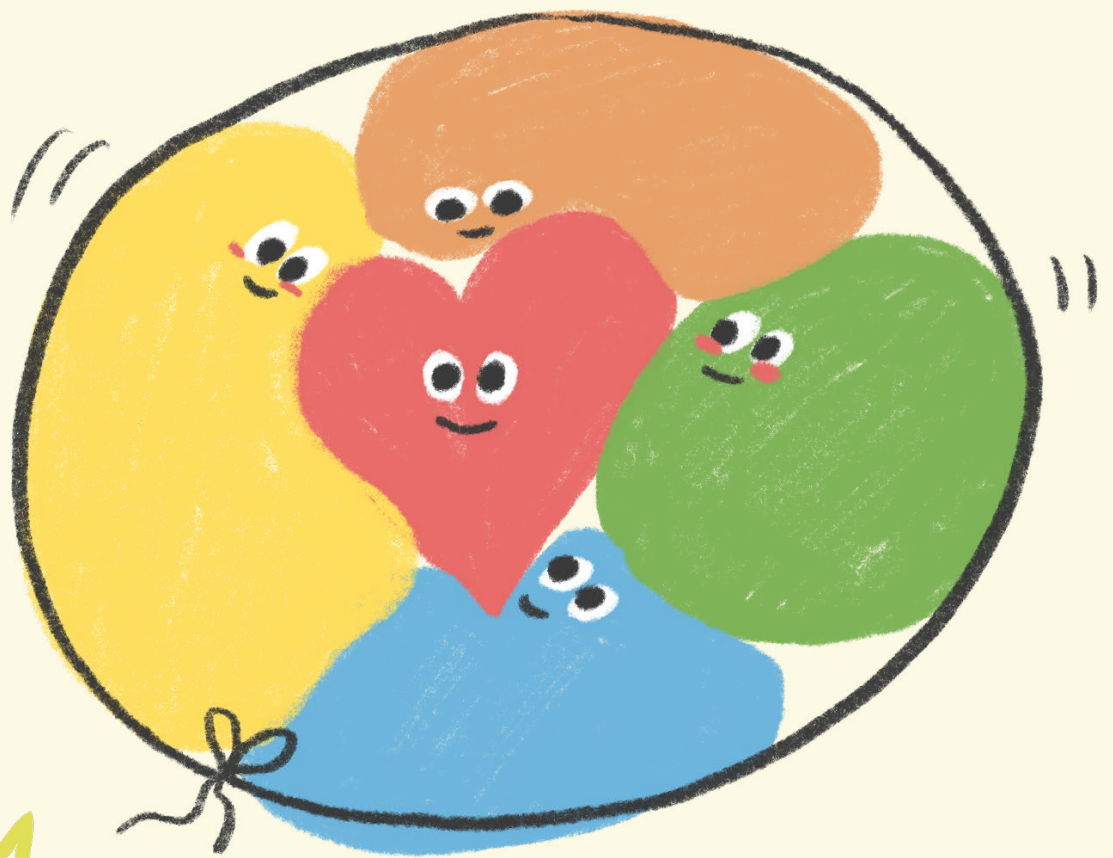


# South Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan

Supporting wellbeing, strong families,  
caring communities

2023-2026



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# Foreword

Welcome to South Ayrshire's Children and Young People's Services Plan for 2023-2026. It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I introduce this plan which sets out our shared vision, priorities and aims for the wellbeing of our children, young people and families in South Ayrshire over the next three years.

This ambitious 2023-2026 plan marks our third consecutive effort to ensure that South Ayrshire is the best place in Scotland for children to grow up. Our journey since the last plan has been one of progress and reflection, more recently engaging in a valuable learning partnership of self-evaluation alongside Horizon's Research. This opportunity to appraise service delivery and consider how the Children's Services Planning Partnership can best improve integrated services and impact Whole Family Wellbeing has been invaluable to the production of this plan's shared priorities. Through consultation with children, young people and partners the priorities and aims within this plan build on the progress of previous plans, celebrating achievements and identifying areas for continued collaborative improvement.

Families have told us they want to be able to access help that is right for them, at the right time. Through collective responsibility, joint action and a deep commitment to our community I am confident we will succeed in achieving this goal in South Ayrshire. Central to this are our six interconnected priorities: The Promise, Families, Included, Voice, Healthy and People. Each priority underlines our commitment to delivering integrated, effective, and caring services in our communities.

I am certain this plan's aims and our caring, compassionate cross-sector workforce in South Ayrshire can continue to make a real difference to the lives of children and young people locally. It is with our children, young people and families potential at heart we embrace the challenges and great opportunities that lie ahead of us.



**Mike Newall**  
*Chief Executive, South Ayrshire Council*

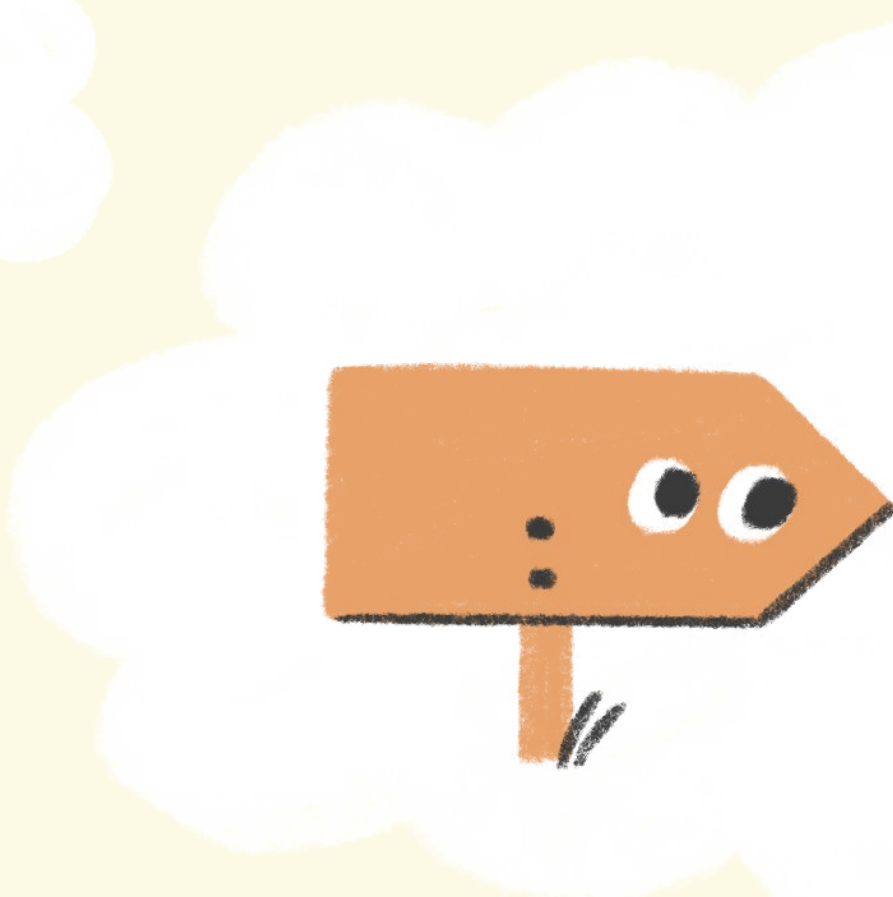
# South Ayrshire's Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026

Our third Children and Young People's Services Plan for South Ayrshire shares our joined vision, priorities and outcomes across the Community Planning Partnership. Community planning partners are national and local public sector bodies who deliver services to families in South Ayrshire together with the wide-reaching Third Sector. All partners in South Ayrshire contribute greatly to the delivery and collaborative aims of this plan.

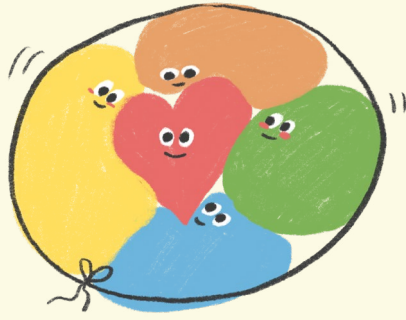
Our approach reflects a shared commitment to Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) at the highest level, supporting the continued provision of high quality services for the

whole family that mitigate against the ongoing impact of poverty and inequality in our communities. Each priority area within the Plan will be accompanied by a GIRFEC Action Plan specific to that priority to ensure equity for all.





This plan is informed by our most important partners, South Ayrshire's children and young people themselves. It builds on the progress of our previous plans, led by the foundations of The Promise and refreshed principles that underpin Getting it Right For Every Child to create a local environment that embraces GIRFEC practice for each individual child, young person and family.







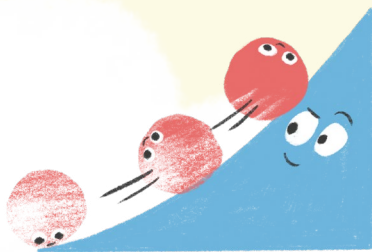
## At our heart

-  Whole families
-  Young carers, Children and young people with care experience
-  Physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people
-  A trauma sensitive workforce



## Our commitment

To provide you and your family with the right support, at the right time. Creating locally placed services with your wellbeing at heart, where you will be treated with kindness and respect. We will work together to make South Ayrshire the best place in Scotland to grow up.



## Our Focus

South Ayrshire's Plan will make a significant contribution to improving wellbeing and outcomes for our children, young people and families.



## Our Priorities

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  The Promise |  Voice   |
|  Families    |  Healthy |
|  Included    |  People  |



# Underpinning our plan



Early and **preventative** support to improve wellbeing of children and young people.



