

North Lanarkshire Children's
Services Partnership

Children's Services Plan 2023-2026

Annual Report 2023-2024



getting
it right
for every child
in North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26

Annual Report 2023-24

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership, April 2024

Summary

This report provides an overview of the progress made during the first year of our [North Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#) (CS Plan).

The report includes updates on significant developments relating to North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership and there are highlights on how we have progressed the priorities to realise our ambitions in our CS Plan.

Alternative formats of this report, further information, more detailed reporting and contact details for the staff leading on the range of programmes is available on request.

Complementing the CS Plan and this report is

- A full report on the priorities within our Action Plan for the 2023-26 period
- A child and young person friendly summary of our children's services planning and the difference services and supports have made

Our Vision

In North Lanarkshire, our vision is to support all children and young people to achieve their potential, ensuring they are loved, nurtured and empowered to thrive in all aspects of their lives, upholding each and every child and young person's rights as stated in the UNCRC.

We will work collaboratively with children, young people, their families, and our partners to ensure they get the best start in life and support families to provide loving care. We will do this by making sure we have the right support available, at the right time, for as long as needed, and delivered in the right places to ensure equity for all and reduce inequalities.

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership

Introduction

Our Children's Services Plan includes our vision, for how we best deliver services and supports for children, young people and families in North Lanarkshire. It states our ambitions and priorities and includes an action plan to detail how we shall achieve these priorities. In North Lanarkshire we do this through North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership (CS Partnership). The CS Partnership brings together key partners and stakeholders and works together to identify shared priorities.

Partners include children, young people and families, key public sector agencies, independent sector organisations and the community and voluntary sector. Rather than oversee the full breadth of work that directly or indirectly relates to children, young people and families, the focus of the CS Partnership is on the shared priorities identified in the CS Plan for the period 2023-26. Each partner has duties and responsibilities beyond the scope and work of the CS Partnership.

The CS Plan links to [The Plan](#) for North Lanarkshire and to the Scottish Government [National Outcomes](#).

Planning and reporting

Scottish Government legislation requires us to publish a Children's Services Plan every 3 years and to publish a report on progress each year.

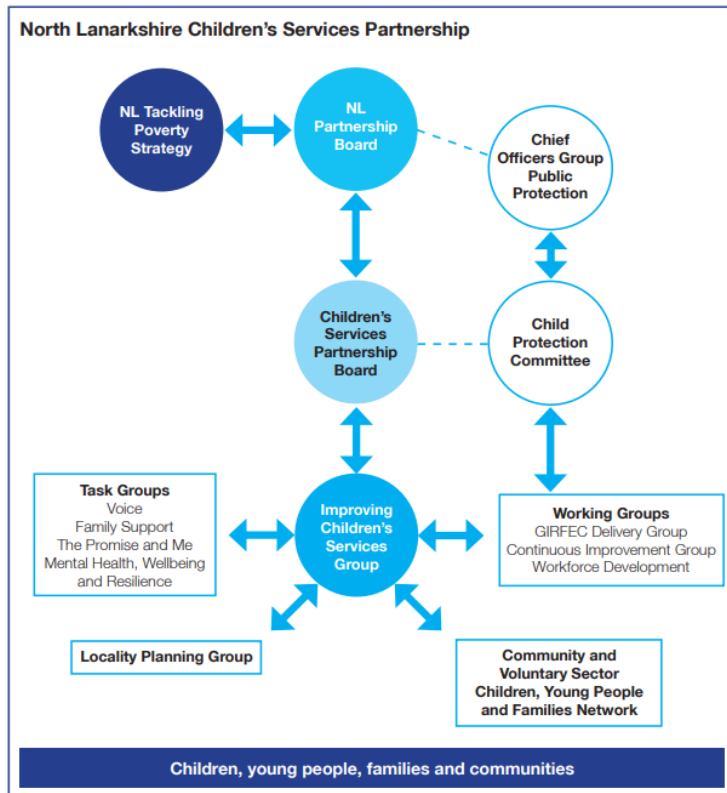
There is a statutory requirement to report every 3 years on how we have further and bettered children's rights. The next Children's Rights Report is due in 2026. The reporting duties are now part of UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and there will be statutory guidance produced by the Scottish Government supporting this duty.

The CS Plan 23-26 developed with engagement of partners over a nine-month period to identify, inform and shape the shared priorities and agreed actions. Partners included children, young people and families, and their inputs to the planning process resulted in a commitment to produce child and young person friendly information about the CS Plan. This was co-produced with young people to complement this report.

There has been an increased emphasis on our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This is the process of gathering information, research, data and feedback to inform continuous improvement, target resources and identify shared priorities. Within this report is a summary of some of the key sources of information that influence current and future planning.

