiatives, as digital technology and digital innovations will be an important consideration in early intervention and prevention strategies.

3. Delayed discharges – what needs to happen

Scotland's Population Health Framework and the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework offer an opportunity for a common focus on prevention across health and social care. But it is not clear how the shared accountability and joint decision-making needed across all stakeholders will be achieved and how the underlying challenges in the social care sector will be addressed.

The lack of a consistent approach to evaluating initiatives makes it very difficult to understand their impact. More needs to be done to understand the true costs of delays, what actions and initiatives are providing better quality of outcomes for individuals, and which approaches represent value for money for public spending.

There is a long-term recognition of the need for extensive change in the health and social care sector to improve outcomes, including a focus on prevention, shifting the balance of funding and better collaborative working across sectors and organisations

96. In 2005, we published [Moving on? An overview of delayed discharges in Scotland](#). In this report, we highlighted that solving the problem of delayed discharges needs action across all parts of the health and care system. In our [Health and social care integration: Update on progress report](#), published in November 2018, we reported that significant changes are required in the way that health and care services are delivered, and highlighted:

- appropriate leadership capacity must be in place
- all partners need to be signed up to and engaged with the reforms

- partners also need to improve how they share learning
- change cannot happen without meaningful engagement with staff, communities and politicians.

97. At both a national and local level, all partners need to work together to be more honest and open about the changes that are needed to sustain health and care services in Scotland.

98. These messages were reiterated in our [Integration Joint Boards: Finance and performance report](#), published in July 2024. It highlighted that we still have not seen significant evidence of the shift in the balance of care from hospitals to the community intended by the creation of IJBs. It also noted there is a lack of collaboration and systematic shared learning.

Scotland’s population health framework and the health and social care service renewal framework provide high-level guidance for change, but more clarity is needed on how these ambitions will be achieved

99. In June 2025, the Scottish Government and COSLA launched [Scotland’s Population Health Framework 2025–2035 \(PHF\)](#) and the [Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework \(SRF\)](#). Both frameworks are a welcome development, recognising the need for a cross-sector approach to address the challenges of health and social care, with a focus on prevention at the core.

Scotland’s population health framework provides a common vision, but it is not clear how shared accountability and joint decision-making will be achieved and there is limited reflection of the role of social care

100. The PHF sets out at a high level ‘a ten-year approach to improving health and wellbeing in Scotland’. It focuses on population-level prevention by improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities across Scotland. It clearly recognises the need to engage across public, private and third sector bodies to have a meaningful impact on public health and wellbeing and address these inequalities.

101. Although delayed discharges are not a central theme, the scope of the framework, which includes a cross-sector approach focusing on prevention drivers of health and wellbeing, supports actions to indirectly address delayed discharges. Importantly, the role of social care, as a critical element in the infrastructure for public health, is not fully recognised. The framework largely reflects the issues from an NHS perspective. This imbalance risks the achievement of the aims of this framework, including improving outcomes such as reducing delayed discharges.

102. The framework is a positive step towards having common aims to achieve long-term improvement of outcomes, although it is not clear how the shared accountability and joint decision-making needed across all stakeholders will be achieved, and it remains to be seen whether the required cross-sector buy-in can be achieved.

The Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework is an opportunity for progress to be made with health and social care reform but IJBs and social care need to be more central to the arrangements, and it is not clear how the framework approach will address the leadership, cultural, financial and governance barriers that integration has not managed to overcome over the past ten years

103. The SRF provides a high-level guide for change, to ensure the sustainability, efficiency, quality and accessibility of health and social care services in Scotland. It sets out a shift towards a community-orientated approach to health and social care which, in turn, will contribute to better integration of services to meet individuals' and families' needs.

104. The SRF aims to 'progress reform to ensure long-term financial sustainability, reduce health and care inequalities, further harness the benefits of digital technology, and improve health outcomes for people in Scotland'. The framework has the potential to reduce delayed discharges, improve workforce sustainability, and enhance patient outcomes, but only if it is implemented effectively and underpinned by genuine collaboration.

105. The SRF offers an opportunity to make the progress needed in the integration of health and social care. However, as with the PHF, there is limited reflection of social care or the role of IJBs. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act, 2014 (the Act) was intended to ensure that health and social care services were well integrated, that people receive the care they need at the right time and in the right setting, with a focus on community-based, preventative care. However, Scotland is yet to achieve this shift in the balance of care. The underlying challenges in the social care sector remain. It is not clear how the SRF approach will address the leadership, cultural, financial and governance barriers that integration has not managed to overcome over the past ten years.

106. Without IJBs and HSCPs being at the centre of the planning and decision-making about service renewal it is unlikely this framework will achieve the engagement and affect the change intended. In developing the plans to support this framework, more consideration is required of what this will mean for social care and social work services.

The NHS Scotland operational improvement plan looks to address delayed discharges through reducing the pressure in hospitals and by shifting the balance of care

107. The [NHS Scotland operational improvement plan \(2025–2026\)](#),³⁰ published in March 2025, is the Scottish Government's short-term plan that sets out actions that are intended to progress reform and enhance NHS delivery. The plan is a useful summary of current key initiatives and commitments but does not set out specific actions in any detail. It looks to address delayed discharges and the pressures on hospitals through

programmes such as H@H, approaches to manage frailty, including specialist frailty services and managing frailty at A&Es and access to GPs and primary health care.

108. As highlighted in relation to the PHF and SRF, these approaches cannot be achieved in isolation and need to be planned and progressed in partnership with the social care sector, primarily through the IAs and HSCPs. In isolation, the NHS is limited in how effectively it can achieve the aims set out in this plan.

The lack of a consistent approach to evaluating initiatives makes it very difficult to understand their impact and assess value for money

109. There has been significant work by the Scottish Government, integration authorities and their partners to reduce delays. Some regional areas are showing improved performance, but there has not been an overall assessment of the impact of these initiatives. Having a consistent approach to evaluating national initiatives for reducing delayed discharges and preventing hospital admissions would improve transparency of their effectiveness, if they are delivering value for money and if they are improving the balance of care which would help inform future resource allocation decisions.

The Scottish Government does not measure the total costs associated with delayed discharges

110. As of October 2021, PHS stopped reporting the underlying costs of beds associated with delayed discharges, which was due to metrics being out of date and likely an underestimate of the true cost.

111. At present, the Scottish Government does not measure the total costs associated with delayed discharges. The Scottish Government recognises this as a gap in its data, but given the priority and investment in reducing delays, the Scottish Government needs to be able to understand the true costs of delays and the savings made through initiatives to reduce delayed discharges. In a system under extreme financial pressure, it is essential that the Scottish Government can identify the cost of delayed discharges and take targeted action to reduce them, enabling more effective and productive use of resources.

The Scottish Government and COSLA do not have targets to monitor performance in reducing delays

112. The national mission to reduce delayed discharges was jointly agreed by the Scottish Government and COSLA, and between July 2024 and October 2024, the Scottish Government and COSLA assessed IAs performance against a national target of 34.6 delays per 100,000 population, based on a pre-pandemic rate, with each IA having to bring

down delays to a specific level to contribute to this national target. This was a time-bound target up to October 2024. By October 2024, the target was not met, with national performance at 44.8 delays per 100,000 population. A new target was not introduced.

113. The Scottish Government and COSLA now monitor IA performance based on the trajectories of the numbers of people delayed, outliers, and comparison with the Scottish average. At a national level, the delayed discharge rate has remained above 40 delays per 100,000 population, peaking at 44.8 in October 2024.

114. The Scottish Government, along with feedback from delivery partners and COSLA, advises that setting a single national target for delays may narrow focus and divert resources from community-based activities. While national targets can highlight key areas for improvement, they may not address the complexity of local issues. Measures should be set in consultation with partners to ensure they are evidence-based, sensitive to local circumstances, and linked to improved outcomes. Many local service providers prefer the indicators developed by the DwD collaborative, which considers the number of delays as one of several performance indicators.

115. Locally driven targets can help focus efforts to reduce delays where they will make the most impact. Analysis of local data on the processes and barriers faced in their local context has allowed some IAs to target investment and implement service changes that have resulted in reductions in delayed discharges. IAs involved in the DwD programme (Case study 3) have agreed four key targets to improve system flow, reduce delayed discharges and ensure actions put in place are achieving the intended impact:

- Reduce acute geriatric length of stay by more than 20 per cent compared to March 2024 levels, by the end of March 2026.
- Reduce community hospital and step-down care length of stay by more than 20 per cent compared to March 2024 levels, by the end of March 2026.
- Reduce respective HSCP delayed discharges by more than 20 per cent compared to March 2024 levels, by end of March 2026, because of improved flow.
- Less than 25 per cent of total delayed discharges in acute hospitals by December 2025.

116. The Scottish Government is working with the DwD group to ensure that all data reporting requirements and measures for monitoring are aligned.


Endnotes

- 1** Delayed discharges in NHS Scotland, annual summary of occupied bed days and census figures, data to March 2025 (planned revision), Public Health Scotland, December 2025.
- 2** Delayed discharges in NHS Scotland, annual summary of occupied bed days and census figures, data to March 2025, Public Health Scotland, June 2025.
- 3** Delayed discharges in NHS Scotland monthly, All delay reasons summary tables to October 2025, Public Health Scotland, December 2025.
- 4** Delayed discharges in NHS Scotland monthly, All delay reasons summary tables to October 2025, Public Health Scotland, December 2025; Mid-year population estimates for Scotland time series data, National Records of Scotland, August 2025.
- 5** Frailty Briefing, British Geriatrics Society, February 2025.
- 6** Health and Social Care Delayed Discharge and Hospital Occupancy Action Plan, Scottish Government, March 2023.
- 7** Median length of delays at point of discharge, Standard delays tables to June 2025, Delayed Discharges in NHS Scotland monthly, Public Health Scotland, August 2025.
- 8** Code 9 delays tables to June 2025, Delayed Discharges in NHS Scotland monthly, Public Health Scotland, August 2025.
- 9** Adults with Incapacity Act Monitoring Report 2023-24, Mental Welfare Commission, September 2024.
- 10** Your future in your hands with Power of Attorney, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, February 2025.
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- 13** National Care Home Contract (NCHC) Fee Negotiation 2025/25 Offer Letter to Scottish Care, Scotland Excel, March 2025.
- 14** Programme for Government 2024-25, Serving Scotland, the Scottish Government, September 2024.
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- 20** Scottish Budget 2025 to 2026, the Scottish Government, December 2024.
- 21** Integrated Clinical Hub – the Scottish Ambulance Service Evolution, the Scottish Ambulance Service, June 2025.


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- 23** Scotland Briefing Caring About Equality, Carers Week 2025.
- 24** Involving Carers in Discharge Planning, Health and Social Care Scotland, March 2019.
- 25** Power of Attorney – stakeholder toolkit, Health and Social Care Scotland, December 2024.
- 26** Legal Aid Enquiry, Scottish Legal Aid Board, April 2025.
- 27** Adults With Incapacity Amendment Act Summary and Analysis of Response to Consultation, the Scottish Government, January 2025.
- 28** The Integration Journey: Celebrating a decade of health and social care, the ALLIANCE, April 2025.
- 29** Strategic Plan 2021-2023, 2024-2027 update, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, June 2025.
- 30** NHS Scotland operational improvement plan, the Scottish Government, March 2025.

Appendix

Integration authorities' performance (number and rate of delays at the monthly census point) between October 2024 and October 2025

	October 2024		October 2025		Percentage change
	Delays at monthly census point	Delays at monthly census point per 100,000 population	Delays at monthly census point	Delays at monthly census point per 100,000 population	
Aberdeen City	64	33.8	49	25.9	-23.4%
Aberdeenshire	84	39.8	80	37.9	-4.8%
Angus	30	31.8	17	18.0	-43.3%
Argyll and Bute	33	44.8	53	71.9	60.6%
Clackmannanshire and Stirling	54	45.2	45	37.7	-16.7%
Dumfries and Galloway	79	65.3	101	83.5	27.8%
Dundee City	25	20.4	23	18.8	-8.0%
East Ayrshire	28	28.4	34	34.5	21.4%
East Dunbartonshire	27	30.7	24	27.3	-11.1%
East Lothian	38	41.2	31	33.6	-18.4%
East Renfrewshire	12	15.6	17	22.0	41.7%
Edinburgh	192	43.2	121	27.2	-37.0%
Eilean Siar	16	73.9	25	115.5	56.3%
Falkirk	65	50.2	68	52.5	4.6%
Fife	128	41.9	113	37.0	-11.7%
Glasgow City	231	42.8	252	46.7	9.1%
					Cont.

Integration authorities' performance (number and rate of delays at the monthly census point) between October 2024 and October 2025

	October 2024		October 2025		Percentage change
	Delays at monthly census point	Delays at monthly census point per 100,000 population	Delays at monthly census point	Delays at monthly census point per 100,000 population	
Highland	223	114.2	215	110.1	-3.6%
Inverclyde	7	10.8	13	20.0	85.7%
Midlothian	32	40.5	20	25.3	-37.5%
Moray	33	42.7	38	49.2	15.2%
North Ayrshire	74	67.2	104	94.5	40.5%
North Lanarkshire	106	38.4	103	37.3	-2.8%
Orkney	7	38.7	15	82.9	114.3%
Perth and Kinross	47	37.1	46	36.3	-2.1%
Renfrewshire	20	13.0	9	5.8	-55.0%
Scottish Borders	84	86.9	43	44.5	-44.8%
Shetland	11	59.1	12	64.5	9.1%
South Ayrshire	79	84.8	88	94.5	11.4%
South Lanarkshire	124	45.9	107	39.6	-13.7%
West Dunbartonshire	24	33.3	53	73.5	120.8%
West Lothian	51	34.6	40	27.2	-21.6%
Scotland	2030	44.8	1962	43.3	-3.3%

Sources: Delayed discharges in NHS Scotland monthly, All delay reasons summary tables to October 2025, Public Health Scotland, December 2025. Mid-year population estimates for Scotland time series data, National Records of Scotland, August 2025

Delayed discharges

A symptom of the challenges facing
health and social care



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ISBN 978 1 915839 95 4 AGS: AGS/2026/1

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Communities and Transformation
Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 19 May 2026**

Subject: Community Learning and Development Plan 2024-27. Mid-term Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the mid-term report is to provide the Service and Partnership Performance Panel with an update on progress made by the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership towards delivering the priorities set out in the CLD Plan 2024–2027

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

- 2.1 It is recommended that Service and Partnership Performance Panel approves the contents of this report and notes the activity, performance and outcomes achieved.

- 2.2 Approves Officers to publish the Mid-Term Programme Report

3. Background

- 3.1 The Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2024–2027 was developed following an extensive consultation process involving learners, communities and partners across South Ayrshire. This engagement shaped the priorities for the Plan and ensured that it reflects local needs, aspirations and the national requirements of the CLD (Scotland) Regulations 2013.
- 3.2 Through the consultation, four core priority areas were identified - Adult & Family Learning, Financial Inclusion, Youth Work and Community Development.
- 3.3 In addition, a set of cross-cutting priorities were established to ensure the Plan supports wider social, wellbeing, and equality outcomes. These are Mental Health & Wellbeing, Volunteering, Ageing Well, The Promise and Young Carers.

3.4 The CLD Partnership works collaboratively to coordinate and deliver activity across these priorities, ensuring services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of communities.

3.5 This midterm report provides an overview of progress made to date and highlights how the Partnership has worked towards achieving the identified priorities and crosscutting themes. This demonstrates key outcomes and achievements and highlights areas for continued improvement as the Plan moves into its next phase.

4. Proposals

4.1 Members to approve Community Learning and Development Plan 2024-27 Mid-term Report

4.2 Notes the activity, performance and outcomes achieved

4.3 Approves Officers to publish the Mid-Term Programme Report

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals within this report have been assessed through the EQIA scoping process and there are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts in agreeing the proposals, therefore an EQIA is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The above recommendations relate to Priority 1 - Spaces and Place, Priority 2 - Live, Work, Learn and Priority 3 – Community and Civic Pride

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

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Date: 13/4/26

South Ayrshire Community Learning & Development Partnership 3 Year Plan 2024-2027

Mid - Point Summary Report
September 2024 - March 2026



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Cross-cutting priorities

The following cross-cutting priorities are considered across the work of the CLD Partnership. Their relevance may vary across different areas of delivery, but they remain important themes that support our commitment to improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Mental Health & Wellbeing 	Volunteering 	Ageing Well 
The Promise 	Young Carers 	

Introduction

In September 2024, the CLD Partnership launched its new Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan for 2024–2027, setting out a refreshed set of priorities designed to strengthen learning, participation and community empowerment across South Ayrshire. The plan focuses on four core priorities: Adult & Family Learning, Financial Inclusion, Youth Work and Community Development. These priorities reflect the Partnership’s commitment to improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities through high quality, collaborative CLD practice.