Whole family supports focusing on **family strengths**.



Meaningfully **listening** to children and promoting their participation.



The **importance** of relational, trauma sensitive practice and local services.

## What are we trying to achieve?

### Our Journey



We want to go on a journey to ensure **families in South Ayrshire are at the heart of everything we do**, and where their wellbeing is our top priority.

With a focus on **prevention and early intervention** we will work to empower families living in South Ayrshire. We will work with families in a way that values the unique needs and perspectives of each family member.

We will ensure those working in our services have **access to the resources, training, and the support they need** to achieve our shared goal, and where they can overcome any challenges that come their way.

We will help build strong and **resilient communities** where families are supported to thrive, and where every member is **valued and included**. This is our whole family approach.

# What will guide our journey?

## 1. The Promise

Our pledge that South Ayrshire's children and young people with care experience will have a good loving childhood, where their needs are met and outcomes are improved. Their voice will continue to drive our commitment to Keep The Promise.



## 2. Families

Our commitment to families in South Ayrshire that support is easily accessible through integrated, multi-agency teams who are based in their local community and know it well. We are committed to helping whole families overcome difficulties to stay together, where children feel loved and are safe.



## 3. Included

Our recognition that we can do more for our children, young people and families who have diagnosed or undiagnosed additional support needs to help them reach their full potential.



## 4. Voice

Our understanding that we must listen to children and meaningfully involve them in decision-making around their wellbeing. South Ayrshire will embrace a culture where compassionate, responsive decision-making for children is embedded into everything we do.



## 5. Healthy

Our dedication to reducing harm, promoting health and keeping our children, young people and families in South Ayrshire safe.



## 6. People

Our training offer to staff in South Ayrshire, allowing them to come together to learn, collaborate and build relationships for the best outcome of the child. The adults with whom children and young people build trusting relationships must be supported in their role to show compassion and care.



# Finding firm ground



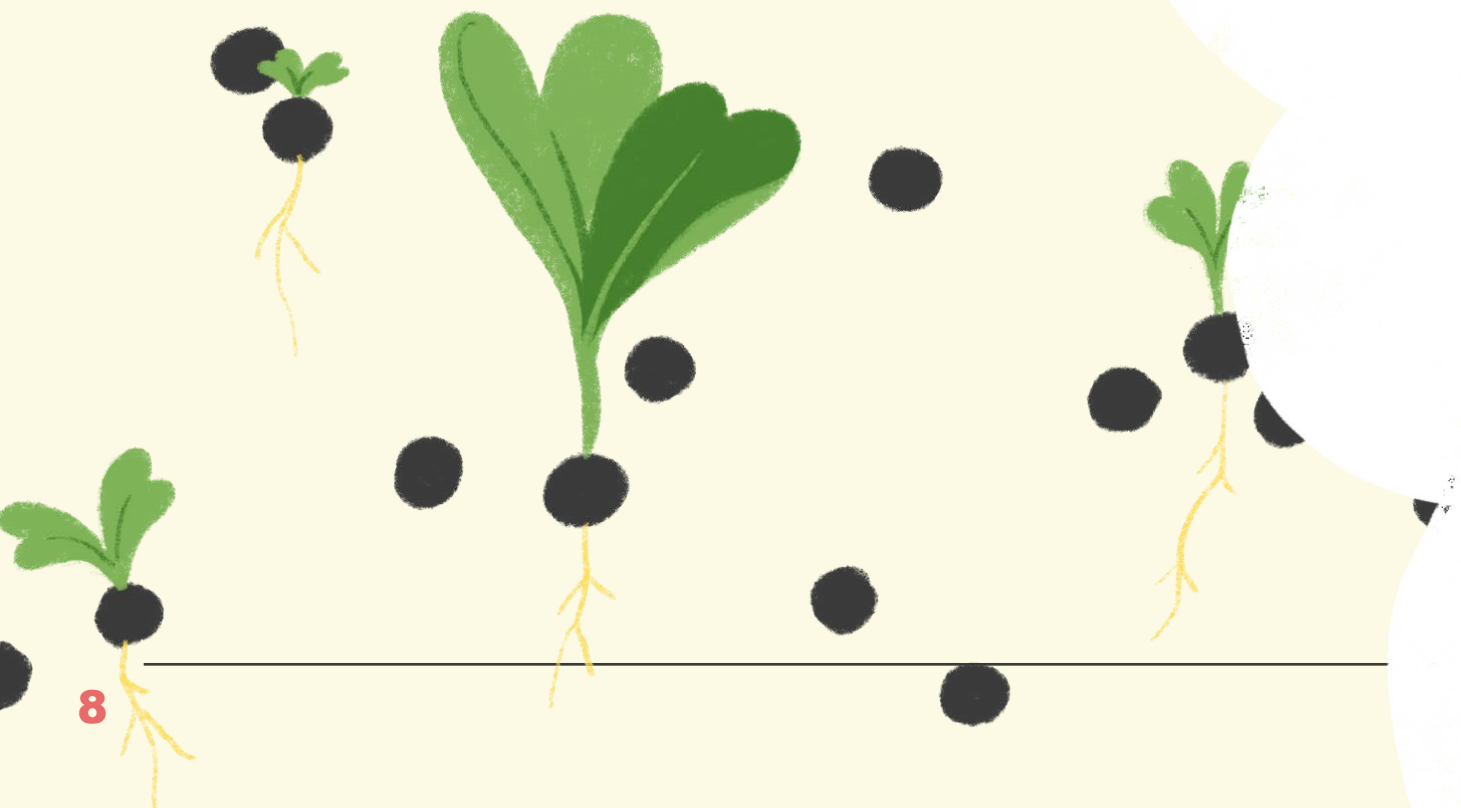
Moving our resources “**upstream**” to reinforce a prevention approach, as we shift from managing crisis to supporting whole families at the earliest point they indicate extra help is needed.



**Integrating services** further in South Ayrshire by supporting our practitioners to work together in “**Family First**” locality teams, allowing opportunity for connection and reflection to positively impact outcomes for whole families.



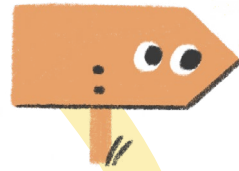
Holding **children and young people’s voice** at the heart of services by undertaking a rights-based approach to planning for maximum impact.



# How will we know if we are going in the right direction?



Fewer children and young people will leave their families where it is safe to stay at home and they feel loved  
**(The Promise)**



Each individual family member will be supported to access the right support, at the right time and place for them to meet their needs  
**(Family)**



Health inequalities will reduce, children and young people will achieve positive outcomes in wellbeing, emotional and physical health  
**(Included/Healthy)**



Communities will tell us the kind of care they want and need to avoid crisis, and will feel heard  
**(Voice)**



Each individual family member will be supported to access the right support, at the right time and place for them to meet their needs  
**(Family)**





# The wider landscape for our journey

## The National Context

There are many national and local strategies, plans, frameworks and legislation that associate, inform and align with the Children and Young People's Services Plan. As integrated, collaborative services we work collectively across sectors to achieve the best outcomes for our children, young people and their families.



### The Promise

In South Ayrshire we are fully committed to Keeping The Promise and are currently delivering on The Promise Plan 21-24, whilst recognising that Plan 25-27 will come into force during the period of this Children and Young People's Service Plan. This Children and Young People's Services Plan has been shaped by the 5 foundations of The Promise; Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding.

South Ayrshire will do absolutely everything it can to make sure that the recommendations are fully implemented. We are reviewing how we position and provide services in South Ayrshire to ensure that families feel supported at the earliest possible point.

→ [Explore The Promise](#)

### Whole Family Support

Children's Services in South Ayrshire recognise that families come in all shapes and sizes. We are committed to walking alongside families where and when they need us, focusing on strengths to keep families together. We know our Third Sector partners play a particularly significant role in this commitment and reach children, young people and families across communities in South Ayrshire. By keeping families at the heart of everything we do and meeting individual needs we'll help them to avoid crisis.

In recent times, there have been several significant developments at National level aiming to enhance the overall wellbeing of families across Scotland. One of the most notable initiatives is the £500 million investment in Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, which is set to be implemented by 2026. This funding is intended to support a range of programs and services aimed at promoting the overall health and wellness of families, including physical and mental health, education, and employment opportunities. To help us get it right for families, South Ayrshire Council Children's Services Planning Partnership and Horizons Research have undertaken a learning partnership to support the development of service design and delivery.

→ [Explore Whole Family Support](#)



## Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC is the Scottish Government's policy framework which overarches everything that services for children and young people do. GIRFEC guidance was refreshed in 2022 and is founded on principles of early intervention that is appropriate and proportionate to promote wellbeing. GIRFEC supports us to work in partnership with families and assists services in South Ayrshire to act quickly when families need extra help. We know that the success of our Plan will be influenced by the effective use of the GIRFEC approach across all of our children and young people's services in South Ayrshire.

→ [Explore Getting it Right for Every Child](#)

## Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

This Act is an important piece of legislation that aims to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. It influences how our services in South Ayrshire work together to improve the lives of our children, young people and families. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out a requirement for all Local Authorities and Health Boards in Scotland to work collaboratively to develop a local Children Services Plan to be reviewed every three years.

Children and young people are at the very heart of this Act, where services are encouraged towards a collaborative shift to early intervention and prevention offers of support, rather than crisis response.