Governance

Children's services in North Lanarkshire are provided by a broad range of agencies and organisations. They come together as the North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership to co-ordinate services and supports to ensure the best outcomes for children, young people and families, making the best use of resources available. The different parts of the structure are shown in the diagram and described below.



Children's Services Partnership Board (CSPB)

The purpose of this is to identify and progress shared priorities and provide strategic direction to the planning and delivery of children's services. It is a forum for partners to communicate about key developments and develop proactive responses to change. This is a shared responsibility. The CSPB links with North Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership.

The structure to support the work of the CSPB includes the **Improving Children's Services Group (ICSG)** which delivers and reports on the range of plans and actions taken forward through the task groups and linked networks.

The CS Partnership also links with **North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee (CPC)**. Each have their own plans. There are also shared areas of responsibility to deliver, focusing on continuous improvement and workforce development.

Within this structure, community and voluntary sector involvement is supported by the **Community and Voluntary Sector, Children, Young People and Families Network**, facilitated by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL).

At a local level, partners come together to deliver on priorities in Locality Planning Groups.

We have the following focussed task groups to identify and take forward the priorities in the plan:

- **Voice** (includes UNCRIC)
We listen and respond to the needs and views of children, young people, parents and families and include them in plans and decisions that impact on their lives. Representatives on the task group have a role in the broad range of engagement and participation responsibilities and activities across the partnership. The group has an overview, makes connections, co-ordinates and supports engagement and participation.
- **Whole Family Support**
The aim of the group is to drive forward multiagency activity to achieve the ambitions of the foundation of Family in The Promise and ensure that children, young people receive support that is relational and trauma-informed at the time they need it. There is a focus on the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund programme of work to support the transformation of the system of support to children, young people and their families.
- **The Promise and Me Partnership**
This group lead on delivering the ambitions of The Promise foundation of Care. They have oversight of corporate parenting and develop and publish the corporate parenting strategy and plan, [Corporate Parenting in North Lanarkshire, Families and Professionals Together 2023-2026](#).

- **Mental Health Wellbeing and Resilience**

The key role of this task group is to promote the mental health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people in North Lanarkshire. There is a focus on a partnership approach to implement the Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing Support and Services Framework and deploy the associated resources.

- **GIRFEC Delivery Group**

This group is promoting a shared understanding of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), embedding the National Practice Model and associated GIRFEC practice materials and guidance. It supports the development and delivery of GIRFEC within the Partnership, driving forward good practice in meeting the needs of families, children and young people so that they get the right help at the right time.

- **Continuous Improvement Group**

The Continuous Improvement Group is a sub-group of both the Child Protection Committee and the Improving Children's Services Group, this provides the platform for taking forward areas of improvement across the partnership whether directly relating to the safeguarding of children and young people or wider children's services improvement.

Strategic links and developments

North Lanarkshire CS Partnership links with a broad range of national and local fora, strategies and plans. These are listed and summarised in the [Strategic Drivers](#) document, reviewed in November 2023 and published in February 2024.

Key drivers for CS Partnership are

- UNCRC
- GIRFEC
- The Promise
- Whole Family Support
- Tackling Poverty and Child Poverty
- Child Protection

Key developments relating to these are

The Promise

On behalf of North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership, The Promise and Me Partnership, one of the task groups lead on the statutory duty to produce a Corporate Parenting Plan. As a task group shared priorities from this are included in our Children's Services Plan and this Annual Report.

The Promise and Me Partnership – [Corporate parenting in North Lanarkshire, Families and Professionals Together 2023-2026](#). This plan embraces the ambitions of The Promise and is further detailed in an Annual Action Plan.

Whole Family Support and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF)

Through its Resilient People Programme, North Lanarkshire Council's Programme of work to 2028 sets out the ambition to deliver local family support that builds the strengths of children, individuals and families to improve outcomes and reduces spend on expensive services that are accessed too late. This complements North Lanarkshire's University Health and Social Care Strategic Commissioning Plan which also has a focus on whole family support.

As a key part of its commitment to keep The Promise, The Scottish Government's 2021- 22 Programme for Government has committed to investing £500 million of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) over the lifetime of the Parliament, to support the development of holistic whole family support services. North Lanarkshire received a total grant of £4.702 million for 22/23 & 23/24 and the further investment is confirmed for 24/25 and we are expecting a further grant in 25/26.

Child Poverty

The work of the CS Partnership is closely linked to the [North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Strategy](#), Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire, and the statutory [Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report](#) (LCPAR). Each task group and working group has given consideration to how the work being progressed will impact on the four key drivers of tackling poverty in North Lanarkshire.