CLD continues to play a vital role in reducing barriers, widening access to learning and supporting people to reach their full potential. This work is delivered through a wide range of approaches including youth work, adult and family learning, ESOL provision, community development, community engagement and community empowerment. The CLD Partnership Plan represents the collective contribution of the local authority, voluntary sector and community organisations working together to support positive change across South Ayrshire.

The Partnership has also identified a number of cross cutting priorities that inform and influence the planning and delivery of CLD activity where relevant. While these themes do not have standalone actions within the plan, they remain important considerations across the Partnership’s work. These cross cutting priorities are: Mental Health & Wellbeing, Volunteering, Ageing Well, The Promise and Young Carers.

Since the launch of the 2024–2027 Plan, the CLD Partnership has continued to build on the strong foundations established in previous years. The Thriving Communities service remains central to this work, bringing together CLD, Employability, Community Safety, Community Engagement and Health and Wellbeing to deliver a coordinated and community focused approach. This integrated model has strengthened collaboration, enhanced capacity and enabled more responsive support for local communities.

This mid term report highlights progress made during the first 18 months of the plan. It showcases examples of effective practice, outlines areas of development and demonstrates the ongoing commitment of partners to delivering meaningful and sustainable outcomes for the people of South Ayrshire.



Priority 1 Adult & Family Learning

Adult learning in South Ayrshire takes place in many different settings, through a wide range of approaches, and for a variety of personal, social and economic reasons. Our aim is to ensure that learning opportunities are relevant, accessible and responsive to the needs of our communities. We remain committed to promoting learning that is lifelong, life wide and firmly centred around the learner.

Recognising the vital role of family learning, the Partnership continues to prioritise approaches that involve whole families in the learning process. This strengthens relationships, improves educational outcomes and helps to build a culture of learning within communities. Our ambition is to deliver high quality adult and family learning provision at times, locations and formats that best suit the people we support.

The actions within the CLD Partnership Action Plan reflect this commitment. Over the course of the plan, we aim to:

- Deliver a range of meaningful adult and family learning opportunities tailored to identified community needs, encouraging individuals and families to learn, work and support one another
- Provide literacies provision for adults across South Ayrshire to enhance skills, confidence and participation
- Deliver ESOL support to learners and their families to promote social integration and strengthen community connections

The following section outlines the progress made to date in delivering these actions and highlights the impact of our work with adults, families and communities.

Participation 2024/25



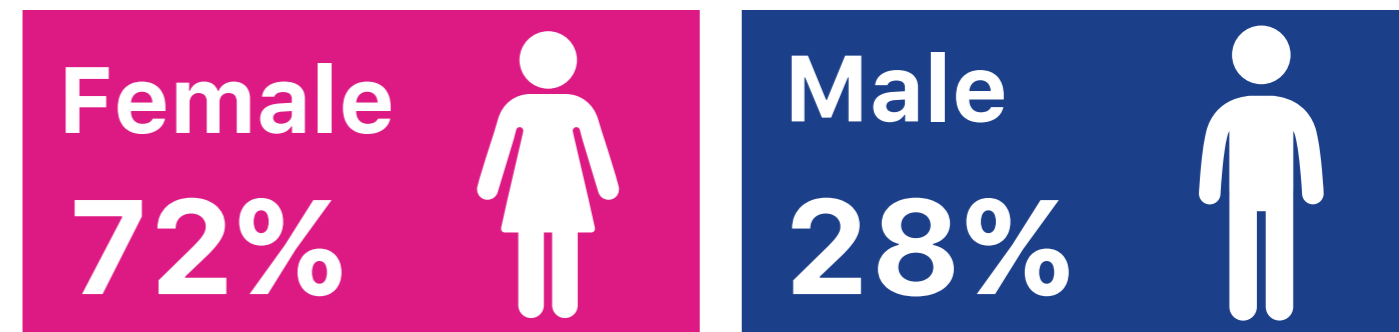
From 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025 there were 990 learning places accessed across CLD Community Based Adult and Family Learning provision.

Family Learning	38%
Literacies	34%
Community Based Adult Learning	28%

Learner Profile

Gender

In 2024/25, significantly more females than males participated in adult and family learning programmes:



Male participation was strongest within ESOL and literacies provision, where 54% of all male learners were engaged. Male learners also took part in family learning opportunities, particularly through holiday programmes, and engaged well in practical skills based courses such as driving theory, first aid and food hygiene

Age Range

In 2024/2025, the majority of adult learners engaged in CLD provision were aged between 31 and 40 years old. This reflects the strong participation in family learning programmes, where many parents taking part fall within the 25–40 age range. The continued demand for family learning opportunities has contributed to sustained engagement from this age group across the year.

Retention Rates

Of the 990 learning places, 898 learners completed their course, resulting in a strong retention rate of 91%.

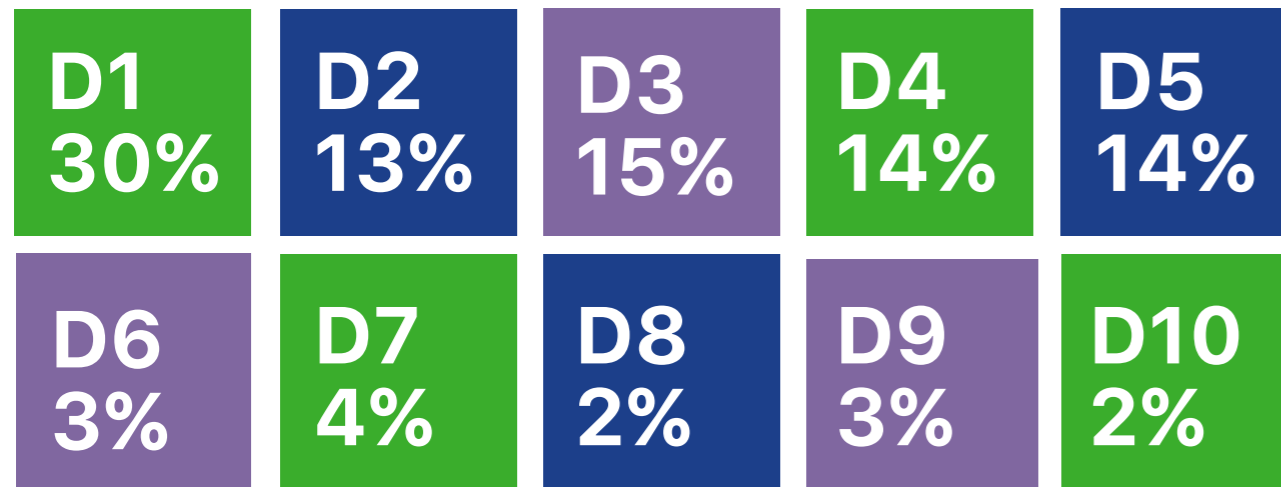
Accreditation Completion Rates

In 2024/25, 16% of all participation involved accredited learning. This reflects ongoing efforts within the CLD Partnership Plan to expand access to accredited opportunities where appropriate. The availability of accredited programmes varies depending on staffing, resources and the suitability of accreditation for different learner groups.



SIMD Deciles

In 2024/2025, 30% of learners lived in SIMD Decile 1, the most deprived areas in South Ayrshire. A further 42% were from Deciles 2–5. This demonstrates that the majority of CLD learners continue to come from communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation, reflecting the Partnership’s commitment to supporting those who face the greatest barriers to learning.



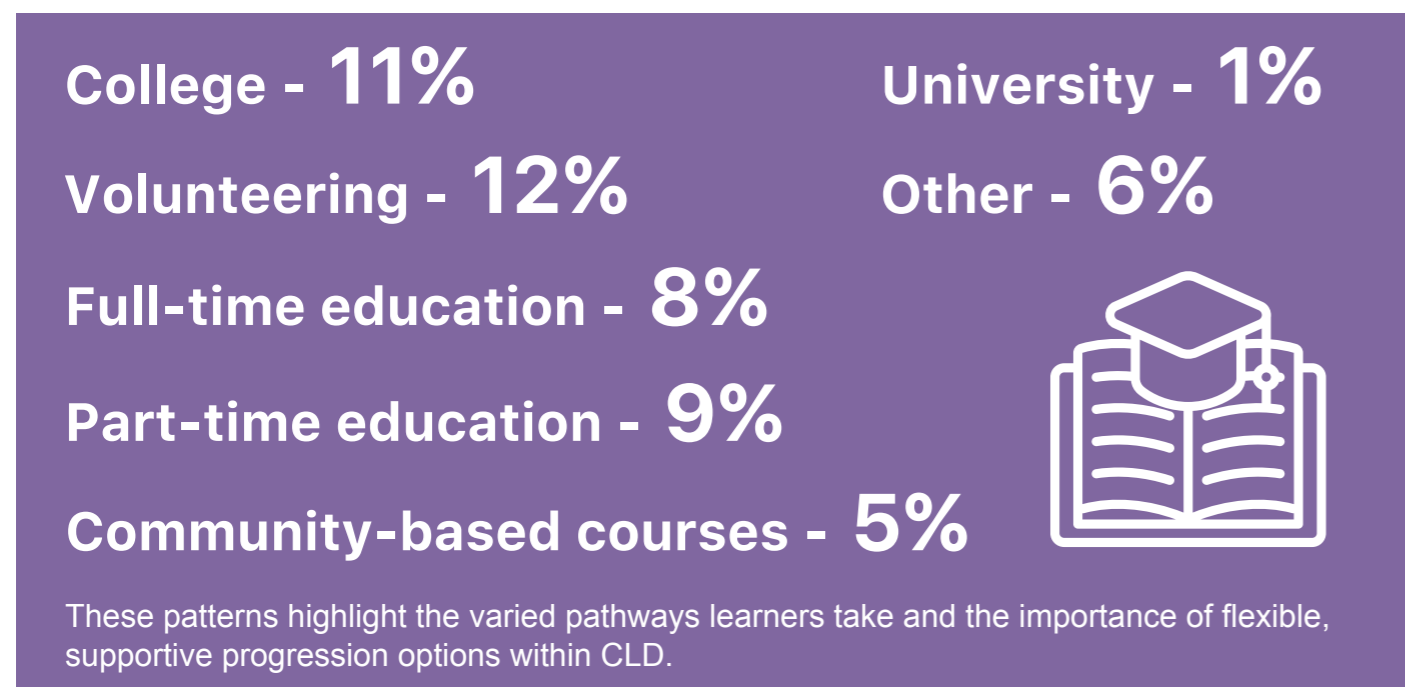
Learning Outcomes

In 2024/25, 92% of learners completing community based adult learning programmes achieved more than 75% of their learning outcomes, demonstrating strong engagement and meaningful progress across the year

Progression Routes

In 2024/25, the most common progression route identified by learners was continued engagement in CLD provision, with 52% choosing to progress into further CLD learning or activity. This reflects the nature of much of our work, where learners often require first steps opportunities that build confidence, resilience and wellbeing before moving on to wider learning or employment pathways.

Other progression routes included:



Impact of Learning on Participants

Three months after completing their learning programme, learners were contacted and asked how their learning had benefited them as individuals, within their families, in their communities or in other aspects of their lives.

In 2024/25, learners reported a wide range of positive outcomes:



- Skills- 75%**
- Knowledge - 76%**
- Health & Wellbeing - 60%**
- Family Support - 57%**
- Learning Progression - 53%**
- Community Involvement - 36%**
- Employment - 22%**
- Other Opportunities - 6%**

These findings highlight the breadth of impact that CLD programmes have on individuals and families across South Ayrshire, particularly in building confidence, strengthening family relationships and improving wellbeing.

Literacies and ESOL Provision

Literacies and ESOL provision continued to be a core element of Adult and Family Learning delivery during 2024/25, supporting learners to develop reading, writing, numeracy, digital skills and communication. ESOL programmes in particular played a vital role in helping individuals and families build confidence, strengthen language skills and participate more fully in their communities.

Between 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025, Literacy Development Officers worked with:

- 128 ESOL learners
- 64 adult literacies learners

ESOL and literacies provision have continued to support learner progression, strengthen social integration, and increase participation in community life across South Ayrshire.



UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People) Hub

Thriving Communities Literacy Development Workers are delivering targeted ESOL support and accreditation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People (UASC), funded by the Health and Social Care Partnership. The programme supports newly arrived, care experienced young people to develop English language skills, achieve accreditation and integrate into their local communities. Currently, 11 care experienced young people are being supported through ESOL delivery and a range of accredited learning pathways.

Delivery takes place over three full days per week at Ayrshire College (Riverside Building), with additional employability support provided one day per week to assist with future transitions. Learners are working towards qualifications including National 2 ESOL (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking), National 5 Applied Mathematics, ICT Core Skills (Levels 2 and 3) and other relevant awards.

Each young person receives tailored support, including access to community interpreters, regular progress reviews and a named Literacies Development Worker who provides continuity and represents them within settlement hub meetings, planning discussions and statutory reviews. This coordinated approach ensures individual needs are met while supporting positive learning and progression outcomes

Adult & Family Learning Awards

On Wednesday 29th October 2025, we hosted the Adult and Family Learning Awards to celebrate the achievements of local learners, volunteers and community groups. The event brought together learners, tutors, partners and third sector organisations from across South Ayrshire, showcasing the progress made through community based adult and family learning. This celebration directly reflects the CLD Partnership Plan's commitment to delivering meaningful learning opportunities that build skills, confidence and stronger families.

Awards were presented across a range of categories, recognising excellence in areas such as digital skills, literacies, ESOL, arts and culture, mental health and wellbeing, volunteering and community contribution.



2025 Award Winners

- **Environmental Award** – The Micah Project
- **Digital Skills** – Jess Leng
- **Arts and Culture Award** – Ayr North Time Team
- **Literacy Learner** – Laura Logan
- **ESOL Learner** – Anastasiia Skipalska
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing** – Dionne Barr
- **Skills and Development** – Wilma Steele
- **Partnership Award** – Friends of Dundonald Castle
- **Volunteer Award** – Jamie Anthony Lane
- **Learner of the Year** – Sharon Munro
- **Family Learning Award** – North Carrick Parent and Child Cluster Group
- **Group of the Year** – EmpowerHer Women's Group



These awards shine a light on individuals and groups who have shown exceptional dedication to learning, strengthened their confidence and skills, and made a positive difference within their families and communities. Many of the award categories directly reflect the actions within the CLD Partnership Plan, including the delivery of literacies, ESOL, and family learning opportunities.

The event also highlighted the vital role of partnership working. Recognition was given to the many third sector organisations who collaborate with Thriving Communities to deliver inclusive, accessible and community led learning across South Ayrshire. Their contribution is central to achieving the Partnership's priorities and ensuring that learning remains responsive to local needs.



Digital Support



Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) continues to offer support through its Digital Support service, now in its fifth year. The service provides free, accessible digital learning support to adults across South Ayrshire through a digital helpline, one to one appointments and regular community drop ins held in libraries, sheltered housing and community venues. Support includes device use, online safety, accessibility features and the development of bespoke learning plans tailored to individual needs. During 2025, the service averaged 11 drop in sessions per month, with 36 attendances monthly.

Quotes

“ **The support and patience gives me the confidence to try and get better with my phone. I can now video call my family instead of turning my phone off and people not being able to reach me.** ”

“ **The digital support service is great and always has a fantastic turnout. The teacher has a great way of talking with her clients, making them feel comfortable so that they understand without being talked down to.** ”

Priority 2 Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion remains a core priority for the CLD Partnership, reflecting our shared commitment to reducing social and economic inequalities across South Ayrshire. Many individuals and families continue to face financial pressures that impact their wellbeing, opportunities and ability to participate fully in community life. Through targeted learning, employability support and strengthened referral pathways, the Partnership aims to ensure that those most vulnerable are able to access the right support at the right time.