→ [Explore CELCIS](#)

## Children's Rights (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the global "gold standard" benchmark for children's rights and sets out the fundamental rights of all children. A rights respecting approach is embedded throughout this plan and in how we design services. Children's voices, rights and needs will be at the heart of decisions as they know what is best for them.

→ [Explore Children's Rights at the Scottish Government](#)

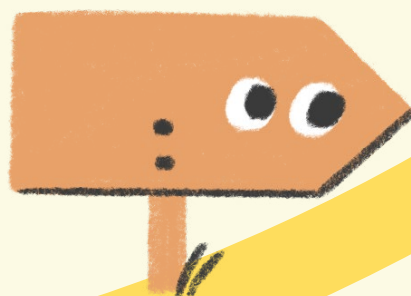
## Impact of trauma

We understand that children and young people affected by trauma and their families need to know what services are available at different points in their recovery journey. Supporters of individuals affected by trauma should have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the whole family. In South Ayrshire we will ensure that our staff are trained to be trauma informed and responsive, in line with our GIRFEC approach.

→ [Explore the Scottish Government's Trauma Training Plan](#)



# Our steps along the journey and who will guide them?



## Children's Services Planning Partnership



We recognise our third sector partners as key early intervention/ prevention services and early intervention funding and investment supports this



We will support existing services, third sector and statutory, that can evidence effective working with families offering early years support

## Joint Improvement Group



We will challenge all members of the CSPP to share the story and be the stewards of the vision of the Children and Young People's Services Plan



We will ask all statutory bodies to assess their strategic plans against the vision of the Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026 and report back to the CSPP



We will conduct robust self-evaluation

## Healthy Priority



We will provide effective early support that will lead to improved mental health and reduced anxiety for infants, children, young people and parents



We will promote improvements in diet and increased physical activity which will increase percentage of children and young people recorded as a healthy weight



We will support young people to make informed choices around sexual health by increasing awareness, training and uptake of sexual health screening



We will promote positive choices to reduce smoking and vaping locally for children, young people and expectant mums



We will ensure families have support in their own right, to manage and recover from the harms caused by alcohol and drug use through development of a whole family team. Recognising the critical role families can play in supporting and sustaining recovery, we'll ensure families are better included in support and services for people affected by their own use. **Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.**

## Family Priority



We will develop plans, alongside the third sector, around a series of online and offline market-place events for families and the workforce in South Ayrshire to better understand opportunities and services offering whole family support



We will invest in locality-based tests of change, bringing services together in multi-agency teams to support whole families and improve longer-term aims in Education –



We will develop the idea of 'Community Connectors' around whole family support

## People Priority



We will develop a training offer for the workforce in South Ayrshire, co-designed with families and front-line workers across sectors, on the practicalities of whole family working and based on GIRFEC principles



We will develop a practical, ambitious, systems-based skills, GIRFEC learning and development framework and training offer based on developing collaborative practice and system leadership. We will develop the idea of facilitated 'learning spaces' for bringing partners across sectors together to reflect on practice together

## Promise Priority Group



We will place love and relationships at the centre of the experiences and outcomes for every child by implementing The Promise across South Ayrshire.

## Voice Priority



We will ensure children of all ages have the opportunity to have a voice and be better connected with the Children and Young People's Services Plan, progress and actions through development of a South Ayrshire Participation and Engagement Strategy in collaboration with third sector partners –



We will develop a consistent approach to participation and engagement with children and young people, ensuring that we work in a "rights-based" way

# How will we know if our journey was successful?

- 1.** Children (0-5 years) meeting expected developmental milestones increases
- 2.** Children, young people and families report experiences of mental health, additional support needs and wellbeing are listened to and supported
- 3.** Staff report increased knowledge and skill to support mental health and wellbeing
- 4.** Improved attendance and attainment for children and young people with care experience
- 5.** Improved Health and wellbeing levels for children and young people with care experience
- 6.** Young people presenting at hospital with substance related concerns decreases and support is available if they do
- 7.** Continuing our success around school pupils entering positive destinations
- 8.** Engagement sessions tailored to needs of children, young people, families and carers are successful
- 9.** Practitioners and families will tell us they know where to access appropriate and timely support
- 10.** Parents accessing family supports report an increase in family wellbeing



# What do we know about children and young people living in South Ayrshire?

Our Children and Young People's Services Plan, improvement activity and priorities have been led by our analysis of data and trends relating to our children, young people and their families in South Ayrshire. We have consulted with parents, carers, children and young people to understand what they highlight as issues, what they value and what is important in their lives.

▶ Our population in South Ayrshire is around **112,450 people**

■ **0-16 population** - 16% of our population is under 16 (17244)

◆ **17-24 breakdown** - 10% of our population falls in this group (10137)

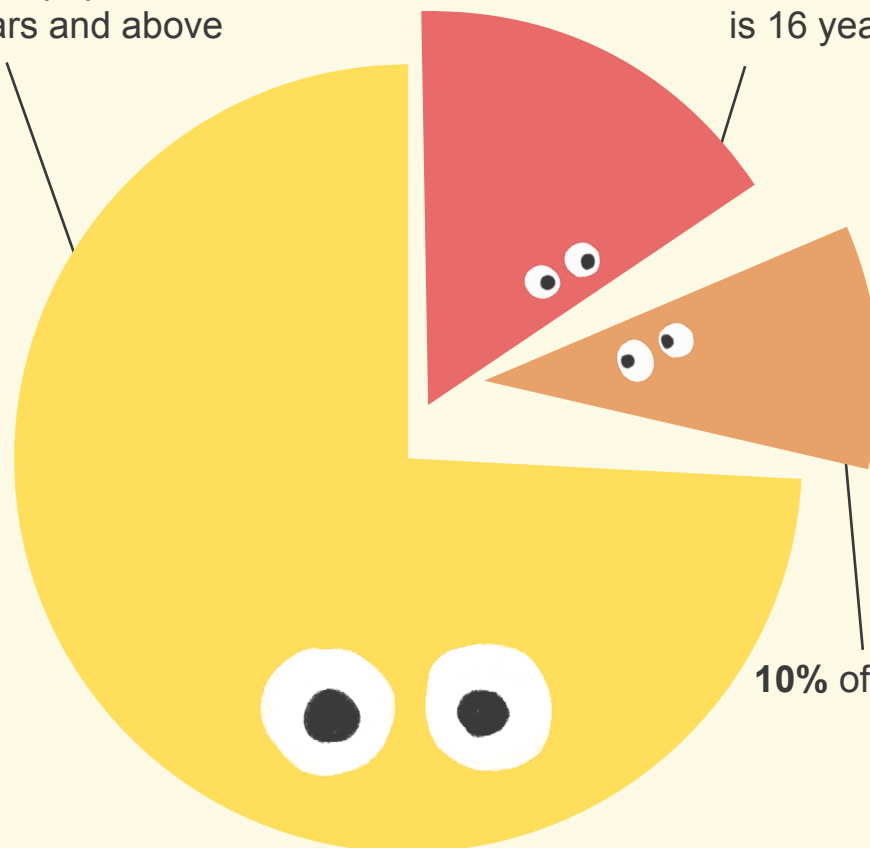
Gathering data helps to guide and direct us towards support for children who may be considered vulnerable or to allow us to see where a group may be showing signs that they need some extra help.



## South Ayrshire is around 112,450 people

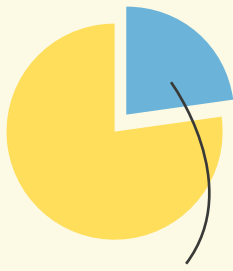
74% of SA population is 25 years and above

16% of SA population is 16 years old and under (17244)



10% of SA population is 17-24 years old (10137)

