
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

29 November 2022

Cabinet

Title:	North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2021-22.
Purpose:	To present the draft North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report covering 2021-22.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Approves the draft North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2021-22; andb) Agrees that the Progress Report is submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning website, subject to sign-off by relevant Community Planning partners.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities, Health Boards, and other Community Planning partners to publish an annual progress report in terms of their Children Services Plans.
- 1.2 The North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2021-22 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 A new Children's Services Plan covering the period 2023-26 is currently in development and will be presented to Cabinet in early 2023.
- 1.4 Following approval, the Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2021/22 will be submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning partnership website.

2. Background

- 2.1 The North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23 was developed by the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership following a Strategic Needs Assessment which drew data from a range of sources including the views and experiences of our children and young people, school census data, child protection data and public health data.

- 2.2 The North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23 was approved and published in October 2020 and sets out five key priorities which are outlined below to achieve our vision in North Ayrshire – ***“for all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up”***.

Priority 1: Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next.

Priority 3: Making things fairer and better.

Priority 4: Supporting mental health.

Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy.

- 2.3 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on Community Planning Partners to produce an Annual Progress Report in terms of their Children's Services Plan.
- 2.4 A draft Progress Report covering 2021-22 is attached at Appendix 1 and sets out some of the key highlights in terms of achieving our Children's Services Plan 2020-23 vision. The Progress report is split into five sections covering the key priorities outlined at paragraph 2.2. above.
- 2.5 A selection of the highlights contained within the Progress Report are provided below:

Priority 1: Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.

- We have allocated £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities. This enabled us to provide over 1,000 laptops and connectivity solutions to our children and young people who need them the most. We also provided 265 devices which included 54 Chromebooks, 45 laptops and 25 iPads to children who are looked after and care leavers.
- Our Scottish Youth Parliament elections took place in November with young people from across North Ayrshire voting on their preferred candidates. Four members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) were elected and took their office in March to start their two-year term.
- Positive Steps with Partners is a structured development programme for individuals that have been developed by The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) (part of the North Ayrshire Third Sector Interface) in partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team. The programme helps people develop skills and gain practical work experience. In addition, participants gain accredited qualifications. Participants complete a programme of development modules before

commencing a placement with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team.

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next.

- We were able to support 314 children, parents and carers through the Rosemount Project which supports families and young people to remain together and in their communities. The service is committed to whole family support and, wherever possible, will include siblings, parents/carers and extended family members in the parenting interventions and family work that the service facilitates.
- 'Team Around the Parent' is a new way of working with families who have their child removed from their care. It was developed in conjunction with families with lived experience. The aim of Team Around the Parents is to help them feel supported and heard at the time of such a distressing event. This service helps them to link with any necessary supports which should assist them to take part in the parenting assessment. We developed a communication profile along with the parents to highlight where barriers have been experienced in either others communicating with them or what they need from others to feel included or heard.

Priority 3: Making things fairer and better.

- The Money Matters Team generated over £17.5m in financial gains for our residents in receipt of Welfare Benefits.
- We have extended universal free school meals (UFSM) to Primary 4 and 5 children and are working on the future provision for Primary 6 to 7. This is expected to greatly increase uptake. Currently the UFSM uptake for Primary 1 to 3 is around 80% and, if replicated across the other year groups, would represent a significant increase in children accessing healthy and nutritious food during the school day. This is likely to have an impact on local employment by increasing the number of jobs with local suppliers.
- We have been distributing winter aid funding directly to families to tackle fuel and clothing poverty and administered the Scottish Government child bridging payments. As well as administering the low-income pandemic payments, we have engaged with our vulnerable families regarding Covid-19 isolation grants and supported families to access services.

Priority 4: Supporting mental health

- The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund was established in 2021, with £15 million allocated to support mental health and wellbeing in communities across Scotland. The fund is being delivered and managed by Arran CVS supported by the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership.
- Our Health and Social Care Partnership's (HSCP), Service Access Team has been instrumental in the development of a Support Pathway for Children and Young people who have attempted suicide. The pathway is intended for young people up to 18 years old who have made a significant attempt at taking their life such as a non-fatal overdose, act of self-harm significant enough to require treatment and

intervention or deliberate act of a suicidal nature, and who are not open to any other social work services.

- The importance of perinatal mental health is recognised across North Ayrshire. Within Universal Early Years, 2021-22 saw an expansion to the support available to expectant and new mums experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties through the recruitment of a second Perinatal Mental Health Nurse within the integrated Universal Early Years' team. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 85 women were referred for early intervention support. Autumn of 2021 also saw the launch of the Ayrshire and Arran Perinatal Mental Health Service, which aims to offer support to expectant and new mums with severe and enduring mental health difficulties.

Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy

- Our team of Health Visitors has continued to deliver full national universal health visiting pathways throughout the pandemic. This is despite more complex caseloads dealing with higher levels of vulnerability and staff absence partially due to Covid-19.
- We are working with children with a BMI on or above the 91st centile. Jumpstart Tots is a 10-session family and community focussed series of activities. The two-hour weekly programme focuses on healthy eating, physical activity, and positive health behaviour change, with children attending alongside their parents or carers. The number of referrals for the year was 17, with the consumption of fruit and vegetables increasing, whilst take away and high sugar consumption was drastically reduced.
- Working alongside KA Leisure and further community partners we provided a range of free places for our young people to participate in our holiday programme. These places were offered to families with low income within the care system or other children from vulnerable backgrounds. The summer programme also included free skating and swimming for young people which we funded. This year's opportunity proved extremely popular with Swimming attracting 91,35 and 5,527 taking part in skating.

2.6 Some of our areas of focus during 2022-23 are highlighted below:

Priority 1: Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.

- CPP partners, notably Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, will continue to build relationships with the Champions Board, Education and other partners and further support activity in relation to care experienced young people to ensure that they are active contributors in Corporate Parenting.
- We will introduce new models of provision for free period products across schools and communities.
- We will review our approach to nurture across our educational establishments.

Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next.

- Refresh and strengthen the focus of the school-college partnership and provide enhanced opportunities for achievement, e.g., through the Regional Improvement Collaborative, in the senior phase.
- Design tailored programmes with partners to provide enhanced support for specific groups of school leaders, including those with identified needs.

Priority 3: Making things fairer and better.

- Develop a three-year Raising Attainment Strategy to improve outcomes for all learners and reduce inequity of outcomes, including a focus on accelerating progress in early primary and early learning centres following the implementation of 1,140 hours of funded childcare for all 3–5-year-olds.
- Work closely across North Ayrshire services and third sector partners to reduce the cost of the school day and mitigate the impact of child poverty.
- The Ayrshire Community Trust will develop a strand of mentoring within the Positive Steps with Partners Project employability project. The project will have volunteer mentors who will support new referrals, supporting them to attend volunteer interviews and placements helping mentees to overcome worries and fears and helping to increase confidence in individual abilities and be more included in their communities.

Priority 4: Supporting mental health

- Review the impact of school counselling services and external counselling / community wellbeing supports and refresh provision, strengthening the relationship between school counselling and other available supports.
- Assist education establishments to implement the national mental health and wellbeing Whole School Approach, including curricular, professional learning, and parental supports.
- Promote staff mental health and wellbeing in a range of ways, including through the development of a programme of supported reflective practice sessions.

Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy

- Recruit additional dental health support workers to support vulnerable families across NHS Ayrshire and Arran focusing on minority ethnic and our most deprived communities.
- As the cost-of-living increases, we are working to ensure that the whole family can be active for one affordable price. Our family membership will launch later in the year and provide a tailored package of opportunities which suits each individual family's setup.

- We are working closely with Active Schools to develop a community programme on Arran. The recruitment of key delivery staff will allow us to ensure that the island's location does not restrict their opportunities to stay active.

2.3 It should be noted that officers are currently working with community planning partners, communities and children and young people to define priorities as they develop a new suite of strategic children's services documents including a Children's Services Plan 2023-26, a Child Poverty Strategy 2023-26, and a Children's Rights Report 2023-26. It is anticipated that these documents will come forward for approval early in 2023.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) approves the draft North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2021-22; and
- b) agrees that the Progress Report is submitted to the Scottish Government and published on the North Ayrshire Community Planning website, subject to sign-off by relevant Community Planning partners.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None. All Children's Services commitments are aligned with the Council's agreed budgets.

Human Resources

4.2 None arising from this report.

Legal

4.3 The production of the Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2021-22 meets the Council's statutory obligations in terms of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None arising from this report.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None arising from this report.

Key Priorities

4.6 The Children's Services Plan and Progress Report link directly to the key priorities contained the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Council Plan 2019-2024.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None arising from this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Children's Services Plan 2020-23: Progress Report 2020/21 is the result of ongoing collaboration. The Community Planning Partnership and the Children's Services Strategic Partnership have influenced and been consulted on the production of this report.

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For further information please contact **Neil Sugden, Policy Officer (Child Poverty and UNCRC)**, email: **NeilSugden@North-Ayrshire.gov.uk**, Telephone on **01294 324163**.

Background Papers

[North Ayrshire Children's Services](#) Plan 2020-23