The Local Employability Partnership plays a central role in this work, supporting the creation of a fair, inclusive and sustainable local economy. By designing services around the needs and aspirations of individuals, we aim to remove barriers, build confidence and create clear pathways into learning, volunteering and employment. Community spaces continue to be key access points for this support, offering welcoming environments where people can develop skills, improve financial resilience and build the foundations for positive progression.

The actions within the CLD Partnership Plan reflect this commitment. Over the course of the plan, we aim to:

- Deliver a range of experiences that equip individuals with the skills for learning, life and work
- Prioritise Youth Work and Adult Learning programmes for individuals residing in SIMD 1–3 areas
- Increase referrals from Thriving Communities for individuals and families requiring financial support

This section outlines the progress made to date in delivering these actions and highlights the impact of our work in supporting financial wellbeing, employability and improved life chances across South Ayrshire.

Support for Young Carers



Health & Social Care Partnership, working with Skills Development Scotland, delivered co design sessions with young carers to improve how their skills and experiences are captured in their My World of Work learner profiles. Fourteen young carers took part, using videos, visual templates and dedicated time in school to help them identify both caring and non caring skills. The approach increased their confidence, reduced stigma and supported more accurate, meaningful profiles. This was a pilot programme that will be rolled out across local schools and carer services, with plans for wider national implementation.

The project showed that young carers bring a wide range of practical, emotional and organisational skills that are highly relevant to future employment, apprenticeships and further education. By helping young carers articulate these strengths in a recognised format, the work supports fairer access to positive destinations and ensures their achievements are visible to employers, colleges and training providers. Staff also gained a better understanding of the pressures young carers face, reinforcing the need for tailored resources and young carer specific examples within MyWoW so their abilities are fully recognised as they plan for their next steps.

Progression and Employability Support

The initial School Leaver Destination Results published in February 2025 confirmed that 98.7% of young people who left school between September 2023 and September 2024 entered a positive destination three months after leaving school. South Ayrshire was ranked 1st in Scotland for these results.

Follow up destinations published in June 2025 showed that 96.8% of these young people remained in a positive destination nine months after leaving school, exceeding the national average of 93.1%.

The initial School Leaver Destination Results published in February 2026 confirmed that 97.3% of young people who left school between September 2024 and September 2025 entered a positive destination three months after leaving school. This is above the national average of 95.7%.

The interim participation measure published in January 2025 confirmed that 93.8% of 16–19 year olds in South Ayrshire were participating in education, employment or training between April 2024 and December 2024. This was above the national figure of 92.8%.

The annual participation results, published in August 2025, showed that 95.6% of 16–19 year olds had sustained a positive destination between April 2024 and March 2025. This exceeded the national average of 93.3% and placed South Ayrshire 5th highest in Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland have confirmed that they no longer produce an interim participation measure.

From 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025 Thriving Communities, Employability Team have provided 996 participants employability support. 103 of these participants have been care experienced and 150 with caring responsibilities. 221 of these participants have been parents.

177 participants have achieved accredited qualifications as of 31st December 2025.

Case Study - GK

GK joined Thriving Communities in September 2023 experiencing severe mental health challenges, social isolation, and with no qualifications or work history. His goals were to improve his wellbeing, build confidence, and eventually secure employment to support his young family.

GK first engaged with SALUS for mental health support before progressing to the Thriving Communities Town Centre Programme. Despite initial anxiety, he adapted well, built positive relationships, and developed essential employability and outdoor working skills. He also completed Emergency First Aid at Work and Manual Handling training.

He then completed a 6-month paid placement with Bereavement Services. During this period he faced some challenges, but he remained committed and continued to engage with support.

GK went on to complete a 4 week placement at SAC's Waste Management Recycling Centre, where his strong work ethic which led to him securing a 23 month Tailored Jobs contract. This programme supports individuals with barriers such as ASN and health conditions into sustainable employment.

Over the last six months, GK has shown exceptional progress in confidence, stability, and workplace ability. He has settled well into his new role and is now planning to begin driving lessons, aiming to become a Refuse Driver in the future. He continues to receive support from his Employability Keyworker.

Participant Quote:

“ I can't thank the Thriving Communities Employability Team enough for what they have done for me. I love my new job and have settled in really quickly; I can't wait to see what the future holds. ”



Volunteering/Employment

An event focused on volunteering and employment opportunities for residents aged 50+ was held at the Cutty Sark Centre on 2nd October 2024, during International Day of Older People week. The event highlighted the wide range of local volunteering roles available and showcased employment options for those wishing to re enter the workforce or explore new pathways. Participants were also introduced to the latest Volunteering Newsletter, which included a dedicated focus on older volunteers. Feedback was positive, with attendees noting increased awareness of the opportunities available locally and greater confidence in taking the next steps towards volunteering or employment.



Evolve Programme

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) continues to support employability activity within the 3rd sector. In partnership with Thriving Communities and through funding from the Local Employability Partnership, VASA administered a programme providing paid 26 week placements for unemployed individuals within local charities. Seven months into the 2025 programme, 25 unemployed people have been placed within 18 charities across South Ayrshire. Over the past 19 months, 42 individuals have been supported through the programme, with approximately 75% progressing into permanent employment within the sector following completion of their placement. This approach supports income stability, skills development and sustainable employment outcomes while also strengthening the local third sector workforce

Quotes:-

“ Being out of work was tough, but the support and encouragement I received through the Evolve Placement made all the difference. The one-to-one guidance helped me get back on track, and now I've not only found a job I enjoy, but I've also been able to take my family on our first holiday abroad, fix my car, and keep caring for my Gran. It's completely changed things for us. ”
- MB, Seascape

“ I have had such a positive experience and really enjoyed my journey on the programme. Would definitely highly recommend to other people who were in my situation. - WB - Vics In The Community ”

“ Amazed at my journey to date and now always look forward not backwards to our next chapter.” – MC Micah Project ”

Holiday Programme

Thriving Communities' Summer 2025 Holiday Programmes provided meaningful, engaging and accessible experiences for families across South Ayrshire. Supported through UK Shared Prosperity Funding, a wide range of activities were delivered free of charge, ensuring that cost was never a barrier to participation. The programmes were targeted towards families who would benefit most from additional support, enrichment and opportunities during the holidays.

Across South Ayrshire, the holiday programmes offered something for everyone—workshops, youth sessions, outdoor learning, wellbeing activities and family experiences. These opportunities supported confidence building, strengthened relationships and created lasting memories for children, young people and their parents. 553 parents and children participated,

reflecting strong engagement and highlighting the continued need for accessible holiday provision.

A key feature of the programme was the provision of free food, ensuring families could attend and enjoy activities without additional financial pressure which is particularly important during the school holidays when household costs can rise. The combination of free food, transport and local delivery created a welcoming, inclusive environment where families could fully engage.

Alongside the locality based programmes, two major festivals were delivered as part of the summer offer, providing large scale, free community events for children, young people and families from across South Ayrshire.

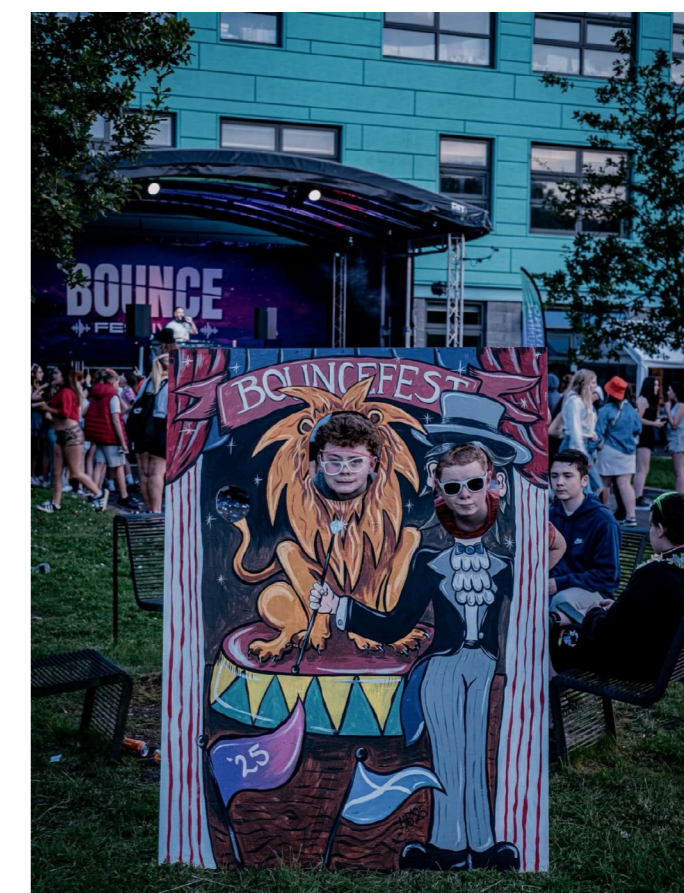


Bounce Festival



In August 2025 Thriving Communities hosted its fourth Youth Work Festival for young people in South Ayrshire, 'Bounce Festival 25'. The main aim of the event was to provide local young people aged 12 to 18 with an opportunity to engage in and enjoy a wide range of positive activities. 456 young people attended Bounce on Friday 15th August 2025 which offered live music from well known DJ's, various activities including fun fair rides, inflatables and workshops. Youth Volunteers supported the organisation of the event along with the Youth Council providing Financial Inclusion Funding. The event was free to attend and transport was also organised across the various localities within South Ayrshire to ensure there were no barriers for young people to be able to participate. There was a reduction of 30% in anti-social behaviour incidents on the night of the Festival.

Please scan the QR code to watch Bounce video!



FAMILY FESTIVAL

Building on the success of last year's event, the Thriving Communities Family Learning Festival took place on Wednesday 13th August 2025 and provided families across South Ayrshire with an opportunity to engage in and enjoy a wide range of positive activities, including; live music, children's entertainment, food, outdoor learning, STEM, sensory play, health and wellbeing workshops and much more! We targeted areas in South Ayrshire where families are experiencing challenging situations in their everyday lives. Thriving Communities staff supported 380 parents and children who predominately live in neighbourhoods recognised as statistically deprived within the health and wellbeing summary and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation to attend. This event was completely free of charge and families will be supported to attend by their Thriving Communities Officer.



“
We had a great day, thank you!
 ”

“
We had a fantastic time!
 ”

“
Great wee day, well fed, watered and entertained!
 ”

Family Festival video below

Glendoune

Thriving Communities, Senior Communities Officer has continued to provide targeted support within Glendoune, helping to reduce the financial pressures experienced by local residents. The centre now plays a key role in supporting individuals and families through food provision, school holiday campaigns, cost free community events, and the distribution of fuel vouchers, helping to ease immediate hardship while creating pathways towards longer term financial stability. Working closely with local partners, including schools, health services, charities and other council teams, Glendoune also addresses related challenges such as poor mental health, substance misuse and community safety issues, ensuring residents receive coordinated and timely support. Since 2021, this approach has led to an 83.3% increase in weekly groups delivered within the centre, alongside a 92.2% rise in young people volunteering, strengthening community resilience, connection and confidence. Glendoune is now recognised as a trusted community hub, providing safe spaces, essential support and opportunities that enable residents to thrive.



Driving Lessons - North Carrick

DRIVING Theory

Start Date: TBC September 2025

Are you looking to start your driving journey?

How we can help:

- 8 week driving theory
- Funding opportunities - Provisional Licence & Theory Test
- Budgeting support - Driving Lessons

To register your interest please email: ainsley.mccrindle@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

The North Carrick Driving theory programme was put together to help support people living in the North Carrick area to access the driving theory test, as transport can be a barrier for many people and that can make looking for employment or moving into further education a challenge.

Putting the programme together offered support and confidence building, preparing the learners for their theory test and helping them to then progress on to taking driving lessons and passing their driving test.

Thriving Communities CLD worked in partnership with Multiply and North Carrick Community Benevolent Company to fund the programme. NCCBC provided funding for driving lessons and the driving test. This was a fantastic opportunity

for the people of North Carrick helping to remove further barriers for people to learn to drive as this can be an impossible expectation for some people with the financial cost.

The course ran over 8 weeks covering lots of different topics of driving theory for example, rules of the road, hazard awareness, road signs, motorway rules, and many more, The Multiply team also offered advice on budgeting, car insurance costs, and the daily cost of owning and running a vehicle.

Outcomes to date include:-

14

learners have passed the driving theory test

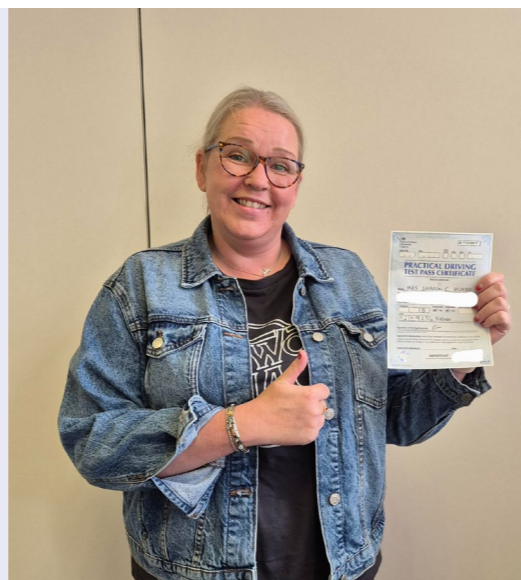
7

further tests are booked

7

have passed their practical driving test (funded by NCCBC)

One of the learners said, “ I’ve always wanted to learn to drive as this would make a huge difference to my family life being able to take the children out but also to help me look after other family members and attending appointments with them. I could never see me being able to afford the cost or pass the tests. By attending the group I’ve gained knowledge and confidence with the driving theory which helped me to pass the test and I’m now currently taking driving lessons funded by the NCCBC. If someone had told me this time last year that I would be learning to drive and passed my theory test I would never have believed them! and that’s thanks to Thriving Communities, I am very grateful for the opportunity I was given I hope more people do this course as it’s a brilliant chance for people”.



Driving Lessons – Ayr North

The Ayr North Driving Theory group was introduced to support local residents who face transport barriers that impact their ability to access employment, training, and further education. Thriving Communities received £18,040 in Financial Inclusion funding to provide structured support to help learners prepare for and pass their driving theory test, and for several participants, to progress into driving lessons and their practical test.

The programme offered confidence building, guidance on the theory exam, and support to help learners take the next steps toward gaining their licence. This approach has created meaningful opportunities for individuals in Ayr North to improve long term financial independence.

Outcomes to date include:-

- 10 learners have passed the driving theory test
- 3 learners are currently taking driving lessons with practical tests booked
- 1 learner has passed both the theory and practical driving test
- 1 learner is completing an intensive programme of lessons and is expected to sit the practical test before March 2026

This programme demonstrates strong engagement and highlights the impact that Financial Inclusion funding can have in reducing barriers, supporting employability, and improving financial wellbeing for residents in Ayr North.



INFORMATION AND ADVICE TEAM

The team provide a free, confidential and impartial welfare rights and money advice service across South Ayrshire. From 1st September 2024 and 25th January 2026, Thriving Communities made 151 referrals to the Information and Advice Team for individuals and families requiring financial support. These referrals resulted in £45,150.39 in confirmed financial gains, directly boosting household income for local residents. In addition, the Team provided advice and support on £31,383.13 worth of debt, helping families to stabilise their financial situation and access appropriate guidance. This demonstrates a strong and growing referral pathway, ensuring that families engaged through Thriving Communities are connected to timely, high impact financial inclusion support.

Case Study 1

A working age male was referred to the Information and Advice Team by Thriving Communities for a benefit check. The advisor identified a missed entitlement to Carer Support Payment and the Carer's Supplement, resulting in an annual financial gain of £4,918.60.

Case Study 2

A working age male with disabilities was referred to the Information and Advice Team by Thriving Communities for support with an Adult Disability Payment re determination. Following advice, he was awarded the standard rate for daily living and mobility, receiving £2,000 backdated and £5,361.20 annually, totalling £7,361.20.