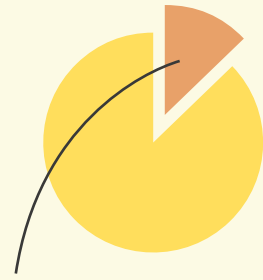
## Poverty and deprivation



**23% of our population** are fuel poor, meaning they cannot meet their energy needs at reasonable cost

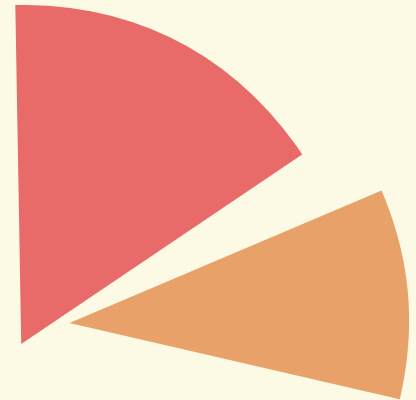


**16% of children** in South Ayrshire live in **relative low-income households**



**13% of children** in South Ayrshire live in **absolute low-income households**

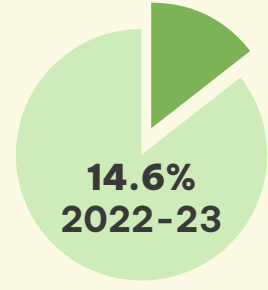
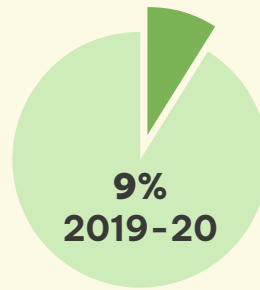
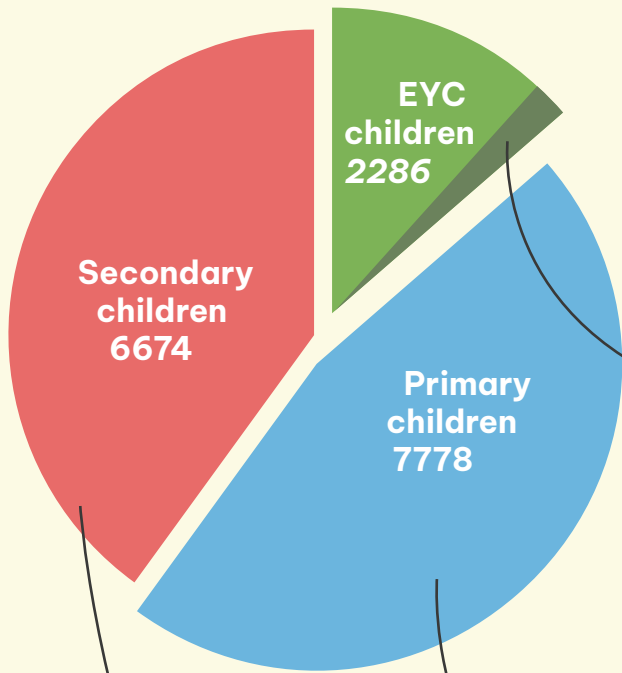
**In Scotland, children are more likely to be living in poverty than adults.** We know that children from disabled households, minority ethnic households, single parent households and households with three or more children are at a higher risk of being in relative poverty. In South Ayrshire we are committed to the creation of a Child Poverty Strategy that is driven by our data and evokes meaningful change to children's lives. Work on this is currently on-going and will be published within the duration of this plan.



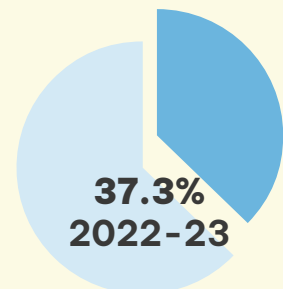
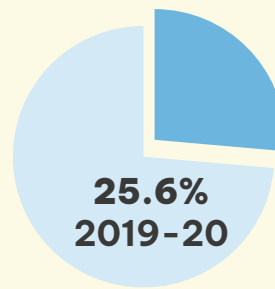
# South Ayrshire Education and Schools

(all data from 22/23)

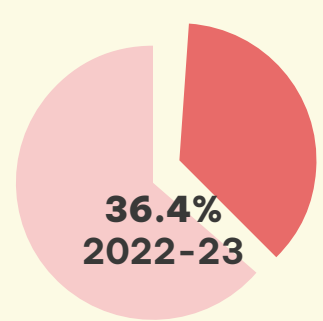
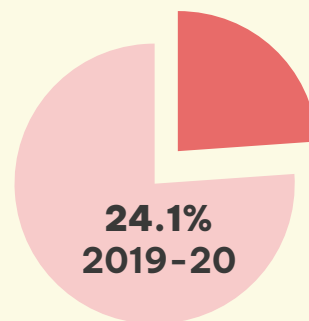
## Pupil break down:



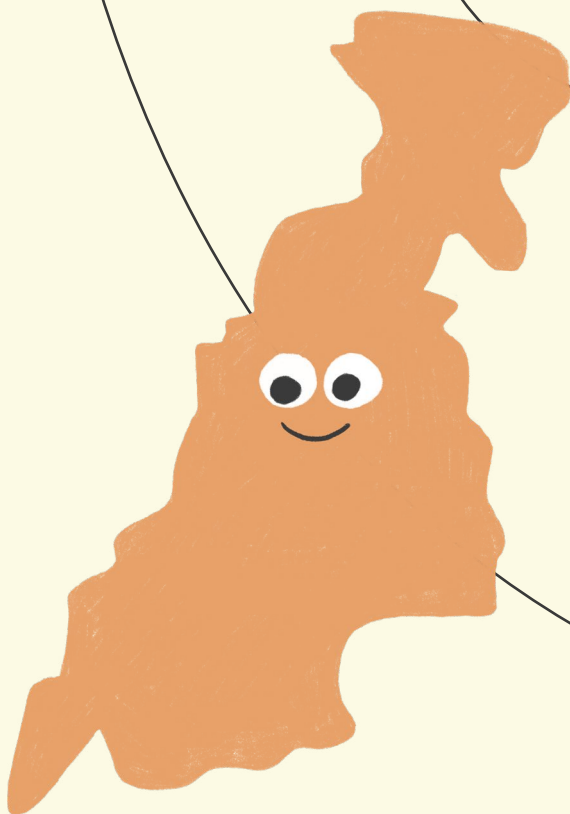
Children in EYC with one or more recorded Additional Support Need = 14.6% in 2022/2023 compared to 9% in 2019/2020



Pupils in Primary school with one or more recorded Additional Support Need = 37.3% in 2022/2023 compared to 26.5% in 2019/2020



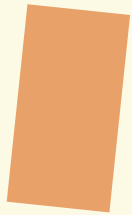
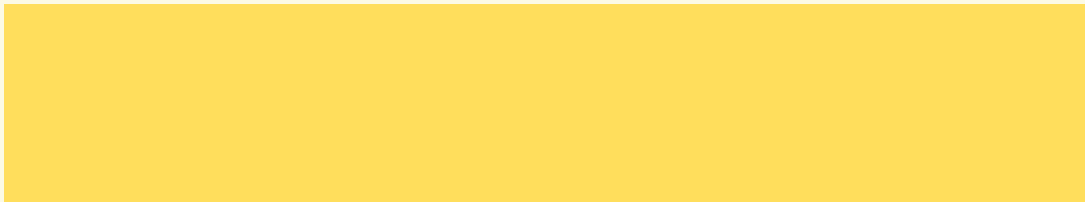
Pupils in Secondary school with one or more recorded Additional Support Need = 36.4% in 2022/2023 compared to 24.1% in 2019/2020







**Pupils across all age groups with a speech and language difficulty = 379**



**Pupils across all age groups with a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty = 1455**



**Exclusion incidence for previously care experienced pupil  
22/23 = 130 pupils per 1000**

In South Ayrshire there are 8 Secondary Schools, 41 Primary Schools, 2 Special Schools and 5 Early Years Centres, although many Primary Schools have Early Years Centres attached. Schools are grouped into eight Clusters, organised by Secondary Schools and including the feeder Primary Schools. We also have a Virtual School for our children and young people with care experience.

Our data shows that following covid, school attendance is still an issue affecting families and touching many services in South Ayrshire. There will be a clear focus on attendance levels across the authority to identify pupils at risk of or currently affected by poor attendance. The priorities, actions and underpinning principles of this plan will demonstrate our commitment to understanding reasons why a pupil might have low levels of attendance and our aim for early offers of support to positively impact school attendance.

Although lower than the national average, we have seen an increase locally in exclusions for pupils who are care experienced in the last year, particularly those who have previous experience of care. In South Ayrshire we are committed to a reduction in exclusions and equity for our care experienced pupils.

## Young Carers and Children and Young People with experience of care in South Ayrshire



Care experienced pupils

# 497

(EYC, PS and S)

Currently experiencing care  
(at May 23)

# 187

Where do our children and young people currently experiencing care live:

**34**  
at home

**11**  
other residential

**36**  
with friends/  
relatives

**89**  
in foster care

**13**  
in local authority children's house

**1**  
with potential adopters

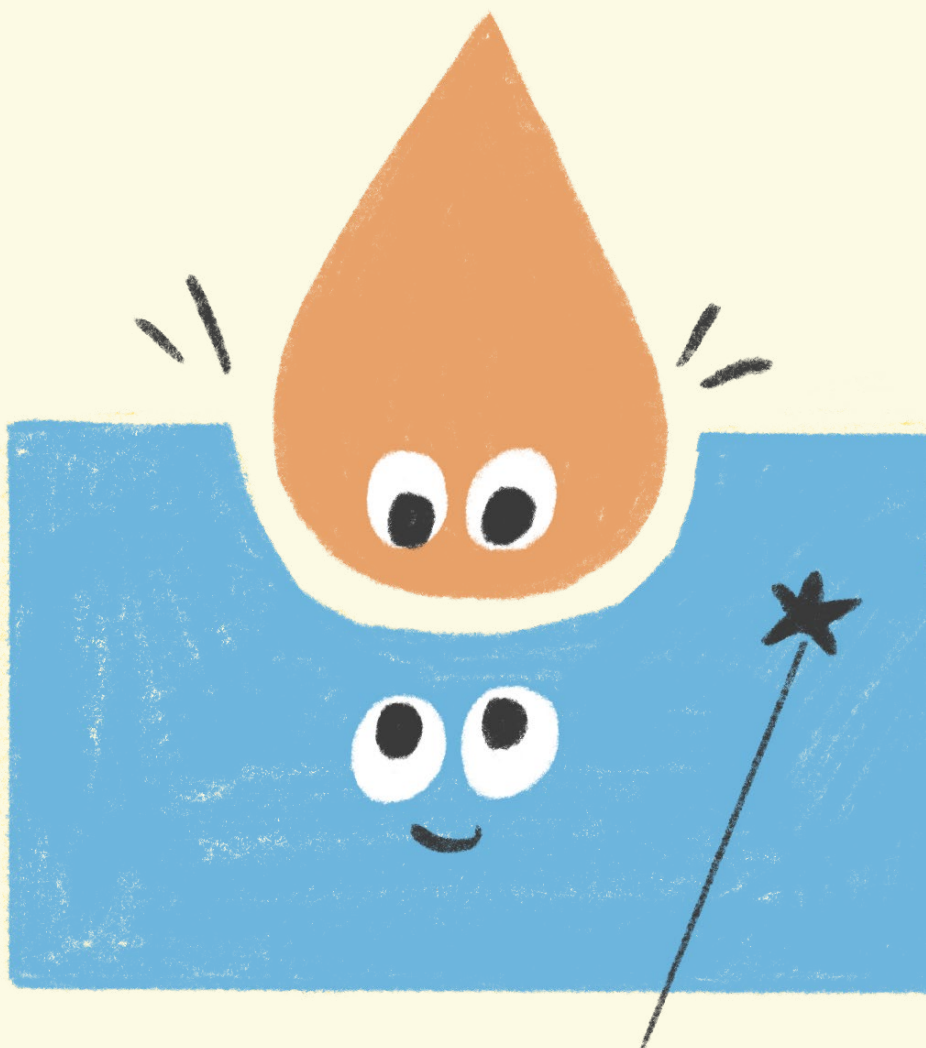
Young carers - A recent survey of S1 to S6 pupils, which had a 60% response rate, revealed 747 young people believe they have caring responsibilities.

# 747

In South Ayrshire we continually strive to be the best Corporate Parents we can be and our improvement plans are set out within the South Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2030. Our Champions Board and Virtual School are two examples of successful practice in the authority, focusing on holistic relationships and very much led by the voices of our children and young people with care experience.

We know that care experienced young people need further support to ensure; their voices are listened to, they are involved in decision making about things that affect them, relationships with brothers and sisters or wider family are maintained, transitions are well supported and the stigma of being care experienced is completely broken down. We are fully committed to supporting families to stay together where the children are safe and feel loved.

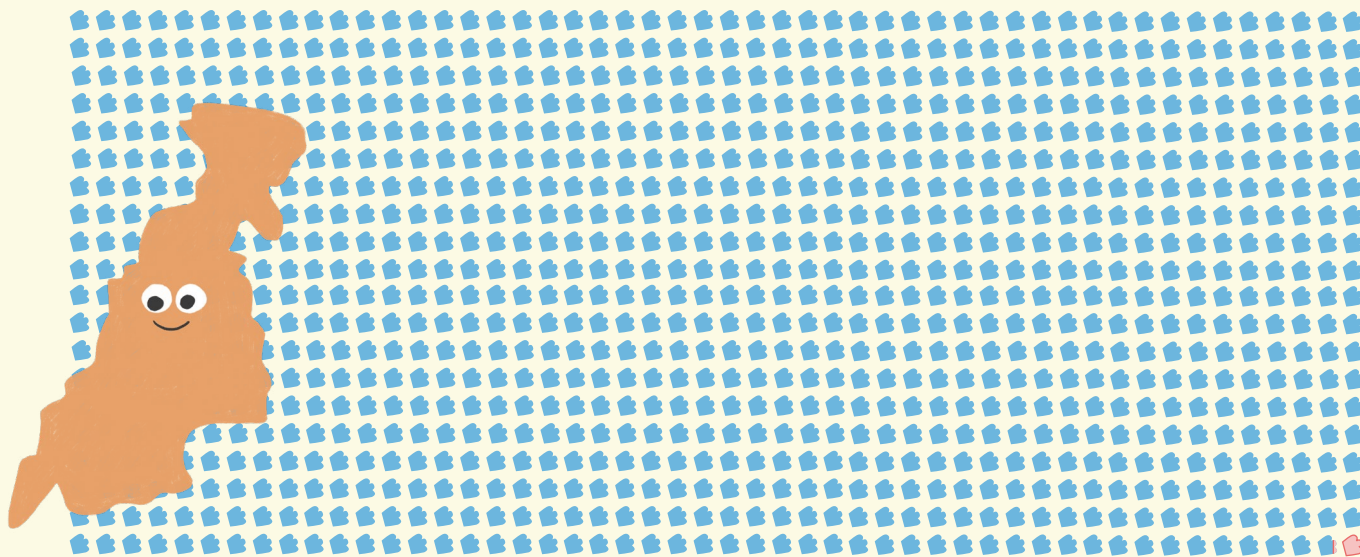
Our Young Carers Strategy 2021-2026 explains what it means to be a young carer and shares plans to raise awareness, recognise and support young carers over the duration of the plan.



## Child Protection Registrations



31st July 2022, Scotland's rate of children's names on the Child Protection register per 1000 was 2.2.



South Ayrshire's rate in 2022 is 1.1 (*this is lower than National average but in line with comparative authorities who have adopted the Signs of Safety approach*)

**Child protection alerts 21/22:**

**132**

**Total number of registrations from initial  
and pre-birth Case Conferences in South  
Ayrshire:**

**34**

**Total number of Inter-Agency Referral  
Discussions (young people/families):**

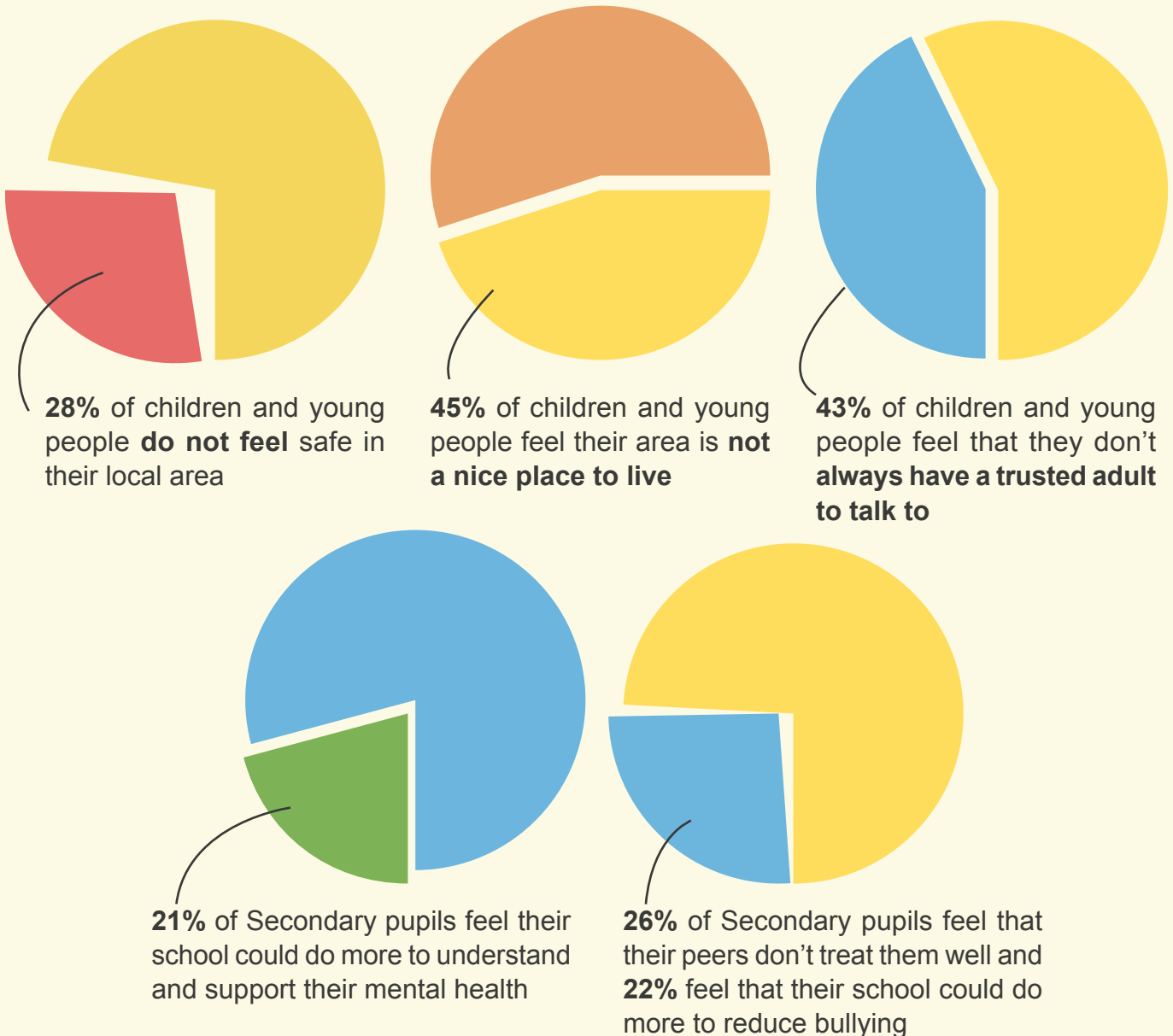
**138**

When children or young people are not safe at home, child protection procedures are generally applied, and intervention traditionally aims to improve outcomes through focusing on the individual child and their family. Assessment of, and intervention with knowledge of the wider context in which the harm is occurring also needs to be undertaken in order to create safety. In South Ayrshire we are committed to the Signs of Safety approach to child protection practice. Signs of Safety is a relationships and strengths-focussed “risk sensible” approach that aligns with our commitment to keeping families together where it is safe to do so.

The South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is a strategic partnership with an independent chair, which is accountable to South Ayrshire’s Chief’s Officers Group. The CPC is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across the public, private and third sectors in the South Ayrshire area. Through rigorous quality improvement and self-evaluation, the CPC is committed to continuous improvement.

## Wellbeing

Overall the data from our Health and Wellbeing Survey was positive and children in South Ayrshire feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. However, we are mindful of the information received from children and young people that indicates room for improvement around their wellbeing.