Your Money, Your Future Events

YOUR MONEY YOUR FUTURE

Financial Wellbeing Event for the Whole Community
Free local event - open to all ages and life stages
Come along and learn practical tips and advice to:

- Make the most of your income
- Manage your bills and budgeting
- Build savings and prepare for your future
- Get support with debt and benefits
- Training and employment opportunities
- Home energy support

Friday 1 August 1pm - 3.30pm Troon Walker Hall

If you're interested in attending this event, please confirm your interest via the events tab on the South Ayrshire Information and Advice Team Facebook page.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES | SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

There were five “Your Money, Your Future” events held by the Information and Advice Team during July and August 2025, within Ayr, Girvan, Maybole, Prestwick and Troon. These events were designed to raise awareness of the financial support available to South Ayrshire residents and provided information on income boosting opportunities, grants and ways to reduce household costs, including energy bills. Thriving Communities supported the events and raised awareness with individuals and families. Around 100 people attended across the five towns, increasing visibility of local financial inclusion support and encouraging early engagement from individuals and families.

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) continues to play an important role in supporting financial inclusion across South Ayrshire through advice, signposting and community based provision. During the reporting period, VASA's Connect Team made a significant number of referrals to benefits advice services, supporting individuals and families to access income maximisation support. Between January and November 2025, the team referred 216 individuals through walk-ins and telephone contacts to benefits advice services, including the Information and Advice Team and Social Security Scotland, helping ensure timely access to financial support.



Food Pantries



Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) operates food pantries in Ayr and Girvan, providing affordable access to nutritious food while promoting dignity, choice and independence. As of November 2025, the Ayr Food Pantry, supporting residents in KA8, Annbank, Mossblown and Tarbolton, had 535 member households, supporting 851 adults and 239 children. Membership included a high proportion of people experiencing financial vulnerability, including single parent households, families with three or more children, individuals who are unemployed or unable to work, and older people. While demand remains high, some members have exited the service during the year as they moved out of food insecurity.

The Girvan Food Pantry, operating for around 18 months, has seen a significant increase in demand. As of November 2025, it supported 155 member households, comprising 245 adults and 74 children, including single parent families and households affected by unemployment, ill health or retirement. Together, the pantries help reduce household food costs, support financial stability during periods of hardship, and contribute to wider outcomes linked to wellbeing and community connection.

Priority 3 Youth Work

Youth work is a vital part of Community Learning and Development in South Ayrshire, supporting young people to build the skills, confidence and resilience they need to thrive. The CLD Partnership is committed to ensuring that every young person—regardless of their background, circumstances or challenges—has the opportunity to realise their potential and plan for a positive future. Through high quality, relationship based practice, youth work provides safe, supportive spaces where young people can learn, grow and feel valued.

Youth work in South Ayrshire is delivered in a range of settings, including schools, community venues and outdoor environments, ensuring that support is available at times and places that suit young people. The Partnership recognises the importance of targeted youth work, early intervention and meaningful participation, and continues to prioritise approaches that strengthen wellbeing, promote inclusion and create opportunities for young people to influence decisions that affect their lives.

The actions within the CLD Partnership Plan reflect this commitment. Over the course of the plan, we aim to:

- promote and deliver targeted community based opportunities for young people aged 10 and above that support their overall wellbeing and development
- deliver a range of experiences that equip young people with learning, accreditation, leadership and employability skills to support school attendance and positive destinations
- provide opportunities for young people to have a voice and influence their groups, services and wider youth voice structures
- support young people to develop a new Youth Voice Charter for South Ayrshire Community Planning Partners
- develop a programme of events where young people's rights are promoted and discussed with key decision makers
- support the delivery of detached youth work and develop positive diversionary experiences at targeted times



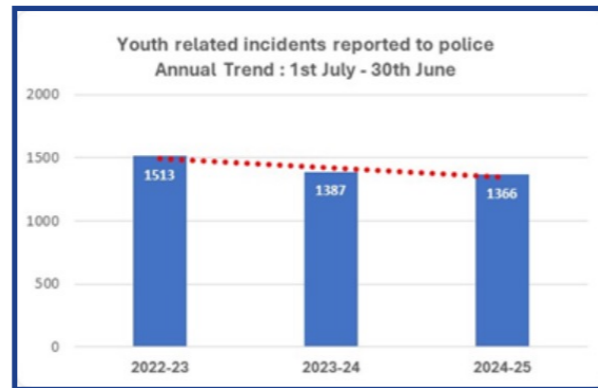
YOUTH WORK PARTICIPATION

2024/25

In 2024/25, 2,136 young people engaged in regular CLD youth work (4+ weeks). Youth work was delivered across four main areas:

- **Community based youth work:** 1,280 young people
- **Holiday programmes:** 293 young people
- **School based youth work:** 469 young people
- **Youth voice groups:** 94 young people

This reflects strong engagement across a broad range of settings, with community based youth work remaining the largest area of delivery.



Targeted Youth Work

In 2024/25, **1,244 young people** were identified as belonging to targeted groups, representing **58%** of all youth work participants. These included:

- young people living in **SIMD 1-3**
- **care experienced** young people
- **young carers**
- young people referred from other priority groups

This demonstrates strong alignment with the Partnership's commitment to prioritising support for those facing the greatest barriers.

Detached Youth Work

A data informed deployment model was used, drawing on:

- community intelligence
- referrals
- partnership reports
- direct feedback from young people

Detached youth work contributed to:

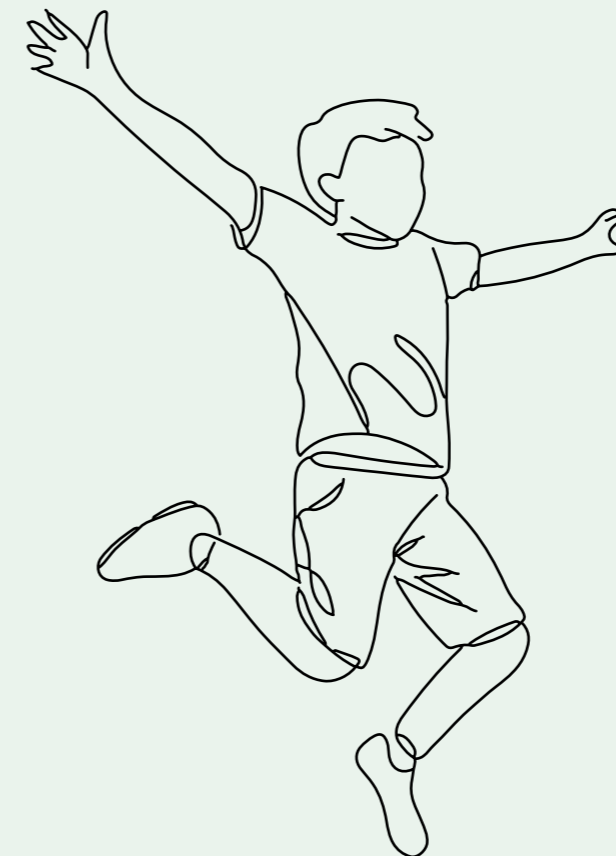
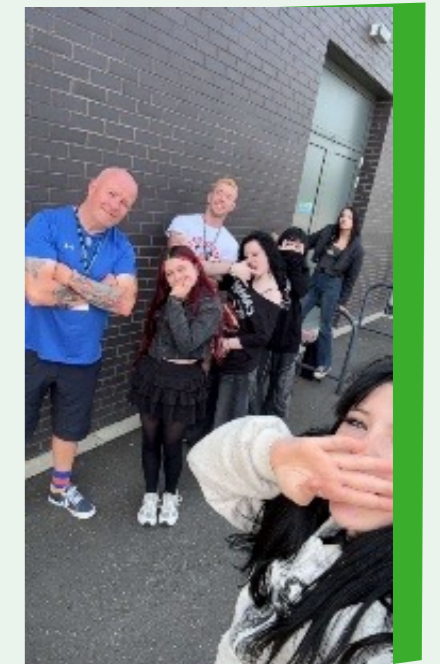
- improved awareness of support pathways
- reductions in antisocial behaviour in identified areas
- strengthened partnership working
- increased youth participation in local decision making

This directly supports the action to deliver targeted and diversionary youth work at key times and as supported a reduction in youth related anti-social behaviour.



TAYP - Targeted Approach to Young People

The Targeted Approach to Young People (TAYP) programme, delivered by South Ayrshire Council Thriving Communities, supports young people who are involved in or at risk of antisocial behaviour, or who are not engaging with school as expected. Between January and June 2025, a targeted girls group took part in an animal care and horse-riding programme delivered in partnership with Fossil Fields Stables. The programme provided consistent, positive experiences that supported improvements in attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and peer relationships. Several participants demonstrated significant improvements in school attendance and engagement, with some attending school primarily on the days the group ran. Young people reported feeling happier and more confident, with improved communication skills, reduced incidents in school and the community, and stronger connections with peers. The partnership with Fossil Fields created a nurturing, structured environment that supported meaningful and sustained positive change for some of the school's most vulnerable young people.



Learner Hours and Programme Delivery

In 2024/25, young people participated in 72 youth work programmes, contributing a total of 42,036 hours of learning and engagement.

Breakdown of hours:

- Community based youth work: 25,936 hours
- Holiday programmes: 6,602 hours
- School based youth work: 7,141 hours
- Youth voice programmes: 2,357 hours

On average, each young person engaged in 19.6 hours of youth work over the year.

Youth work delivery continues to evolve, with a growing emphasis on:

- diversionary activity
- events and festivals
- residential experiences
- longer, more intensive sessions

This reflects increasing complexity in young people's needs and the Partnership's commitment to deeper, more meaningful engagement.



Volunteer Contribution

Adult and youth volunteers contributed 2,580

hours to youth work programmes in 2024/25. This significant level of involvement has strengthened community capacity, supported emerging youth workers and enhanced the sustainability of youth work provision.

Learner Outcomes

Using the National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework, 550 young people completed a Learner Journey form in 2024/25.

Young people identified improvements in:

<p>Positive relationships</p>	<p>Feeling safe and welcome</p>	<p>Having a say</p>
<p>New experiences</p>	<p>Skills and Knowledge</p>	<p>Better informed decisions</p>
<p>Positive futures</p>	<p>These outcomes demonstrate the breadth of impact youth work has on wellbeing, confidence and personal development.</p>	

Youth Work Accreditation

In 2024/25:

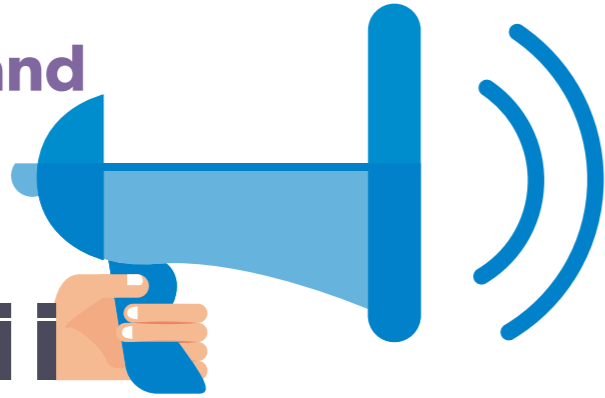
- 406 young people registered for youth awards
- 319 achieved an award (79% completion rate)
- 57 young people are continuing their award into 2025/26

Most popular awards included:

- Hi5! Awards
- Dynamic Youth Awards
- Saltire Awards

Accreditation was embedded across targeted school based provision to support wider achievement and ensure young people could gain recognition for their learning.

Youth Voice and Participation



Youth voice remained a central focus of youth work in 2024/25.

South Ayrshire Youth Council

Elected in June 2024, the Youth Council represents all secondary schools, the ASN school, the Virtual School and young people aged 16+. Their priorities include:

- cost of living
- mental health and wellbeing
- youth voice and influence
- support for young people with additional needs

Over the year, members engaged in meetings with elected members, contributed to policy discussions, delivered presentations and led a cost of living survey reaching over 600 young people. They also launched the Body Essentials Project, supporting 31 schools and multiple youth groups to provide free toiletries to young people.



Youth Voice Engagements

Through rights based approaches, 366 young people took part in one off youth voice engagements, contributing to focus groups, consultations and service design.

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament

South Ayrshire MSYPs played an active role in national and local youth democracy, including:

- consulting over 200 young people on racism and xenophobia
- presenting a successful motion to the Scottish Youth Parliament
- developing a pilot lesson plan with the Scottish Refugee Council
- hosting a regional MSYP gathering
- supporting increased youth involvement in Community Councils



This work directly supports the action to strengthen youth voice and influence.

YOUTH AWARDS EVENT

The South Ayrshire Youth Awards took place on 3 April 2025, celebrating the achievements of young people aged 11–25. The event was entirely youth led, with young people shaping the theme, categories, entertainment and design. A total of 107 nominations were received, with 27 finalists recognised across nine categories.

This event demonstrates the Partnership’s commitment to promoting young people’s rights, celebrating achievement and strengthening youth participation.



Keeping Our Promise



Over the past year, care experienced young people in South Ayrshire have taken part in a range of targeted, confidence building activities delivered through partnership working between Thriving Communities, local support teams and third sector partners. Activity included curriculum and extra curricular sessions, outdoor learning, leadership opportunities, holiday provision and mental health workshops, all designed to promote wellbeing, inclusion and a sense of belonging.

In partnership with Scottish Rowing, a Learn to Row project was delivered on the River Ayr, providing a safe and supportive environment where young people could build confidence, social skills and physical ability at their own pace. The project ensured participants felt included, empowered and able to engage in new experiences in a way that suited their individual needs.



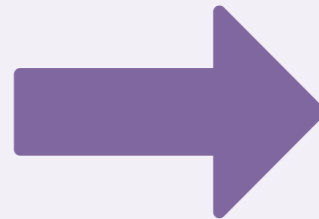
Champions Board Groups

Thriving Communities have worked in partnership with the Champions Board to create regular, supportive opportunities for care experienced young people to come together. Fortnightly groups operate in both Ayr and Girvan, providing safe and welcoming spaces where young people can connect, share experiences and build positive relationships with peers who have similar lived experience.

The groups offer a wide range of activities designed to promote confidence, wellbeing and life skills. Young people take part in activities such as mountain biking, swimming, music and creative sessions, alongside practical opportunities including cooking and developing basic life skills. This varied programme ensures there is something for everyone, encourages participation at individual pace, and supports young people to build skills, friendships and a sense of belonging.



You can find out more in the video:-



Saltire Awards

Between September 2024 and January 2026, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire supported strong engagement in youth volunteering across South Ayrshire, with 243 new Saltire Awards users, 17 new group administrators, and 9,412 volunteering hours logged. Young people achieved 1,784 Saltire Awards, including five Summit Awards recognised at the annual ceremony in April 2025. VASA launched the first Young Volunteers Newsletter in January 2026, now available across libraries, schools, youth organisations and online, promoting local volunteering opportunities for young people.

VASA supported young people through school events, college and university engagement, and one to one guidance, with over 100 young people receiving individual support across in person and online contact. Since September 2024, 713 young people completed a Saltire Challenge Award, developing teamwork and leadership skills through school and community based activities. Monthly development sessions for Saltire Ambassadors further strengthened young people's confidence, leadership and wellbeing skills, supported by external inputs such as SAMH.

There are currently 14 Saltire Ambassadors representing seven schools and local education settings. Ambassadors play an active role in shaping youth volunteering, supporting events, and voting on Summit Award nominations, with several reporting increased confidence, belonging and enjoyment through their role. Young people with additional support needs were also assisted to access volunteering placements, demonstrating VASA's inclusive youth work approach.

Family First

Family First, South Ayrshire's whole family, early intervention model, provides integrated multi agency support through locality teams linked to school clusters, ensuring families receive timely, preventative help that strengthens wellbeing and improves outcomes for children and young people. As part of this approach, Thriving Communities continues to play a key role by supporting referrals across all clusters.



Family First Referrals to Thriving Communities:-

Dates	Ayr Academy	Belmont Academy	Carrick Academy	Girvan Academy	Kyle Academy	Marr College	Prestwick Academy	Queen Margaret Academy
Aug 24- June 25	5	0	2	3	3	2	3	1

Priority 4 Community Development

Community Development is a core function of Community Learning and Development and plays a vital role in strengthening the capacity, resilience and influence of communities across South Ayrshire. It involves a deliberate and collaborative approach to working with groups connected by place, interest, identity or shared experience, enabling them to participate meaningfully in local decision making and shape the services and opportunities that affect their lives.