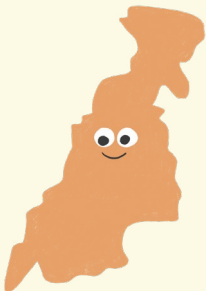


Our GIRFEC approach in South Ayrshire is child centred which means we focus on each individual child and their particular experiences and strengths. It is from this position that we will consider and identify preventative, early and targeted supports and interventions that will improve wellbeing outcomes.

# What does our data tell us?



More children in schools are now identified as having an additional support need. Children with neurodiversity and their families need us to think about how we can provide early support for them via universal services, particularly whilst awaiting diagnosis. **(Included)**



Young Carers, and children and young people who experience the care system continue to need our commitment to change in order to thrive **(The Promise)**

We must address the increase in exclusions for pupils who have care experience but are not currently looked after **(The Promise)**



Families and schools are telling us they need support to help young people return to or stay in school, in particular our pupils who are currently care experienced or have previously experienced care. Our GIRFEC “South Ayrshire Family First” cluster model provides opportunity for whole family support in prevention and early intervention. **(Families)**



An increase in need around speech and language highlights a requirement for a joined up approach. Our teams tell us communication between Early Years settings and Health Visitors could also improve for the benefit of families. **(Included)**



In SAC our children and young people are more likely to present at A&E due to substances than if they lived elsewhere, we must address this. **(Healthy)**



Practitioners tell us they can find it difficult to access the right services at the right time, and families often cannot get help until they are in crisis. **(People)**



# South Ayrshire's Strategic Landscape

Our Children's Services Planning in South Ayrshire is led by the Children's Services Planning Partnership. This group includes statutory and non-statutory partners who support children and young people across the local authority. Membership includes Education, the Health and Social Care Partnership, Third Sector partners, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Corporate Parenting, Police Scotland, Thriving Communities, Fire and Rescue, Young Carers Service and Housing. These agencies and organisations come together to coordinate their services to ensure the best use of resources for the best outcomes for children and young people.




South Ayrshire Children's Services Planning Partnership are proud to work closely and collaboratively with **Third Sector partners** within the CSPP for the best outcomes of our children, young people and families. We aim to continue to strengthen this relationship throughout the duration of this plan and beyond.

**Third Sector organisations** locally play a hugely significant role in the CSPP, particularly around prevention and early intervention. Their work both **compliments and extends** this plan's aim to ensure all children in South Ayrshire have what they need to thrive.

In order to achieve the best possible outcomes, our Children and Young People's Services Plan cannot exist in isolation. To achieve our shared vision of collaborative, early and preventative offers of support for our communities it is essential we take a "whole system" approach to development and planning of services.

Some priorities of **South Ayrshire's Local Improvement Plan** mutually reinforce our Children and Young People's Service Plan due to the Local Improvement Plan's ambition to improve wellbeing and outcomes for children and young people. The Local Improvement Plan sets out high-level ambitions for South Ayrshire over ten years and is structured around strategic priority areas for local people. Within the Local Improvement Plan **Keeping The Promise** and a commitment to **Young Carers** are the most relevant priorities to Children's Planning, alongside the key outcomes for these priorities and the plan's emphasis on reducing inequalities locally.

## The purpose of the Children's Services Planning Partnership is to:

-  Address the shared priorities by providing strategic direction to planning
-  Bring partners together to communicate and share key developments
-  Develop responses to change in a proactive way



**Children's Services Planning Partnership (CSPP)**

**Joint Improvement Group (JIG)**

**The Promise**

**People**

**Family**

**Healthy**

**Included**

**Voice**

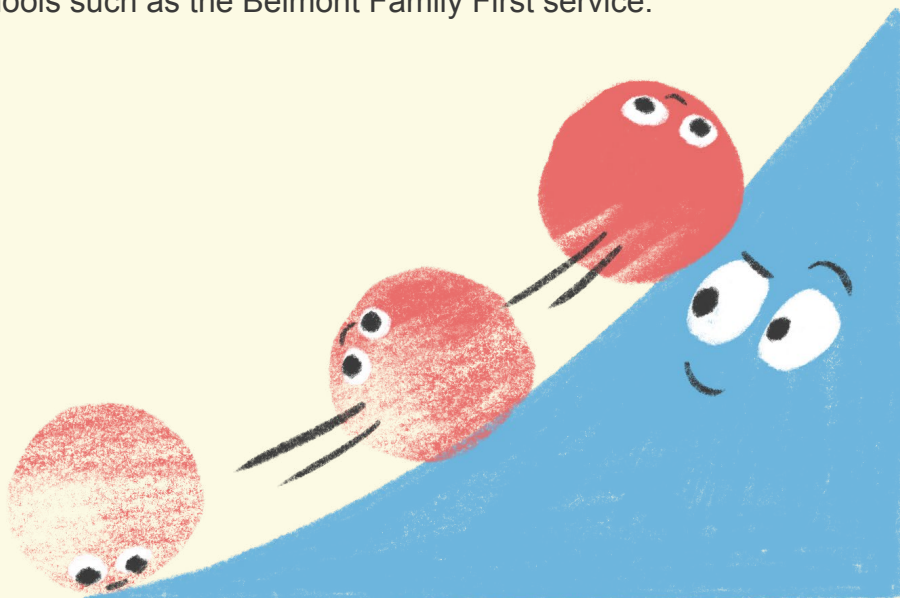
# Supporting Families - The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

It is normal for all parents or carers to need help from their wider family, friends, community and sometimes from children's services. Although families are generally the best source of nurture for their children, extra support should be available, responsive to the needs of the whole family and without stigma.

## What are we committed to doing in South Ayrshire?

In South Ayrshire, the following funding and initiatives are in place:

- £604k per year is allocated to the Children's Services Planning Group for Whole Family Wellbeing Funding.
- £79k per year is allocated to the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to support the implementation of the Whole Family Approach.
- South Ayrshire Council receives £229k per year through the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (Pupil Equity Funding) and £229k over two years from the Promise Partnership Fund.
- South Ayrshire has made a commitment to embed 10 principles of intensive family support across all directorates and commissioned services by 2024 as part of its Parenting Promise 2021-30.
- Children's Services has existing work in place that we are keen to expand on, such as the Virtual Schools Team who improve outcomes for our children and young people with care experience, and early intervention Social Work teams in schools such as the Belmont Family First service.



## South Ayrshire's Whole Family Approach Journey so far...

In November 2022, The South Ayrshire's Children's Services Planning Partnership (SACSPP) agreed to undertake a learning partnership with Horizons Research to support the development of Whole Family Services that align with GIRFEC, The Promise and the Scottish Government's Whole Family Wellbeing funding criteria.

### The Learning Review involves three distinct phases:

**Phase one:** A process evaluation, including mapping, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to Whole Family Approach, creating a new system-wide logic model and change story based on Whole Family Approach ambitions. Capturing ideas and activities with potential to build on.

**Phase two:** In close collaboration with the Third Sector and through the lens of families, phase two will build on the evidence from phase one and undertake new activities with families. Focusing on evaluation of these activities and assessing how well children's services are achieving local and national outcomes.

**Phase three:** Summative evaluation to measure the outcomes. This will provide an overview and analysis of the learning and activities which have occurred across this work.

### Where are the gaps?

Learning Review feedback and research so far suggests there are gaps in the provision of Whole Family Support in South Ayrshire. We need to address the gaps in order to ensure that families receive the appropriate support they need.

- 1.** More focus, and investment on preventative supports is required
- 2.** Collaboration between agencies can improve to benefit families
- 3.** Creation of meaningful training and resources for practitioners to help them to help families
- 4.** Reducing stigma and fear as barriers for families asking for help
- 5.** Increasing availability of tailored interventions to meet each individual family member's needs



## **Our Plan's 6 Priorities...**

In South Ayrshire, we believe that our communities will be stronger if every child has what they need to thrive.

The following pages will set out what we aim to achieve as South Ayrshire's Children's Services Planning Partnership from 2023 to 2026, giving context to the priorities and outlining the thinking behind each one.

We have structured our priorities around our focus on preventative and early offers of help for each individual family member, to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Although we have included measures, this is an area that will develop further within the period of 2023-2026 and each priority area within the Plan will be accompanied by a detailed GIRFEC Action Plan specific to that priority.

# The Promise

Work to Keep the Promise is shaped by three plans. In South Ayrshire we are currently delivering on The Promise Plan 21-24, whilst recognising that Plan 25-27 will come into force during the period of this Children and Young People's Service Plan.

The Promise demands radical redesign of services for children currently experiencing care and those who are care experienced. In South Ayrshire we are committed to review of our systems and culture to ensure children and young people currently experiencing care have nurturing relationships in which they can thrive in order to Keep The Promise.

During the period of this plan, we will continue our work and focus on the five priority areas detailed in South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise 2021-2030. Supported by this Children's and Young People's Services Plan, this thematic priority group will be led by a subgroup of the Children's Services Planning Group.

## **Areas identified to work together on include:**

- 1.** A good childhood - children in the 'care system' feel loved, have their needs met and their rights upheld
- 2.** Whole family support - families look different in every household and all families need support at different times in their lives
- 3.** Planning - equity around experiences and outcomes regardless of location or service
- 4.** Supporting the workforce - supporting the people who directly and indirectly help children and families
- 5.** Building capacity - the structure of the 'care system' should be focussed on the needs of children and young people

Partners within South Ayrshire's Children's Services Planning Partnership recognise the significance of the Independent Care Review and The Promise and remain committed to delivering on it.