The CLD Partnership is committed to supporting communities to identify their priorities, articulate their needs and take forward actions that matter to them. By raising awareness of funding opportunities, connecting groups with relevant partners and providing access to specialist support, we aim to ensure that communities have the financial, organisational and strategic resources required to thrive. Our ambition is to empower communities to take ownership of local assets, strengthen local leadership and increase their ability to influence change.

The actions within the CLD Partnership Plan reflect this commitment. Over the course of the plan, we aim to:

- Support and empower communities to take on assets within their local area
- Provide support to communities to access internal and external funding
- Support communities to develop community led action plans and Local Place Plans across South Ayrshire
- Build community capacity by providing assistance to community groups, associations and Community Councils
- Empower existing Thriving Communities groups, where appropriate, to become independent of internal support by enabling them to use their own assets to improve community life

This section outlines the progress made in 2024/25 in delivering these actions and highlights the impact of community development work across South Ayrshire.



External Funding Support Funding support to community Groups

From 1st July 2024 – 30th June 2025 the External Funding Officer has provided advice and information to a wide range of community groups and organisations to help identify both external and internal funding opportunities.

- 72 dedicated funding reports were prepared and issued to groups.
- 24 bi-weekly funding alerts have been circulated to community groups across South Ayrshire since August 2024.
- Thriving Communities CLD Facebook page shared funding information through an average of 18 posts per week.

Additional support has been provided to groups requiring help with applications, alongside information and advice sessions on how to prepare strong submissions to funders.

As part of the Council's commitment to supporting community and voluntary groups, charities, and social enterprises in accessing external funding, a free online resource — South Ayrshire 4 Funding is available:-



This resource provides a cohesive approach to external funding and enables groups to identify the best funders for their projects.

- 1,391 searches have been carried out in the past year.
- 279 groups are currently registered as users.

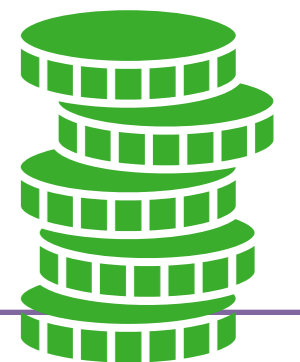
To date, the service has helped generate over £700,000 in funding for the region, delivering a return of £20.39 for every £1 invested.

These searches cover a wide range of community funding needs, as illustrated by the accompanying keyword word cloud.

INTERNAL FUNDING INVESTED



Alongside external funding support, Thriving Communities has also invested directly in communities through a range of funding opportunities since August 2024.



Financial Inclusion Funding

Thriving Communities is committed to supporting Financial Inclusion Projects that aim to reduce poverty and improve quality of life for communities.

Name of group	Amount awarded
Daily Community Development Trust	£1000
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£750
Ayr & Prestwick Mens Shed	£1000
Mossblown Matters	£1000
Girvan Town Team	£600
Vasa pantry	£1000

Following approval by Councillors at Cabinet, additional funding was allocated for 2025/26, allowing a second Financial Inclusion Fund to be launched.

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ayr Gaiety Partnership	£2500
The Honey Pot Childrens Charity	£4142
The Ballantrae Trust	£1000
Ayr United Football Academy	£3000
Vics in the Community	£4142
SeAscape	£4142
Recovery Ayr	£2000
Broken Chains	£3642
The Carrick Centre	£4142
Glendoune Community Association	£3250

A total of £60,000 was also distributed to support the work of food pantries:-

Name of group	Amount awarded
VASA - Ayr	£35,000
VASA - Girvan	£12,500
The Carrick Centre	£12,500

Community Empowerment Funding

The Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) is part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and supports community groups in taking ownership of land or assets, completing capital or development projects, and achieving priorities identified within their Place Plans or Community Action Plans. Applicants can apply for:-

- Small Grant: up to £4,950 – to address barriers to sustaining a group or to fund smaller development projects.
- Development Grant: up to £15,000 – for groups taking ownership of land/assets, going through a Community Asset Transfer (CAT), or taking the lease of an asset.

2024/25 Awards

- Budget: £105,000 (Capital £55,000, Revenue £50,000)
- Applications received: 22
- Successful applications: 12, with grants ranging from £2,600 to £15,000

Name of group	Amount awarded
Friends of Dundonald Castle	£4,950
ACE	£4,588
Ballantrae Trust	£15,000
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£2,600
Vics in the Community	£15,000
Friends of Broadway Prestwick	£4,950
Biosphere Bikes	£15,000
Overmills Allotment Assoc	£4,950
Girvan & District Attractions	£4,950
Kincaidston Action Group	£9,200
Peter Boyle Bowling Club	£14,030
The Ayr Ark	£8,585.13

2025/26 Awards

- Budget: £100,000 (Capital £80,000, Revenue £20,000)
- Fund Launched – 10th April 2025
- Closing Date – 1st May 2025
- Applications received: 27
- Successful applications: 16, with grants ranging from £608 to £15,000
- Conditions: All awarded funds must be spent by 28 February 2026

Name of group	Amount awarded
Annbank Comm Association	£8,600
Ayr Sea Cadets	£6,500
Ayr United Football Academy	£3,300
Dailly Comm Dev Trust	£2,400
Forehill Bowling Club	£15,000
Friends of the Broadway Prestwick	£12,000
Harbour Ayrshire	£1,794
Maybole Womens Group	£950
Peter Boyle Bowling Club	£14,958
Pinwherry & Pinmore Comm Dev Trust	£3,758
Prestwick Cricket Club	£608
Prestwick St Cuthbert Archery Club	£997
South Ayrshire Access Panel	£1,240
The Iris Ayr	£9,765
Troon Men's Shed	£10,276
Vics in the Community	£7,827

Good News Story/Quote

“ The purpose of the club is to provide a sporting and social space for members and the public to participate in activities and enhance their physical health and mental wellbeing. ”

 **Michelle - Peter Boyle Bowling Club**

“ This grant has enabled the club to enhance the social space and reach out to members and the wider community to make a valued difference to their health and wellbeing. ”

Participatory Budgeting Funding

The Participatory Budgeting Fund (PB) is also supported through UKSPF and aims to empower local communities to influence how funding is allocated to projects that meet local health, wellbeing, and community priorities.

2024/25 Awards

Budget: £90,000, in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership

Local allocation: £15,000 to each of the six localities:

- Ayr North
- Ayr South & Villages
- Girvan & South Carrick
- Maybole & North Carrick
- Prestwick & Villages
- Troon & Villages
- Grant range: £500–£3,000 per group
- Groups funded: 66

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ukrainian Community Group	£3,000 UKSPF
Carers Gateway South Ayrshire	£3,000 UKSPF
The IRIS	£3,000 UKSPF
Peter Boyle Bowling Club	£2,400
Ayr ARK	£2,800 UKSPF
Harbour AYRSHIRE	£1,800 UKSPF
Riverside Community Trust	£3,000
Overmills User Group	£2,100
Ayr North Exc Womens Group	£3,000
RecycleAyr	£3,000
Overmills Allotments	£2,000 UKSPF
Lochside Gardening Group	£900
Honeypot Childrens Charity	£2,789 UKSPF
Ayrshire Hospice	£3,000 UKSPF
Spotty Zebras	£2,000
RecoveryAyr	£3,000 UKSPF

Carers Gateway	£3,000 UKSPF
Annbank Comm Assoc	£3,000 UKSPF
Broken Chains	£3,000
Mossblown Matters	£2,850
NLADYS	£3,000
Mindfully Present	£2,060
Tarbolton Community Council	£1,500
Kincaidston Action Group	£801
Girvan Youth Football Club	£3,000 UKSPF
Girvan & District Attractions SCIO	£3,000 UKSPF
Girvan Development Group	£3,000 UKSPF
Carrick Resilience Team	£3,000 UKSPF
Girvan Youth Trust	£1,900 UKSPF
Sacred Heart Primary School Parent Council	£1,000 UKSPF
Girvan Community Garden	£2,994
Stumpy Corner Steering Group	£3,000
Girvan Opportunities Planning Committee	£3,000
Biosphere Bikes	£631
Z1 Girls Group	£500
Ballantrae Scouts (2nd Ayrshire)	£3,000
Colmonell Parent Council	£2,100
Colmonell Community Association	£1,950
Girvan & District Mens Shed	£500
Barrhill Events Group	£500
Carrick Resilience Team	£3,000 UKSPF
Maybole Youth Club	£3,000 UKSPF
Carrick Tots Playgroup	£1,700
Maybole Events Committee	£3,000 UKSPF
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£3,000 UKSPF

The Carrick Centre	£2,100 UKSPF
McCandlish Hall - Straiton Club	£3,000
Community Wellbeing Hub	£3,000
Growing Together Kirkmichael	£750 UKSPF
Carrick Walking Football Club	£2,450
Dementia Friendly Prestwick	£3,000 UKSPF
Ayr & Prestwick Men's Shed	£1,500 UKSPF
Age Concern Prestwick (65Club)	£1,500 UKSPF
Symington Bowling Club	£2,548 UKSPF
Glenburn miners Football club 2015's	£785
Friends of the Broadway Prestwick (FotBP)	£750
Glenburn Miners Welfare FC	£1,500
Domino Playgroup	£1,224
Monkton Community Council	£586
Carers Gateway - South Ayrshire (Carers Centre)	£3,000 UKSPF
Diamonds (New Life Trust)	£3,000 UKSPF
Ukrainian Community Group (UCG) South Ayrshire	£606
Keeping the wheels turning	£3,000 UKSPF
Start Up Funding	£1,000 UKSPF
Dementia Cafe and Staying Ahead of the Curve	£3,000 UKSPF
Chocolate - More Than Just A Sweet; International Badgework culminating in a trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park	£1,830 UKSPF
Wellness for Carers in Employment - Troon, Loans & Dundonald	£3,000 UKSPF
G.C.SCHEDULE 24/25	£3,000 UKSPF
Health and Fitness Group	£1,470
More Than A Journey	£3,000
Ukrainian Community Centre	£700

2025/26 Awards

- Fund Launched:- 19th May 2025
- Fund Closed:- 12th June 2025
- Budget: £70,000, divided by population across four Thriving Communities Localities:
- Ayr North
- Ayr South & Villages
- North & South Carrick
- Prestwick, Troon & Villages
- Grant range: £500–£2,000 per group
- Focus areas:
 1. Adult and Family Learning
 2. Financial Inclusion (Cost of Living Support)
 3. Youth Work
 4. Community Development
- Groups funded: 42

Name of group	Amount awarded
Alloway Tunnel	£2,000
Annbank Community Association	£1,982
Annbank United FC	£2,000
Carers Gateway	£1,783
Community Gift Exchange - Ayr South	£2,000
Coylton Family Fun Day	£2,000
Doonfoot After School Services	£500
Mossblown Matters	£2,000
Newmarket Street Dev Trust	£2,000
Night Before Christmas Campaign	£2,000
Oshay's Brain Domain's	£1,025
Recycle Ayr	£2,000
The Ayr Ark	£970
Ayr Academy Parent Council	£2,000
Carers Gateway	£600
Community Gift Exchange - Ayr North	£2,000

Morrison Gardens Residents	£1,350
Dalmilling Primary Parent Council	£570
Overmill Allotment	£2,000
Sea Cadets	£2,000
The Iris Arts	£1,410
Vics in the Community	£2,000
Ballantrae PS Parent Council	£2,000
Carrick Centre	£520
Carrick Rygby Football Club	£1,900
Community Wellbeing Hub	£830
Kirckmichael Village Renaissance	£1,965
McCandlish Hall	£2,000
Maybole Charity Shop	£2,000
Stinchar Connections	£2,000
BSL Sign Language	£900
Carers Gateway	£1,220
Friends of the Broadway Prestwick	£1,430
Friends of Dundonald Castle	£2,000
Loans Gala Committee	£1,630
Loans Village Hall	£2,000
Prestwick Community Cafe	£379
Prestwick Tennis & Fitness	£2,000
Symington Community Projects	£1,596
Troon Development Trust	£2,000
Troon Men's Shed	£2,000
Troon Scouts	£1,600
Troon Water Sports	£2,000

South Ayrshire Charitable Trust

The South Ayrshire Charitable Trust was set up to assist and improve the lives of South Ayrshire residents who are in need because of poverty, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. The available funding is split geographically.

In November 2024 the Ayr Fund councillors agreed to split the remaining £3500 by a donation system. The following groups were awarded:-

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ayrshire Cancer Support	£1,500
Newton Primary School	£1,000
Wallacetown EYC	£500
Compass Drop In Centre	£500

In March 2025 the Girvan Fund Councillors agreed to split the remaining £2000 by a donation system. The following groups were awarded:

Name of group	Amount awarded
C.A.N	£500
Ayrshire Hospice Shop	£500
O.I.R	£250
Cosy Spaces	£250
Girvan Mens Shed	£250
Duff Street Kitchen	£250

In November 2024 the Prestwick Fund Councillors agreed to split the remaining £2500 by a donation system. The following groups were awarded:

Name of group	Amount awarded
Monkton Community Council	£500
VASA	£190
Age Concern (65 club)	£500
Dementia Friendly Prestwick	£500
Diamonds Lunch Club	£500
Night Before Christmas Campaign	£310

Partnership Working (Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) & The National Lottery Community Fund)

Close partnership working between VASA, the local Third Sector Interface (TSI), and the Council's External Funding Officer has strengthened support for South Ayrshire's 3rd Sector. By sharing knowledge of local groups and funding opportunities, partners have improved signposting, reduced duplication, and provided more rounded support to organisations.

“ Closer partnership working between VASA, the local TSI, and SAC External Funding Officer has led to better intelligence overall of the 3rd Sector in South Ayrshire. Shared knowledge of the remit of partners as well as shared knowledge of groups in the community has led to a more rounded support for these groups when signposting and identifying duplication. By working in partnership we can also offer more support to the sector by sharing resources and taking that support out to the communities across SA. ”

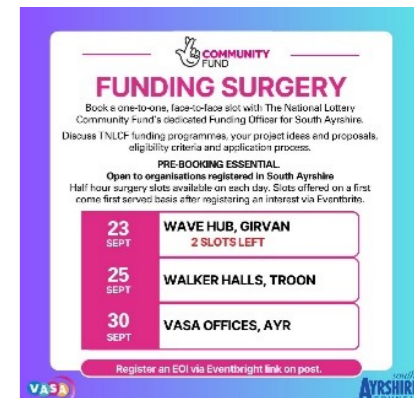
Angela McWhinnie, Depute Chief Officer, VASA

Locality Based Funding Surgeries

Thriving Communities and VASA has developed a strong working relationship with the National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) in Scotland. Working with TNLCF's South Ayrshire officer, Lauren Farquharson, and in partnership with VASA, a series of local funding surgeries were introduced.

These surgeries provide community groups with the opportunity to book 30-minute face-to-face appointments with the funding officer to discuss project ideas and receive direct feedback.

- 5 surgeries have been held since August 2024.
- 54 community groups have participated.
- As a result, £1,499,090 has been distributed to groups in South Ayrshire since August 2024.



“ Funding surgeries enable me to provide face-to-face support and advice about TNLCF's programmes, while also giving groups the chance to receive honest feedback on their project ideas. The involvement of Thriving Communities and VASA has strengthened this model, ensuring groups can access specialist local support alongside National Lottery advice. ”

Lauren Farquharson, National Lottery Funding Officer for South Ayrshire

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA)

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), as the Third Sector Interface for South Ayrshire, plays a central role in building the capacity, resilience and sustainability of voluntary and community organisations across the area. Capacity building is a core function of VASA's remit and is offered to organisations of all sizes, from small volunteer led groups to large national and regional charities delivering locally. During the reporting period, VASA provided direct and indirect support to approximately 240 organisations through a combination of events, information sessions, networking opportunities, structured programmes and bespoke one to one support.

This support has included assistance with charity and voluntary group set up, legal status options, governance and trustee development, funding advice, training, employability, social enterprise development, mediation and signposting, enabling organisations to strengthen leadership, improve compliance, increase sustainability and respond effectively to local need. A wide range of information sessions were delivered throughout the year, covering topics such as funding opportunities (including The National Lottery Community Fund and Children in Need), outcome setting and evaluation, EVOLVE paid placements, and the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults. These sessions supported groups to build skills, improve impact measurement and access external funding.