We believe our focus on the five foundations of The Promise: Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding, can benefit all our children and young people.



# Thematic Group Priority - The Promise



Steered by South Ayrshire's children and young people with care experience, we will ensure they experience nurturing relationships, where they can thrive and meet their full potential.

**UNCRC Article 20** - We will help you grow up safe and healthy and we will provide special care if you need it.

## We will work together to ensure

- 1.** Our services and Corporate Parents are nurturing, supportive, and provide opportunities for children and young people to express their views.
- 2.** Children and young people with care experience will have access to the support needed to thrive educationally, physically, and emotionally for as long as they need it.
- 3.** South Ayrshire services are shaped by the active participation of our children, young people and families with care experience.
- 4.** Where children are safe at home with their family and feel loved, they will receive all the support required to stay together.

## How we will measure our progress

- 1.** Increased number of children remaining at home or residing in kinship care in place of other options such as foster care.
- 2.** Percentage of currently care experienced children who report they feel safer as a result of intervention or support.
- 3.** Children and young people with experience of care will have opportunities to tell those supporting them which areas of their lives and services they receive need to change.
- 4.** Positive impact on rates of exclusions, attendance, attainment and positive destinations for young people with care experience.

*Detailed Actions Found Within Thematic Group Action Plan  
GIRFEC Corporate Parenting Action Plan*

# Families

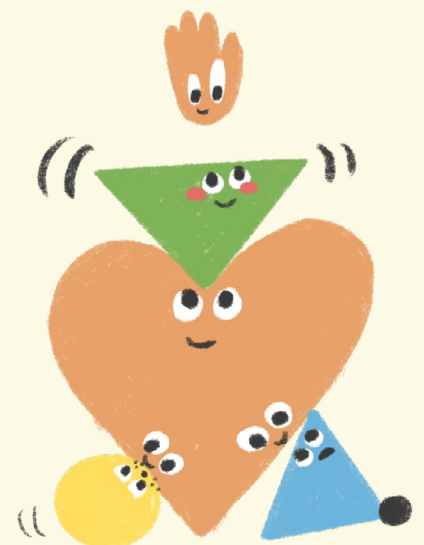
## GIRFEC in Action in South Ayrshire

GIRFEC services in South Ayrshire involve a wide range of strategic partnerships, Third sector agencies and public authorities who work alongside children, young people and families to promote their wellbeing. Our processes generally work well in South Ayrshire, but we know that parents, carers, young people and practitioners want to easily access support or information about support locally. We have listened and our locality model plans will contribute to addressing this issue.

Alongside local communities, we will design and develop our **Family First** “Team Around the Cluster” model to respond to local need in South Ayrshire. Our aim is to enhance **collaborative early support** across our communities in South Ayrshire and in turn, **improve outcomes** for our children, young people and families.

**This test of change, led by Education is based on the aims of Children’s Services Planning...**

- 1. Early Intervention & Primary Prevention:** Through locally based multi-agency teams who understand local need, support is offered at the earliest opportunity and in many cases prevents need arising.
- 2. Integration:** Support is coordinated from the point of view and experiences of children, young people and their families. The model brings services together into teams to wrap around our local communities.
- 3. Best Value:** Jointly assessing need ensures the best use of available resources.
- 4. Wellbeing:** All services supporting families, such as those supporting parents, carry out their work in a manner which also safeguards, supports and promotes child wellbeing.






# South Ayrshire Family First



Our vision in South Ayrshire puts children, young people and families at the very heart of our decision making.

Our community focused **South Ayrshire Family First model** is built around 8 educational clusters, organised by our 8 Secondary Schools in South Ayrshire including their associated primary schools. A **Family First** 'support around schools' approach will bring key partners such as Education, Third Sector, School Nursing, Thriving Communities, Health and Social Care together into teams within their community areas, alongside families to improve outcomes in three key areas:

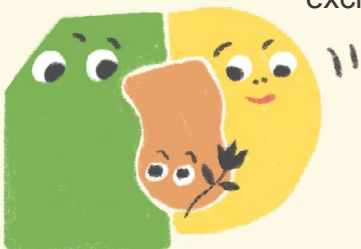
-  School attendance
-  Supporting pupils who are at risk of exclusion
-  Improving transitions

## Aims of our Family First model:

**Improve our community leadership** - building staff capacity, empower local decision making, deploying resource to those with most need, implementing person centred solutions

**Improve outcomes in wellbeing** - improved attendance, reduced exclusion, improved engagement of pupils most in need of support

**Improving attainment** - levels of literacy, levels of numeracy, qualifications at senior phase, more high quality, sustainable, positive destinations



## Our 8 “Family First” localities represent our 8 Secondary School Clusters:



### **Ayr Family First:**

Ayr Academy, Annbank Primary, Coylton Primary, Dalmilling Primary, Newton Primary



### **Carrick Family First:**

Carrick Academy, Crosshill Primary, Culzean Primary, Fisherton Primary, Kirkmichael Primary, Maidens Primary, Minishant Primary, Straiton Primary



### **Kyle Family First:**

Kyle Academy, Ayr Grammar Primary, Forehill Primary



### **Prestwick Family First:**

Prestwick Academy, Glenburn Primary, Heathfield Primary, Kingcase Primary, Monkton Primary, Symington Primary



### **Belmont Family First:**

Belmont Academy, Alloway Primary, Braehead Primary, Doonfoot Primary, Holmston Primary, Kincaidston Primary, Southcraig Campus, Tarbolton Primary



### **Girvan Family First:**

Girvan Academy, Ballantrae Primary, Barr Primary, Barrhill Primary, Colmonell Primary, Dailly Primary, Girvan Primary, Invergarven School



### **Marr Family First:**

Marr College, Barassie Primary, Dundonald Primary, Muirhead Primary, Struthers Primary, Troon Primary



### **Queen Margaret Family First:**

Queen Margaret Academy, Sacred Heart Primary, St Cuthberts Primary, St Johns Primary, St Ninians Primary, St Patricks Primary

**Our South Ayrshire Family First model** will allow the needs of South Ayrshire’s children to be met through a joined-up, collaborative approach to children’s services. Integrative practice within and across agencies is key to locality working, and with this in mind we will use a tiered approach to intervention in order to plan for individual children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity. Putting **Families First** and working alongside local families, our GIRFEC approach will help us to identify the support each child or young person needs to help to improve their wellbeing.



## Thematic Group Priority - Families



Through our South Ayrshire Family First model, whole family wellbeing is improved and promoted by enabling families to get the right support early and effectively.

**UNCRC Article 13** - *We will help you to have the information that you need to make good decisions.*

**UNCRC Article 27** - *We will help you to have what you need to grow up safe & healthy.*

### We will work together to ensure:

- 1.** The creation of a GIRFEC “Family First” locality model is implemented in South Ayrshire, promoting preventative and early intervention offers of support specific to each local area’s need.
- 2.** Information to help identify the right support at the right time will be accessible to families and practitioners who know the local area well.
- 3.** Routes to accessing additional, or specialist support will be clear and accessible for families and practitioners in the local area.

### How we will measure progress

- 1.** Data will demonstrate Improvements in key outcome areas.
- 2.** Online and offline marketplace events for the whole community including practitioners across sectors increase knowledge of local services.
- 3.** Awareness and use of appropriate online and offline information platforms designed and developed with children, young people and their families.
- 4.** Children, young people and families are aware of and access clear routes to additional, or specialist support.

### Detailed Actions Found Within Thematic Group Action Plan

GIRFEC Whole Family Wellbeing Model Action Plan



# Voice





Planning and delivering quality local services requires a wide range of different people, agencies and organisations - most importantly people who have used services themselves. The GIRFEC approach is underpinned by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and requires us all to put children at the very heart of our day-to-day practice.

**“Every child has the right to express their views, feelings, and wishes in all matters affecting them and to have their views considered and taken seriously.”**

(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12)

It is so important that we listen and respond to the views of the children, young people and families who have experienced our services as they have a unique perspective on how we might change or adapt services to meet the needs of others in South Ayrshire. Their voice must be meaningfully included in the planning of integrated children’s services.

We will create opportunities for participation in all aspects of services and support. People with lived-experience of accessing our local services are our partners in assessment, planning and design of local services. **We can support participation well if we:**

-  Seek views, listen and respond in a meaningful way to ensure what is said is heard, acted on and represented in our planning
-  Understand the ambitions and aspirations of our children, young people and families
-  Adapt our individual approaches to ensure equity and consider how we capture voices that often to unheard
-  Work in collaboration with the Third Sector

We strive to continuously improve our engagement work in South Ayrshire. Since our last Children and Young People’s Service Plan there has been a lot of positive work in this area, but we recognise that we can and should improve. We think creating a Peer Research Network in South Ayrshire is an exciting and sustainable way to involve the wider community into policy and service development across sectors.

## Thematic Group Priority - Voice



The views and opinions of children, young people, families and carers will inform future improvements, planning and developments in South Ayrshire.

**UNCRC Article 12** - *We will respect your right to express your views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting you. We will consider your views and take them seriously.*

### We will work together to ensure


- 1.** We take a right-based approach to service design and delivery
- 2.** Children, young people, families, carers and practitioners will be consulted, have the opportunity to express views and be supported to meaningfully shape service delivery in their local area.

### How we will measure progress

- 1.** Consultation with children, young people and families in identified areas is completed and results inform service design and delivery. Feedback from children, young people and families demonstrates they feel heard.
- 2.** Children, young people and families will have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in improvements within their local area in collaboration with the Third Sector.
- 3.** Our young carers will feel their opinion is valued and making a difference.
- 4.** Children and young people who are currently cared for away from home for example in residential children's houses, and children involved in child protection feel heard.