VASA also delivered and promoted a comprehensive programme of training opportunities to strengthen the third sector workforce. Training topics included adult and child protection, financial harm, child sexual exploitation, gender based violence, stigma awareness, professional curiosity, self neglect and hoarding, parental mental health and its impact on children, child mental health, working with families in challenging times,

neurodiversity, first aid, nutrition, suicide prevention, Scottish Mental Health First Aid, leadership development, recruiting with convictions and healthy workplaces for managers. This programme has helped ensure community organisations are well equipped to deliver safe, inclusive and trauma informed services.

As part of its role as a fund administrator, VASA continues to manage the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults, supporting grassroots, community led approaches to improving mental health and wellbeing. VASA has been awarded Years 5 and 6 funding, with £330,786.77 allocated per year, resulting in over £660,000 being invested into South Ayrshire communities between April 2026 and March 2028. Over the lifetime of the programme, VASA will have administered approximately £2 million to the third sector. Funding streams include Chatty Space grants, small grants, and large multi year grants, supporting a wide range of locally designed projects that reduce isolation, strengthen community connections and improve wellbeing. Year 4 funded projects, delivered between April 2025 and March 2026, have already demonstrated the breadth and value of community led responses to mental health and wellbeing needs across South Ayrshire.

Through this integrated approach to capacity building, funding, training and representation, VASA continues to strengthen the third sector's ability to support communities, respond to emerging challenges and contribute meaningfully to local priorities. This work aligns strongly with the CLD Partnership Plan's Community Development priority and its cross cutting focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing, supporting empowered, resilient and sustainable communities across South Ayrshire.



Community Development – Building Capacity and Empowering Communities

Thriving Communities balances empowering groups to operate independently with providing targeted support where needed, ensuring sustainable community-led activity, strong networks, and ongoing engagement in local initiatives.



- Ayr North Time Team – Supported to become self-sufficient from June 2025.
- Wallacetoun Women's Group – Progressing towards self-sufficiency, aiming for independence by 2026.
- Kincaidston Women's Group – Supported to become a constituted group, linking with other groups and staff for guidance; expected to operate independently in 2026.
- Ayr North Exclusively Women's Group – Running independently, requesting support as needed and engaging with campaigns.
- Violence Against Women Joint Action Group (JAG) – Carried out a scoping exercise led by Thriving Communities. This exercise identified groups and support for women with long term wider local networks. This resource supports groups who are not ready to make the steps to become independent.



Thriving Communities has been leading the review and update of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to strengthen local democracy across South Ayrshire.

There are currently 23 active Community Councils across South Ayrshire, representing 218 members.

The revised scheme will provide a stronger framework to support Community Councils role in giving local people a voice in decision making.

The consultation process has been designed to maximise participation and transparency:-

- February 2025 – Report presented to Cabinet to gain approval to start the consultation process.
- March 2025 – Stage 1 Consultation – Online survey launched via [Your Area Your Voice Your Choice](#), with additional opportunities to provide feedback on paper at local libraries.
- May 2025 – Working group established, supported by Thriving Communities to collate consultation responses and draft the revised scheme.
- August 2025 – Draft scheme will be presented to Cabinet, approval sought to begin Stage 2 of the consultation.
- September 2025 – Stage 2 Consultation – Online survey will be launched on Draft Scheme via [Your Area Your Voice Your Choice](#), with opportunities to provide feedback on paper at local libraries. Locality drop-in sessions will also be available and promoted across South Ayrshire.
- December 2025 – Scheme of Establishment to be presented to full Council. The new scheme is due to be launched in April 2026.

Volunteering Strategy South Ayrshire

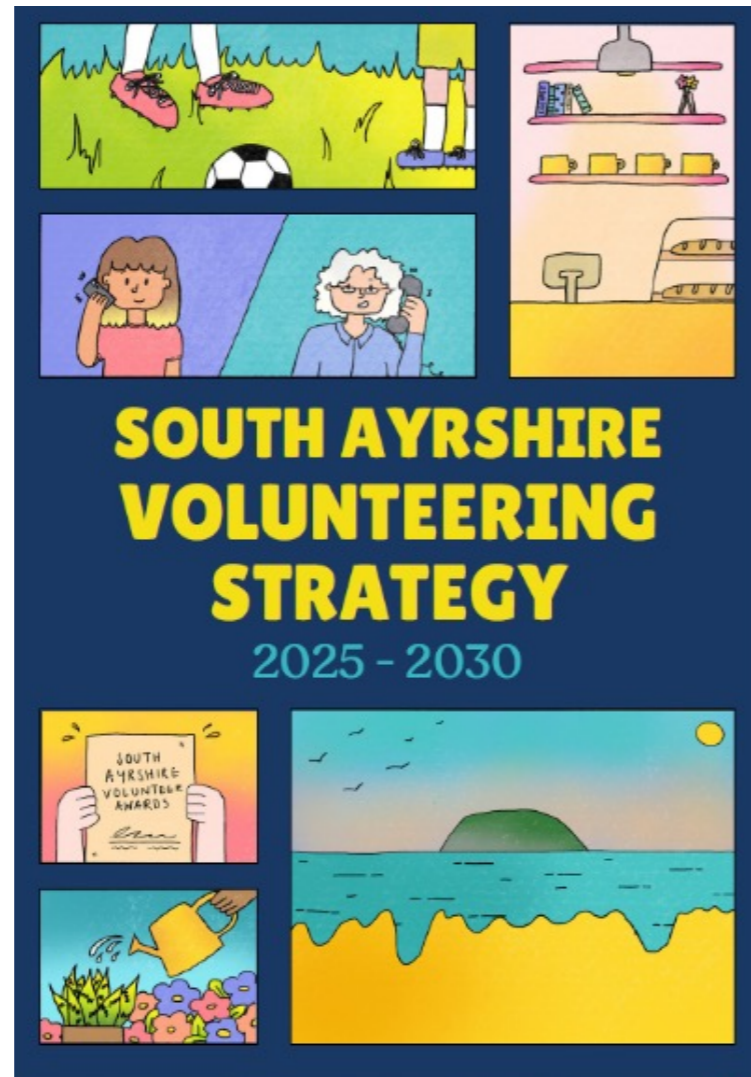
In September 2025, we launched our new Volunteering Strategy 2025 - 2030, published by Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). This strategy reinforces our shared commitment to ensuring that volunteers across South Ayrshire have the best possible experience, and that local organisations are supported through a strong and effective best practice infrastructure.

The strategy reflects our ongoing ambition to strengthen the community planning process, improve outcomes for local people, and reduce inequalities across our communities.

The new Volunteering Strategy sets out clear ambitions for how volunteering will be supported and valued across South Ayrshire. Through the enactment of this strategy, we will seek to ensure:

1. That volunteering is embedded in the work of all CPP partners, recognising that volunteering plays a vital role in supporting strategic priorities and community outcomes.
2. That volunteering is purposeful for everyone involved, ensuring that opportunities are meaningful and mutually beneficial for volunteers and organisations.
3. That volunteering is inclusive and accessible, with barriers identified and addressed by Volunteer Involving Organisations wherever possible.
4. That volunteers are celebrated for their exceptional contribution, recognising the important role they play in supporting individuals and communities throughout South Ayrshire.
5. That Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) are empowered, supported to provide high quality volunteer experiences and strengthened through strong networks and shared learning.

This refreshed approach highlights the CPP's commitment to building a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient volunteering culture that continues to contribute positively to local wellbeing and community capacity.



Over the past year, South Ayrshire has delivered an extensive programme of Ageing Well activity aligned to the launch of the Ageing Well Strategy and Action Plan in September 2024. The launch event at the Gaiety Theatre brought together key partners and community members and featured a community produced performance celebrating positive ageing. Since the launch, a wide range of initiatives has supported older adults to stay active, informed and connected.

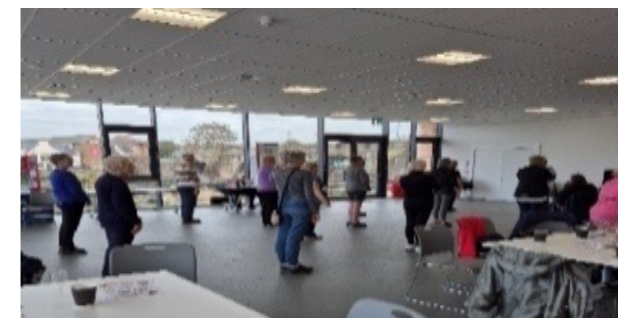
A series of Social Fit events were delivered across Colmonell, Barr, Prestwick, Barrhill and Troon, with over 100 attendees receiving a Function Fitness MOT alongside access to advice on wellbeing, benefits, community activities and independent living. Engagement continued through Age Without Limits 2025, where more than 150 people contributed their views on ageing, helping challenge ageism and celebrate later life experiences. In May, the Big Cheerio event attracted over 60 attendees, offering practical guidance on planning for later life and launching updated resources including the All About Me and My Final Wishes booklets.

South Ayrshire also delivered a programme of events for International Day of Older People (1st – 4th October 2024), including arts and crafts sessions, volunteering information, and the launch of food parcels for older adults returning home from hospital. An intergenerational day at Girvan Academy and an Over 50s afternoon disco further strengthened connections across generations and communities.



In addition, the innovative Take A Seat initiative was launched in Ayr, giving older people greater confidence to move around their community by providing rest points in local businesses, with plans now in place for wider roll out. The annual Ageing Well Review in Troon showcased progress under the first Action Plan and highlighted opportunities in volunteering, self employment and digital inclusion

through Connect South Ayrshire. The Ageing Well Champions Board, now with over 100 registered members, continues to ensure the voices of older adults shape South Ayrshire's ambition to be the best place in Scotland to live and age well.





Workforce Development

Over the reporting period, the CLD workforce continued to strengthen skills, knowledge and professional practice through a wide range of training and development opportunities. Staff engaged in sector relevant learning spanning community development, trauma informed practice, child and adult protection, employability support, ESOL delivery, mental health, welfare benefits and youth work.

Two notable professional qualifications were achieved or progressed during this period. One staff member progressed to the final year of the BA in Community Development and received the UWS Court Medal (2024/25) in recognition of outstanding academic achievement. In addition, one staff member successfully completed the CELTA qualification, supporting the continued development of ESOL delivery capacity across the Partnership.

Alongside formal qualifications, a substantial programme of continuing professional development (CPD) was delivered to ensure staff are well equipped to meet community needs, uphold professional standards and respond to emerging priorities. Key training opportunities included management development, trauma informed practice, child and adult protection, financial wellbeing, welfare systems, neurodiversity, supported employment, first aid and mental health improvement. Specialist training was also delivered to support staff working with individuals with complex needs, including those affected by MAPPA, forced displacement, the justice system or custody.

Partnership led workforce development has also played an important role, with NHS Ayrshire and Arran Public Health contributing to training focused on child poverty, financial inclusion and mental health and wellbeing. This has strengthened shared understanding across services and supported more consistent, informed and preventative responses for individuals, families and communities across South Ayrshire.

TRAINING



Training Delivered (2024-2026)

Training	Details	Date(s)
MBTI Management Training	Delivered by SAC OD for Managers	Jan-Sept 2024 (monthly)
GIRFEC & Children's Rights Awareness	Delivered by Gillian Carroll	1 Oct 2024
Supporting Financial Wellbeing	Delivered by IAAH - overview of Better Off calculations & available supports	Nov 2024
Scottish Welfare Fund & Discretionary Housing Payment Awareness	Delivered by South Ayrshire Council, Revenue and Benefits Team	Nov 2024
CLD South West Development Day	UNCRC, CLD Standards Council, Practice Sharing - Improvement Service, Education Scotland & CLD SW Network	28 Nov 2024
Mental Health Improvement	Delivered by Public Health	4 Feb 2025
Trauma-Informed Practice	SAC Trauma-Informed Practice Team	Various dates
Suicide Prevention Training	Delivered by Papyrus	2 Sept 2024
Stigma Awareness Training	SAC Drug & Alcohol Partnership	26 Nov 2024
Families Outside	Training for staff supporting families affected by a loved one in custody	9 Dec 2024
Adult Support Protection	SAC Practice Development Team	Various dates
Child Support Protection	SAC Protection Development Team	Various dates
Case Study Writing	Delivered by Thriving Communities - Senior Literacies Development Officer	6 Dec 2024
CPI Training	Delivered by Education	Various dates
Managing Anxiety	Delivered by SAMH	7 Mar 2024
Youth Work Training	Aberlour - working with young people with Additional Support Needs	20 May 2025

Refugee Training	Scottish Refugee Council - supporting asylum seekers, forcibly displaced people and refugees	29 July & 28 Aug 2024
Heartstart	Emergency life-saving skills	3 & 9 Sept 2024
Introduction to Neurodiversity	Delivered by NEST	21 Jan 2025
Commercial Sexual Exploitation Training	Delivered by Thriving Communities & Women's Aid	Various dates
Child Poverty & Financial Inclusion Workshop	Developed and delivered by NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health to South Ayrshire Information and Advice Team	2024-2025
Supporting Financial Wellbeing (Workplace)	Delivered by NHS Workplace Health Team with MoneyHelper; focus on income maximisation, budgeting and debt	Nov 2025
Mental Health Improvement - A Practical Approach	Delivered by NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health to staff and community groups, including resettlement services and third sector organisations	Various dates
Stress Awareness	Delivered by NHS Workplace Health Team to individuals completing Community Payback Orders and partner staff	Various dates
Healthy Eating While Out of Work	Delivered by NHS Workplace Health Team to individuals completing Community Payback Orders	Various dates
Staying Healthy While Out of Work	Delivered to Department for Work and Pensions and Skills Development Scotland staff	Various dates
Introduction to Mindfulness	Delivered to partner staff to support wellbeing and resilience	Various dates
Mentally Healthy Workplace (Managers)	Workplace Health Team training to support employer capacity and staff wellbeing	Various dates
Menopause in the Workplace	Delivered by NHS Workplace Health Team	Various dates

Looking Ahead

This mid point review, informed by HGIOCLD self evaluation and partnership evidence, confirms that the CLD Partnership is on track to deliver the priorities set out in the CLD Partnership Plan 2024–2027. The following areas of focus highlight where effort will be concentrated over the remaining period of the Plan.

Adult and Family Learning

- Deliver responsive adult and family learning aligned to identified community need.
- Continue literacies and ESOL provision, supporting skills development and social integration.
- Prioritise SIMD 1–3 communities and increase access to accredited learning, where appropriate.

Financial Inclusion

- Maintain a whole system partnership approach to financial inclusion through early intervention and effective referral pathways.
- Target support towards SIMD 1–3 communities and individuals facing multiple barriers.
- Embed financial inclusion across CLD delivery to support improved resilience and progression.

Youth Work

- Maintain a targeted focus on young people aged 10+, particularly those facing the greatest barriers.
- Strengthen evidence of impact using the YouthLink Scotland Youth Work Skills Framework.
- Ensure access to positive, diversionary activity at targeted evening and weekend times.
- Continue to embed the South Ayrshire Youth Voice Pledge and support learning, achievement and accreditation pathways.

Community Development

- Strengthen community empowerment and participation through engagement, consultation and funding opportunities.
- Support Community Councils through training, digital resources and implementation of the revised Scheme of Establishment (2026).
- Continue to build community capacity, collaboration and sustainability.

Cross Cutting Themes

The cross cutting themes of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Volunteering, Ageing Well, The Promise and Young Carers will continue to be embedded across all CLD activity, informing planning, delivery and partnership working.

Moving Forward

These areas of focus provide a clear and proportionate framework for delivery and improvement through to 2027. The CLD Partnership will continue to use evidence, participation and strong partnership working to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities across South Ayrshire.

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South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Communities and Transformation
Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 19 May 2026**

Subject: Thriving Economy Annual Report 2025/26

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Service and Partnership Performance Panel with an update performance and impact of Thriving Economy during 2025/26

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

- 2.1.1 Approves the contents of the report and notes the activity, performance and outcomes achieved (Appendix 1)**
2.1.2 Approves Officers to publish the Annual Report

3. Background

- 3.1 In April 2025, the Service Lead for Thriving Communities took over the management responsibility for the Economy service, now known as Thriving Economy. This alignment is intended to create opportunities to strengthen economic activity and advance Community Wealth Building (CWB) across South Ayrshire.
- 3.2 Thriving Economy focuses on strengthening the local economy by helping individuals start a business, help businesses grow, create skilled jobs, and shape the wider conditions that allow communities to thrive. It brings together work on business support, skills, investment, infrastructure, and place-making to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- 3.3 The AMBITION Programme, launched in 2013, was created to provide expert advice and support to both new and existing businesses. Over the years, the AMBITION brand has become a recognised and trusted name within the business support network, known for helping both individuals and businesses grow, innovate and succeed.
- 3.4 There are two core strands of the AMBITION Programme:

AMBITION to *Start* – This programme provides the full range of services offered by Business Gateway and provides business start-up support as well as business planning advice, access to workshops and webinars,

business surgeries and grant assistance to those businesses with the ambition and ability to employ an additional member of staff within the first two years of trading.

AMBITION to *Grow* – This programme offers support and access to a dedicated business adviser for business owners and senior management to develop, consolidate and grow their business with support services, access to grant funding and signposting to other partner organisations.

- 3.5 On 28 November 2023 [Cabinet](#) approved a revised AMBITION Programme, including three new strands:

Green AMBITION - to support business transition to new lower cost and greener sources of energy.

Digital AMBITION – to support businesses with the tools and techniques to ensure they are digitally competitive and productive to compete, grow and project their brand to a wider audience.

Productivity AMBITION - to support the manufacturing sector and helps businesses analyse their current processes, identify opportunities for improvement and introduce measures that

- 3.6 During 2025/26 the AMBITION programme was funded through a blend of council core budget and UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF).

- 3.7 Thriving Economy Investment during 2025/26

FUNDING SOURCE	CAPITAL	REVENUE	TOTAL
UKSPF – Ambition	£126,499.61	£169,205.36	£295,704.97
UKSPF – AyrShow Business Support Grant	£39,062.15	£6,262.50	£45,324.65
SAC Core Thriving Economy	£29,770.49	£53,030.39	£82,800.88
Total Spend	£195,332.25	£228,498.25	£423,830.50

- 3.8 During 2026/27 the AMBITION programme will be funded through a blend of UKSPF funding and Local Growth Fund (LGF). Concerns have been raised in relation to the impact of the potential reduction and redirection of LGF funding from revenue to capital locally, regionally and nationally.

The greatest impact of this on Scotland is likely to be felt in the areas of **employability and business development** which were previously funded by EU programmes and have been reliant on revenue funding via UKSPF for staffing and programming.

- 3.9 The UK Government published its Spending Review on 11 June 2025. This provided confirmation that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which concludes in March 2026 (UKSPF now extended until September 2026), would be replaced by a new LGF. The total allocation for Scotland is £140m.

- 3.10 LGF Funding has been allocated at regional level, via Regional Economic Partnerships (REPs), to enable strategic decision-making and maximum

growth impact. Allocations have been allocated across five eligible REPs in proportion to their population.

- 3.11 The total allocation for the Ayrshire REP over the next 3 years is **£11.8m**. UK Government have broken this down into revenue and capital elements as follows:

LGF: Ayrshire allocation, 2026/27 – 2028/29			
Year	RDEL	CDEL	Total
26/27	£1.3m	£3.1m	£4.4m
27/28	£1.3m	£2.9m	£4.2m
28/29	£0.9m	£2.3m	£3.2m
Total	£3.5m	£8.3m	£11.8m

The UK Government has delegated responsibility for budget decision-making to REPs in Scotland, meaning that there is no allocation for individual local authorities.

- 3.12 LGF proposals will be presented to the Ayrshire Economic Joint Board on the 28 May 2026 for consideration.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Members to approve Thriving Economy Annual Report 2025/26
- 4.2 Notes the activity, performance and outcomes achieved
- 4.3 Approves Officers to publish the Annual Report
- 4.4 Members to note proposed changes to funding that support Business Support moving forward

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- 8.2.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals within this report have been assessed through the EQIA scoping process and there are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts in agreeing the proposals, therefore an EQIA is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The above recommendations relate to Priority 1 - Spaces and Place and Priority 2 - Live, Work, Learn

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

Background Papers: [Council 28 November 2023 Ambition Programme](#)

Person to Contact

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Email: heather.anderson@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: 29/4/26

Thriving Economy end of year report

2025-26

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**THRIVING
ECONOMY**

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Making a Difference Every Day

INTRODUCTION

In April 2025, the Service Lead for Thriving Communities took over the management responsibility for the Economy service, now known as Thriving Economy. This alignment is intended to create opportunities to strengthen economic activity and advance Community Wealth Building (CWB) across South Ayrshire.

Thriving Economy focuses on strengthening the local economy by helping individuals start a business, help businesses grow, create skilled jobs, and shape the wider conditions that allow communities to thrive. It brings together work on business support, skills, investment, infrastructure, and place-making to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable economy.

By understanding local strengths and challenges, Thriving Economy attracts new opportunities, supports talent retention, revitalises town centres, and ensures that growth benefits both residents and employers.



Strengthening the local economy, helping businesses grow and creating skilled jobs.

BACKGROUND



The AMBITION Programme, launched in 2013, was created to provide expert advice and support to both new and existing businesses. Over the years, the AMBITION brand has become a recognised and trusted name within the business support network, known for helping both individuals and businesses grow, innovate and succeed.

The two core strands of the AMBITION Programme are:

AMBITION TO START

This programme offers all the services of Business Gateway and provides business start-up support as well as business planning advice, access to workshops and webinars, business surgeries and grant assistance to those businesses with the ambition and ability to employ an additional member of staff within the first two years of trading.

AMBITION TO GROW

This programme offers support and access to a dedicated business adviser for business owners and senior management to develop, consolidate and grow their business with support services, access to grant funding and signposting to other partner organisations.

On 28 November 2023 Cabinet approved a revised AMBITION Programme, including three new strands:

AMBITION GREEN

to support business transition to new lower cost and greener sources of energy.

AMBITION DIGITAL

to support businesses with the tools and techniques to ensure they are digitally competitive and productive to compete, grow and project their brand to a wider audience.

AMBITION PRODUCTIVITY

to support the manufacturing sector and helps businesses analyse their current processes, identify opportunities for improvement and introduce measures that increase operational efficiency, through process improvements, data capture and intelligence and investments in new energy efficient manufacturing technologies.



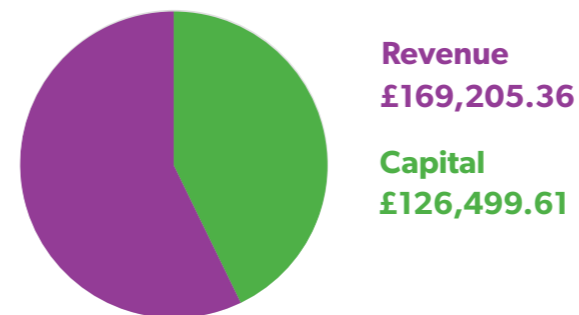
BREAKDOWN OF AMBITION GRANTS DURING 25/26

Type of Grant	Total Grants
AMBITION to Start	28
AMBITION to Grow	24
AMBITION Green	4
AMBITION Digital	7
AMBITION Productivity	1
Total grants delivered	64

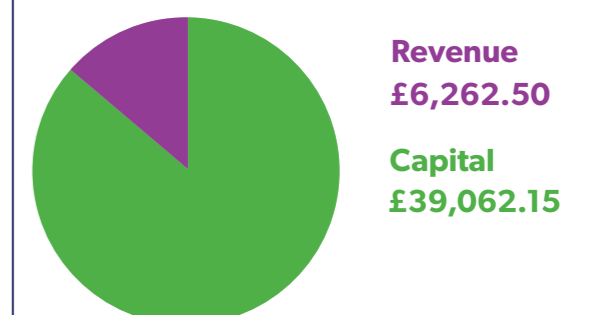
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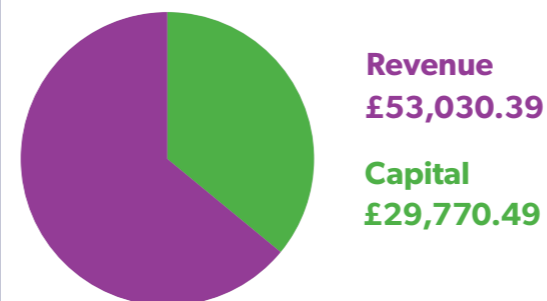
2025/2026 UKSPF Ambition funding



2025/2026 Airshow Business Support Grant



2025/2026 Core Funding





AMBITION TO START

The **AMBITION to Start Programme** offers comprehensive, end-to-end support to help turn ideas into viable enterprises.

The programme is designed for any individual looking to launch a new venture within South Ayrshire. The programme, in conjunction with the national Business Gateway support offers free advice and support including business planning, workshops, and online resources to help entrepreneurs navigate the local business landscape.

A start-up grant of £1,000 is also available to support start-up costs, helping businesses to develop and become competitive and sustainable. This aligns with South Ayrshire's place-based approach to Community Wealth Building, which focuses on strengthening the local economy, retaining wealth within South Ayrshire, and encouraging



CASE STUDIES

O&K FORESTRY

is a newly established business providing a range of support services to the forestry sector, including tree planting for woodland creation, carbon-capture projects, tree maintenance, plant protection, and wider forestry solutions. In addition to the start-up support, the client also received assistance through the expert help programme for both business planning and procurement. This included developing a robust business plan and financial forecasting, enabling the business to seek external funding for essential equipment.

In addition, Procurement specialists provided tailored support to develop a robust quality and procurement strategy, strengthening the business's ability to tender competitively for new contracts.

As a result of support, the client has since secured a lucrative **£70k contract** with Euro Forest. The business received a start-up grant of **£1000**.

FOLIA

attended one of Thriving Economy's drop-in sessions looking for guidance on opening a coffee, plant and flower shop based in Newmarket Street, Ayr. The business is now successfully trading and offers a relaxing environment for coffee and food during the day with bespoke workshops and events running in the evening. Thriving Economy provided the business with business start-up advice and an AMBITION to Start-up Grant of **£1000**.

THE DENTAL CLINIC AYR AND THE SKIN CLINIC AYR

is a unique, integrated clinic operating from 13 Miller Road, Ayr, combining NHS and private dental services, medical aesthetics, and, in time, a dedicated training academy all under one roof. This new venture helps address a significant gap in NHS dental provision in South Ayrshire while providing a welcoming, high-end, patient-centred environment. The business employs nine full-time staff and has invested over £600k into establishing the clinic. The business received a Start-up grant of **£1000**.



ACE SUPPORTING SERVICES

is a mother-and-daughter-run organisation supporting young adults with ASN. They first engaged with Business Gateway 18 months ago and received a Start-Up Grant through Thriving Economy in June 2025. Since then, they have received specialist support to develop their website and financial guidance to establish a social enterprise arm-both of which are now successfully in place.

In response to significant gaps in local provision, they have secured a long-term lease for Bute Hall in Prestwick and carried out the necessary upgrades to create a dedicated community space for young adults with ASN. Their motivation stems from their own lived experience as service users, where themselves, alongside many families felt existing support was inadequate.

They now employ 9 staff, support 28 service users, and have ambitious plans to further improve outcomes for families. There is potential for continued development, with clear opportunities for collaboration across council departments and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

To date, they have received **£4,475** of support, which included the AMBITION to Start grant. This investment has enabled them to grow quickly.

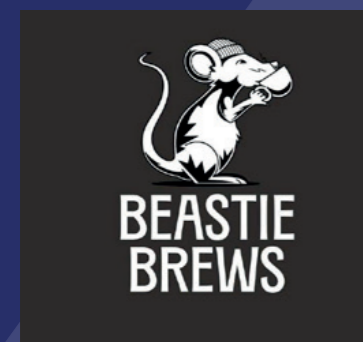
KIDS IN CYBER

is a digital learning platform providing a structured computing and online-safety curriculum for children aged 5–12. Its story-based lessons introduce networks, data, AI, and online risk through story-based lessons that develops over multiple years.

Thriving Economy has supported the founders for the past two years with business planning and concept development, followed by a start-up grant and digital expertise in August 2025, which enabled them to develop the platform and publish their book Riley's First Console.

They are now building a strong sales pipeline and have already attracted interest from schools in New York, Guernsey, and across Europe, demonstrating significant potential to scale up despite still being in the early stages.

To date, they have received **£3,300** of support which included £1000 AMBITION to Start Grant.



BEASTIE BREWS

is a high growth start-up coffee shop based in Ayr, employing six full time staff within its first eight months of trading. The business received a start-up grant of **£1000**.

AMBITION TO GROW



The **AMBITION to grow programme** works with local existing businesses to encourage job creation across South Ayrshire. It's designed to support established businesses looking to grow.

AMBITION is tailored to support businesses at every stage - whether it's shaping an initial idea, establishing early operations, or driving a growth project to boost competitiveness, productivity, or sustainability.

CASE STUDIES

KITTY CAT CAFE

was supported via AMBITION to Grow programme. This business is an experience based venue offering coffee, cake, and the opportunity to interact with its resident cats, located just outside Ayr town centre. After a strong first year with healthy turnover, the business sought support to ensure long term sustainability. The owners aimed to enhance the premises by introducing energy efficient upgrades that would reduce ongoing costs and strengthen the café's environmental impact.

Thriving Economy provided Expert Help in both Energy Efficiency and Digital & Social Media.

A grant of **£2,600** was provided to boost the café's marketing activity.



THE KIRKMICHAEL ARMS

was supported through our AMBITION to Grow programme. South Ayrshire Council has supported the business since its start-up phase and has now assisted with two further projects:

A search engine optimisation (SEO) campaign to strengthen branding and marketing. Have a strong SEO campaign allows for the business to be highly visible online; generate revenue streams; capture data and having the ability to use that data to influence marketing plans.

The creation of a Private Dining Experience, offering clients exclusive use of the restaurant. This strategic investment has contributed to the restaurant securing its second listing in the Michelin Guide (currently the only listed venue between Glasgow and Dumfries) and supports its ambition to achieve a Michelin star by 2027

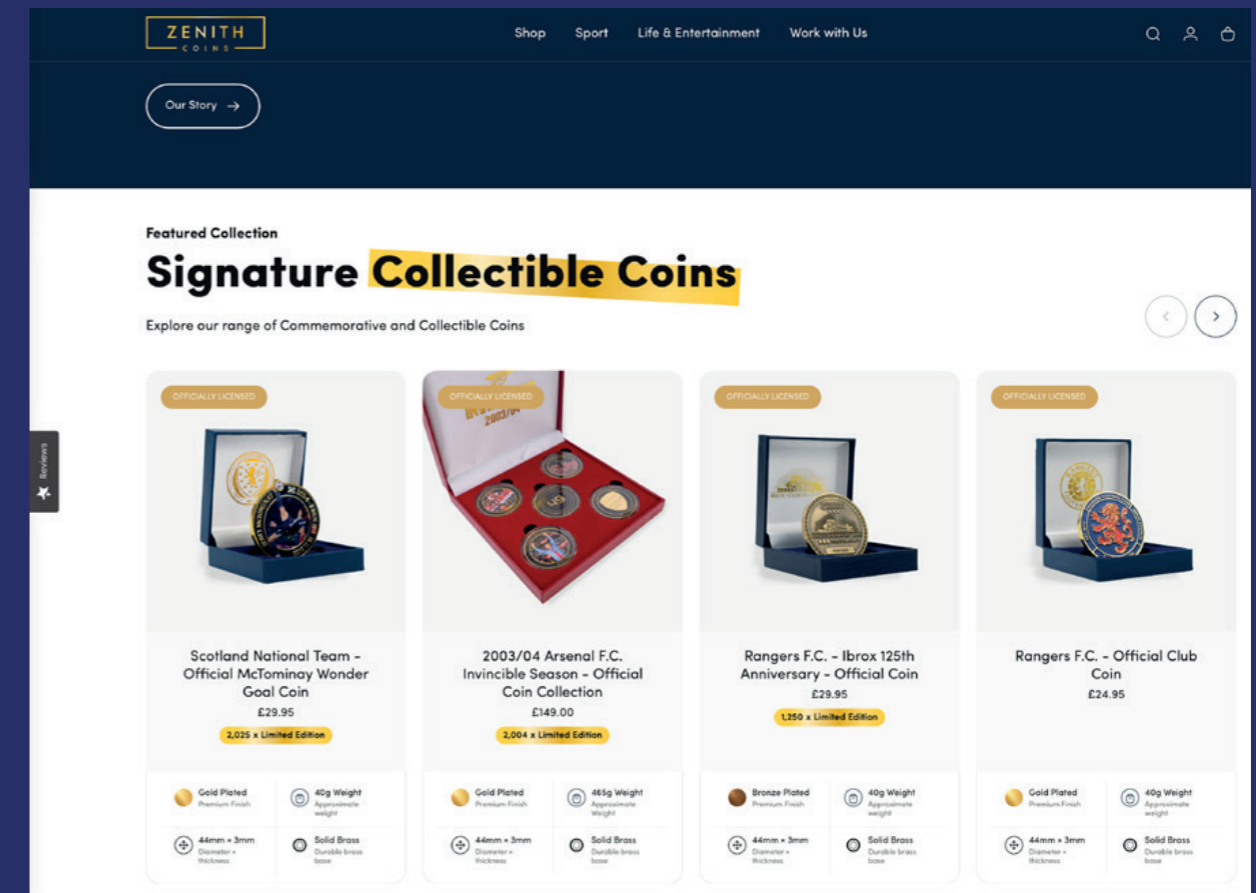
A grant of **£18,500** was provided for these projects.