*Detailed Actions Found Within Thematic Group Action Plan  
GIRFEC Child and Community Voice Action Plan*





# Healthy




Health and wellbeing is consistently raised by our children, young people, families and services alike as their highest priority for improvement. Our key focus is to support our children and young people to thrive, achieve the best possible outcomes and improve their lives. To do this we know we need to create a caring culture where emotional wellbeing, mental and physical health is promoted whilst ensuring access to specialist services when needed.

Substance use can affect children and families, through direct harm from a young person's own use or harm from a parent or carer's use. We know that our children and young people in South Ayrshire are disproportionately represented within A&E presentations for substances, and recognise that those young people are at greater risk of developing challenges around addiction as adults if support isn't available.

South Ayrshire **Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP)** have begun the process of developing a Whole Family Approach Team alongside those with lived-experience of seeking support for alcohol and drug use. Early Intervention is not only support at the right time for the individual or family, it is support offered as close to the realisation that help is required as possible. This work will ensure there is 'no wrong door' for young people seeking support with their own emerging alcohol or drug use and will provide individual support to young people affected by familial alcohol and drug use. The ambitions of this model further strengthen the ADP's focus on families by recognising the critical role families play in recovery, the need to include families in services or support, and ensuring families have support in their own right to manage or heal from the impact of alcohol and drug use.

Improving health and wellbeing is the core of our plan and the focus of our preventative work. We want to help children, young people and families to feel able to lead an active lifestyle, with a balanced diet. Mental health is so important for our families to be able to build resilience and cope with challenges in life. We need to build on the work of our previous plan, by embedding what we have learned into practice and evaluating the impact of feedback from children and young people.

## **As a Children's Services Planning Partnership we will improve wellbeing by:**

-  Using local data and reflecting on feedback from children and young people, for example from the Scottish Government's Core Wellbeing Indicators Survey to consider specific areas for improvement
-  Linking in with our other priority areas such as The Promise to consider specific needs for wellbeing and health for our children and young people with care experience
-  Considering the design and accessibility of preventative, early help and targeted supports in South Ayrshire in collaboration with the Third Sector.

# Thematic Group Priority - Healthy



Children and young people's health, wellbeing and safety in their families and communities will be promoted and improved.

**UNCRC Article 23** - *We will help you to reach your full potential*

**UNCRC Article 24** - *We will help you to grow up safe and healthy*

## **We will work together to ensure:**

- 1.** Supports around health and wellbeing are holistic, considering the whole family with the understanding that children and young people's mental health or substance use can be impacted by that of their parents
- 2.** Services for children and young people are relationship based and tailored to the need of the individual child
- 3.** Preventative offers of support or engagement are created in collaboration with children and young people
- 4.** Practitioners will have confidence, knowledge and competence to engage with young people about sexual health.

## **How we will measure progress:**



- 1.** Children live with adults. We'll see stronger links between child and adult services across sectors, with increased partnership working for the benefit of the whole family
- 2.** We will establish a baseline of young people's mental health and wellbeing in South Ayrshire by which progress can be measured
- 3.** Children, young people and families will tell us they have access to the right support at the right time to improve their physical, mental, and sexual health.

*Detailed Actions Found Within Thematic Group Action Plan  
GIRFEC Safe and Healthy Action Plan*

# Included

## Supports for families where a child may have a neurodiversity or an additional support need.

More children in South Ayrshire now have an additional support need or have a neurodiversity concern where a mental health diagnosis is not present. Families have told us they need support whilst the assessment process is ongoing.

-  In South Ayrshire 34% of the pupil population from Early Years to S6 are recorded having one or more additional support need, an increase of 8.5% since 2019/2020.
-  Practitioners across sectors in South Ayrshire identified challenges around additional support needs as one of the main concerns that families seek support for in South Ayrshire.

In South Ayrshire we are committed to the creation of a neurodevelopmental pathway and to ensure that a neurodevelopmental diagnosis is not a prerequisite to support being offered.

Families have told us that early support should be offered at the point of referral, linked into the needs of the child and as such the pathway would be a part of addressing this issue. We want to develop a system whereby families are able to access tiered support that is timely and proportionate from a multi-agency team. A team that also supports parents and carers to understand and manage their child or children's needs.

Within this priority we recognise the importance of early and effective multi-agency support where a speech and language need is identified. We understand that speech and language skills are essential for our children to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Learning and social skills are developed through a child's ability to communicate meaningfully with those around them, and we know that complex or significant difficulties can become life-long if not addressed.

## Thematic Group Priority - Included



Children and young people with additional support needs and their families are well supported at the earliest stage, to achieve their full potential.

**UNCRC Article 23** - We will help you to realise your full potential.

**UNCRC Article 31** - We will support your social needs.

### We will work together to ensure:

- 1.** We provide transitional help to children and families receiving additional and intensive levels of support
- 2.** Early Years Settings and Schools are supported to ensure better outcomes for children and young people with speech and language needs
- 3.** South Ayrshire's children and young people receive appropriate needs-based support whilst they are assessed for neurodevelopmental concerns

### How we will measure progress:

- 1.** Monitoring and evaluating the transitions experienced by young people will demonstrate an increase in success
- 2.** Staff across sectors who support children, young people and families with a diagnosed or potential additional support need will tell us they feel increased confidence to support children and increased effectiveness within their multi-agency relationships
- 3.** The creation of a successful pathway for children where there is a neurodiversity concern but no existing mental health diagnosis to ensure the best early help for the child and family
- 4.** Young people and families report that standards are improved, due to robust pathways being in place for children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions.

*Detailed Actions Found Within Thematic Group Action Plan  
GIRFEC Neurodiversity and Additional Support Needs Action Plan*

# People

**“The workforce needs support, time and care to develop and maintain relationships.**

**Scotland must hold the hands of those who hold the hand of the child. Scotland must place trust in its workforce to develop and nurture relationships, enable their capacity to care and love and provide support to make this part of daily life.**

**As well as access to advice and networks, carers must be given time to focus on developing relationships, and to reflect on whether these are delivering what the child needs. The boundaries and barriers that prevent nurturing relationships developing and lasting, such as not allowing friendships between residential workers and children after they have moved on, must be removed.”**

*The Promise, Plan 21-24*

As demanded by The Promise, in South Ayrshire we are committed to the design and delivery of a rights-based, trauma responsive offer of training for our workforce. The workforce in South Ayrshire includes volunteers, carers, and employees across all sectors who support children, young people and families either directly or indirectly.

We need to ensure that our multi-agency workforce is skilled, nurturing and connected to positively impact on the wellbeing of children, young people and families. Our workforce tells us they benefit from opportunities to come together to build strong relationships, networks and to share expertise for the best outcomes of the child.

Our aim is to empower the workforce across sectors through increased knowledge, reflection and connection to deliver the vision of South Ayrshire’s Children’s Services Planning Partnership.



# Thematic Group Priority - People



Our GIRFEC training offer to staff in South Ayrshire, allowing them to come together to learn, collaborate and build relationships to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

**UNCRC Article 3** - *The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.*

## We will work together to ensure




- 1.** A local multi-agency training and development strategy is created, co-designed by families and practitioners, taking account of the national GIRFEC Refresh and new guidance.
- 2.** Practitioners across all sectors have opportunities to come together to build trusting relationships, reflect, communicate and share their expertise.
- 3.** All services who support children and young people understand their roles and responsibilities around prevention and early identification of need in families, within the GIRFEC approach.
- 4.** Our staff in South Ayrshire understand what support is available to families and where to go to access timely, appropriate and effective help.

## How we will measure progress

- 1.** Staff feel connected to the vision of the Children's Services Planning Partnership
- 2.** Joint workforce GIRFEC development areas are embedded into training
- 3.** There is an increase in multi-agency learning opportunities for the workforce across all sectors
- 4.** Staff across all sectors feel increased confidence in their role supporting children, young people and families

# What this plan means for you as a child or young person

In South Ayrshire we know that there are issues or difficulties in life that make it harder for you to reach your potential such as:

-  You or someone in your family might need support with mental health
-  Your family might have some difficulties that mean you can't live at home
-  You might have an additional support need that may require you to have extra help to thrive

You might need help at times of big change in life, we call these 'transitions' such as moving from Primary into Secondary school

As a young person you have rights that should be respected. You should expect to receive the support you need to thrive and live a good life. Often, you'll find support from your school but in some circumstances you might need support from other people for example; nurses, support workers or counsellors. In South Ayrshire we are committed to involving you in any decisions that affect your life and understanding how you feel about any support you've been given.

**Parent or carer:** We know that families are usually the best source of support and nurture for children. At different times in our lives we all need extra help, and many families are currently facing additional pressures such as the cost of living crisis. If you have other difficulties too then it can make things even harder.

Our aim is to ensure that difficulties can be prevented for you or your child before they develop or get worse for you. You and your whole family should be able to get the right support, at the right time, where we can all work together to place your child or children at the heart of any help given.

**Practitioner providing support:** By continuing to focus on preventative or early whole family supports, we aim to ensure that less children will require care or protection through statutory measures. You will feel skilled, supported and able to provide holistic trauma-sensitive care for families. Our plans will ensure you have the opportunity to connect and reflect on a multi-agency basis, across sectors, to build relationships that will benefit your practice and our families in South Ayrshire.