ZENITH COINS

was supported via AMBITION to Grow to support the development of its new website. The business designs and supplies collectible and commemorative coins for the sports and commercial sectors, and over the past year has expanded its portfolio to include the education and lifestyle markets. The business has secured licensing agreements with several major football clubs, including Celtic and Arsenal, strengthening its position within the sports collectibles market. It has also recently secured a contract with Coronation Street to produce a range of commemorative coins, further expanding its commercial partnerships.

Thriving Economy offered Expert Help support in Business Planning & Strategy as well as Productivity, helping the company refine its growth direction and operational efficiency.

A grant of **£2,232** was provided for this project.



AMBITION GREEN

JIM MAIR DRIVER TRAINING

were supported via our AMBITION Green programme. Originally based in East Ayrshire, the business re-located to South Ayrshire in 2019 with major investment to their current head office at Whitfield Drive, Ayr. Seeking to reduce energy consumption and operating costs, the business secured planning consent to install solar panels to assist with energy efficiencies. With funding support from Thriving Economy, the installation is expected to reduce the business's **annual energy costs savings of around 77%**.

A grant of **£12,000** was provided towards this project.



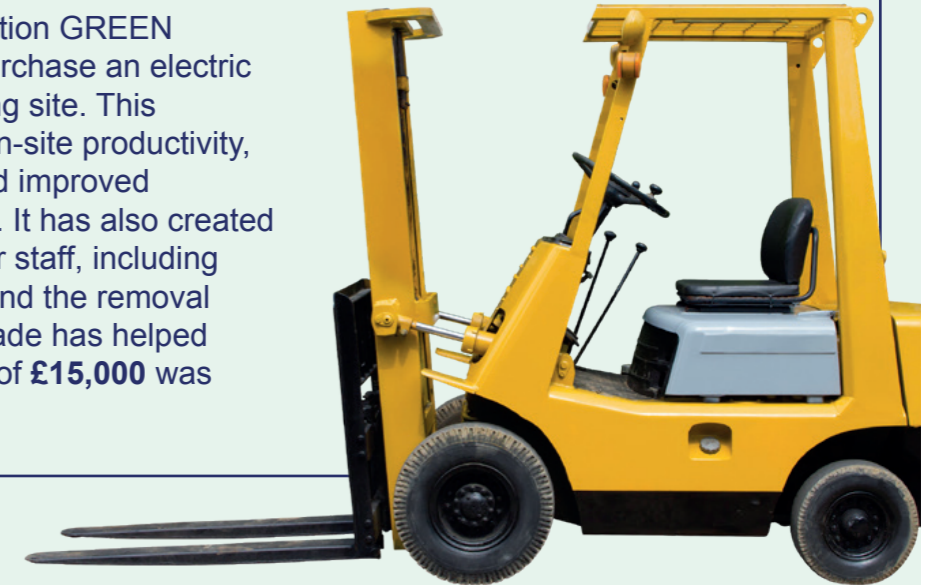
THE COO SHED/CORTON PLANTS

have been supported via our AMBITION Green programme. Sustainability sits at the heart of their business, from carbon reducing farming practices to a solar panel system that already generates a portion of their energy needs. Through AMBITION Green we have provided support to help them purchase and integrate a battery storage system. The investment will enable The Coo Shed to reduce energy costs and further strengthen their long-term sustainable.

A grant of **£14,429** was provided for this project.

AILS A WOOD PRODUCTS, OLD DAILLY

was supported via our Ambition GREEN programme to support to purchase an electric forklift for their manufacturing site. This investment has increased on-site productivity, reduced operating costs and improved environmental performance. It has also created better working conditions for staff, including cleaner air, reduced noise and the removal of harmful fumes. The upgrade has helped safeguard **20 jobs**. A grant of **£15,000** was provided for this project.



MAGICAL BOLTHOLES

was supported via AMBITION Green programme. This business offers luxury self-catering accommodation perched on The Carrick Hills just outside of Ayr. The business is expanding by constructing four eco cabins designed to provide sustainable, low impact accommodation while preserving the surrounding natural environment. The development prioritises environmentally responsible infrastructure, incorporating ecologically sound and predominantly passive treatment systems to minimise energy use and operational impact.

Thriving Economy worked with the business providing support in developing a Social Media Strategy to strengthen its digital presence. Thriving Economy also awarded a Green AMBITION grant to contribute towards the supply and delivery of a sewerage treatment plan, supporting the businesses commitment to sustainable growth.

A grant of **£5,288** was provided for this project.



AMBITION DIGITAL

ABCD 4D LTD

was supported via the Digital AMBITION Programme. ABCD 4D is an independent private baby scan clinic registered with Healthcare Improvement Scotland. In addition to ultrasound scans, the business offers fertility testing and non-invasive prenatal screening.

The business wished to invest in its website and booking system to attract more customers and make the booking process more transparent and user-friendly.

A grant of **£3,354** was provided to support this digital project.



AMBITION PRODUCTIVITY

POLLOK WILLIAMSON BUTCHERS

were supported via our AMBITION to Grow and AMBITION Productivity programmes, enabling the business to invest in new energy-efficient, productivity-enhancing equipment.

The business had previously been unable to supply raw meats to small convenience stores due to being unable to offer the standard of vacuum packaging required to ensure an extended shelf life. Funding awarded through the programme has enabled the purchase of a new Flat Sealing Machine, which will significantly improve productivity and allow the business to supply a wider range of longer-life products to SPAR stores across Scotland.

A grant of **£25,000** was provided to support this investment.

EXPERT HELP

Expert Help gives individuals access to specialist consultants with the skills and experience needed to support their business ambitions, offering tailored guidance that can strengthen ideas, improve decision-making, and drive progress. Consultants provide the practical insight required to navigate challenges and identify new opportunities. By providing focused, one-to-one support, Expert Help enables individuals and businesses at any stage of their journey to access the expertise required to move forward with confidence.

EXPERT HELP CASE STUDIES

PUNJAB PAKORA

received support through the Expert Help programme to strengthen their marketing. As they prepared to introduce new products, the business were looking to refresh their branding and develop a more effective marketing strategy, working closely with a specialist consultant to deliver a full re-brand. As a result of this work, they have secured new contracts with ALDI, Morrisons, and Booker stores across Scotland, equating to circa £1.5m.

LAND ENERGY GIRVAN

received support through the Expert Help Programme for Procurement support.

Land Energy Girvan Ltd manufactures wood pellets and briquettes using sustainably sourced timber for biomass heating and power generation. The company operates from Girvan, South Ayrshire, and employs more than 80 staff skilled staff, including operatives, engineers, and professional staff. Established in 2006, it works with several local businesses such as Grants and Ailsa Wood to maintain a local supply chain. Land Energy Girvan contributes to renewable energy production in the UK through the supply of low-carbon biomass fuels.

Land Energy were looking for support to improve its procurement strategy by reviewing current processes and the types of bids it undertakes. The team required upskilling, with the business intending to appoint a Purchasing Manager. Five days (35hrs) of free Procurement Expert Help support was provided to the business.



BUSINESS SECTOR INITIATIVES

The Thriving Economy team have also led on a number of sector specific initiatives throughout 2025/25.

THE DIGITAL DAIRY CHAIN

is a UK Research & Innovation funded project, with a £21 million budget aimed at transforming the dairy sector and strengthening the rural economy through grant funding and sustainable innovations. Thriving Economy have referred 12 South Ayrshire based businesses for new product development support and funding. Among them, Corton Plants Ltd who are progressing an innovation funding application and Pierino Foods Ltd who are bidding for external funding from national government.

NET ZERO ACCELERATOR

Six South Ayrshire businesses were funded to participate in the twelve month Net Zero Accelerator programme, with four having successfully completed it to date. The programme has already generated meaningful outcomes, including:



BLACKTHORN / PEACOCK SALT

- Established a ten person carbon team to lead on net zero and sustainability initiatives.
- Developed a ten project strategic plan focused on capital investment to improve sustainability and reduce operational costs.
- Projected to save 183.44 tonnes of carbon between 2024 and 2026.



GLENAMMER SIEVES

- Engaging proactively with their supply chain to explore and implement carbon reduction methods.
- Encouraging staff to adopt more carbon aware practices, both in workplace processes and in commuting.



POLLOK WILLIAMSON

- Investment made into modern equipment to improve sustainability and reduce cost. Pollok Williamson received an Ambition To Grow grant to support this investment.

GROW AYRSHIRE

is a regional food and drink business support programme jointly funded by North, South and East Ayrshire Council. Fifteen businesses joined the programme at launch, with eight completing the programme and pitching their products to retailers. More than ten external support organisations have contributed specialist expertise throughout.

The initiative has delivered strong results, including:

- One business securing multiple national contracts, including a six figure agreement.
- One business investing a six figure sum to upgrade its facility and scale production.
- One business securing £100,000 in funding from Scotland EDGE, positioning it for rapid growth.



AYRSHOW GRANTS

was a dedicated grant programme created to support South Ayrshire based businesses participating in Ayr Show 2025. The programme was designed to help businesses prepare for and manage the increased demand generated by the event. Key outcomes include:

- One business received support to purchase new machinery for its food trailer, enabling a highly successful weekend at the Ayr Show and resulting in more than fifty enquiries for future events.
- Two businesses that collaborated during the Ayr Show continued working together afterwards, using grant funding to develop a new product range and host an event that generated over £10,000 for local South Ayrshire traders and charities.
- One business was approached by a wholesaler at the Ayr Show and invited to supply their products, opening up a new commercial opportunity.

OTHER KEY HIGHLIGHTS



AMBITION

drop in sessions, delivered in partnership with Thriving Communities who provided advice on their Employer Recruitment Incentive and SALUS, the Ayrshire Growth Deal's Occupational Health Service for local businesses, took place across Ayr, Girvan and Troon.

Three separate sessions were held in each town between August and October 2025. As a result of these sessions, two new start ups received support through the AMBITION Start up Grant, while several other attendees were referred to services such as Business Gateway surgeries for assistance with business planning, marketing and wider business development needs.



BUSINESS ENQUIRIES

The Thriving Economy Team supported a total of 609 enquiries from individuals and businesses seeking advice and guidance on business support. These enquiries were generated through a wide range of channels, including Business Gateway National, the AMBITION website, the Council website, Customer Services, partner referrals, and general direct enquiries.

BUSINESS EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Since April 2025, Thriving Economy/Business Gateway (BG) delivered the following:

Event	No of Events	No of Attendees
BG Ayrshire Workshops	19	70
BG Ayrshire Webinars	63	462

In addition to delivering local workshops and webinars, a total of 584 individuals with a South Ayrshire postcode attended a National Business Gateway workshop or webinar.



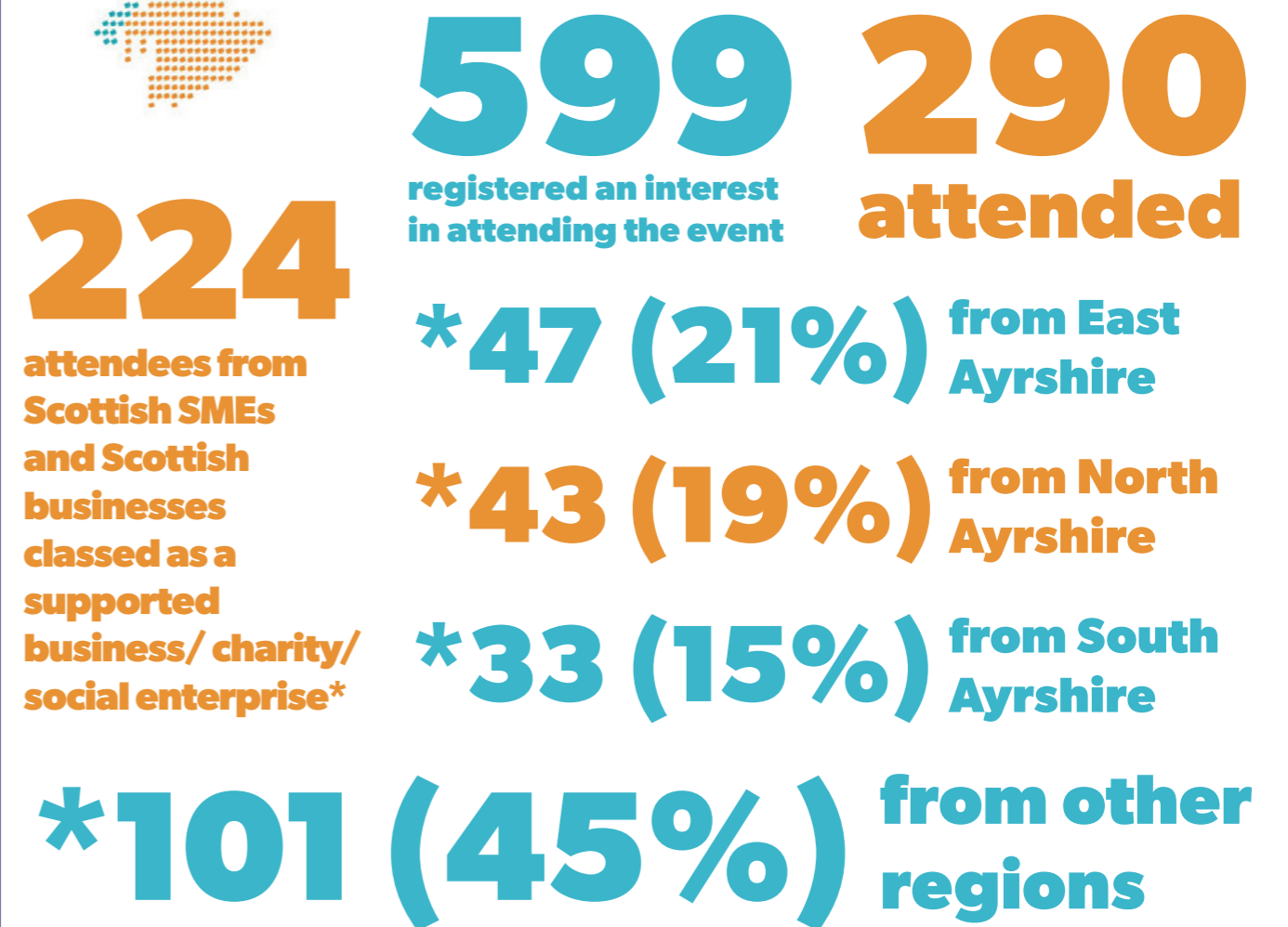
AYRSHIRE BUSINESS WEEK 2025

In October. The event, held at the Park Hotel, attracted over 1,200 attendees from local businesses, entrepreneurs and key decision makers. Ayrshire Business Week featured a programme of keynote speakers, networking opportunities, workshops and exhibitions, all designed to inspire, connect and educate the local business community.



AYRSHIRE MEET THE BUYER

In November 2025, the Thriving Economy Team exhibited alongside colleagues from Procurement at the Ayrshire Meet the Buyer event, held at the Park Hotel, Kilmarnock. The breakdown of attendance is outlined below.





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Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Deas
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