- Income from employment
- Reducing the cost of living
- Income from social security and benefits in kind
- Holistic support

As part of the North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Strategy, consultation with children and young people has taken place to gather their experiences and views on poverty and what can be done. This has been shared to inform the Children's Services Plan 2023-26 and also within task groups where relevant details inform actions ensuring that the impact of poverty is mitigated wherever possible.

Priorities and actions in the Children's Services Plan link with priorities and actions in the Tackling Poverty Strategy and LCPAR. There are increasingly joint initiatives, cross representation and sharing of data and reports. The work of all task groups impacts on child poverty and there are close links with the

Family Support Task Group, recognising the role of family support in relation to the key drivers. Addressing poverty through cash first/direct financial support is key component of whole family support and informs developments being coordinated by the group.

Examples of partnership work linking with the Tackling Poverty Strategy

- Promotion of free transport for young people through the Young Scot, National Entitlement Card.
- Supporting the Tackling Poverty team on 'The Three Questions' to engage those in school, those not in school and seldom heard voices in conversations around poverty.
- Supporting the delivery of Financial Education Package in schools and community settings.
- Launch of Cash First Project supported by funding from Scottish Government to focus on food poverty and insecurity. There is additional funding from NLC to include fuel poverty in this project.
- Whole Family Support task group are focused on reducing the cost of living.
- Through co-production with children, young people and families, there has been support to all partners and services to "poverty proof" community-based activities to maximise attendance, participation and outcomes.

North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee (CPC)

The relationship between the CS Partnership and North Lanarkshire CPC has continued to gather strength. The revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, published in Sept 2021 and updated in 2023, provides a framework for this work that reflects a holistic approach and the drivers and priorities within our Children's Services Plan 2023-26. GIRFEC, children's rights, whole family support, The Promise and the impact of child poverty underpin child protection and improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Developing practice

Contextual Safeguarding

When risk out with the family is identified, the contextual safeguarding approach supports a shift in practice and culture in North Lanarkshire in which child protection professionals and partners actively take steps to make the context in which young people have experienced abuse safer.

We are committed to using a contextual safeguarding approach to improve our response to young people at risk of extra familial harm. This approach recognises and considers the environmental and social context for young people. To support practice change there has been continued multi agency training, a commitment to a sharing of tools and resources and a commitment to evidence based learning.

As the first local authority area in Scotland to implement contextual safeguarding we continue to work alongside other national bodies to improve and refine responses from a rights based perspective and support other authorities who may be thinking of implementing the approach. North Lanarkshire has contributed to new research in this area;

- [Innovation in Social Care – New Approaches for Young People Affected by Extra-Familial Risks and Harms | Bristol University Press \(bristoluniversitypressdigital.com\)](https://bristoluniversitypressdigital.com)
- [Sustaining Social Work: Practitioner experiences of Contextual Safeguarding | Contextual Safeguarding](#)

Trauma-Informed Practice

North Lanarkshire are working with the National Trauma Transformation Programme approach and NLC are aspiring to become a Trauma Informed Organisation. There is a high level steering group co-ordinating implementation strategy across the 5 national drivers:

- Workforce knowledge and skills.
- Leadership and management.
- Workforce wellbeing.
- Voice of lived experience.
- Data loops to support this.

The steering group has developed an [implementation plan](#). Training has been piloted and is in the process of being rolled out across the partnership and is being delivered collaboratively with NLC and NHS Lanarkshire.

Challenges and opportunities

COVID 19

Globally the impacts of the pandemic remain with us. Whilst we are now “living with” the virus, the affects from the measures and the virus itself continue to emerge. As a partnership we remain vigilant and ever responsive to these impacts and continue to ensure the best supports and responses are available to those in need. In the development of the CS Plan 2023-2026, our JSNA identified statistical trends, challenges and opportunities. This, in conjunction with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) contributed to the development of the priorities in the CS Plan and helps to identify improvements that promote health and wellbeing for all children and young people in North Lanarkshire.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

From April – June 2023 the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was completed in primary, secondary and Additional Support Need (ASN) schools. The information gathered supports work to enhance collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all our children and young people are included, supported, and safe.

The SDQ is an internationally recognised measure of wellbeing in young people.

The questionnaire is scored across five areas (emotions, conduct, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationships, prosocial) and these are combined to give a strengths and a difficulties score that is categorised as ‘close to average’, ‘slightly raised’, ‘high’ or ‘very high’. There has been analysis of the results which can be compared to the results of the SDQ completed in 2021 and as part of the Realigning Children’s Services Survey in 2017.

The set of results for 2023 takes in 36,294 individual responders, representing 76% of children and young people in schools. Analysis was able to focus on a range of areas to compare with the average, with previous years and in different groups such as gender, those with care experience, children on the child protection register, additional support needs and those who live in geographic areas where the Scottish Indicator of Multiple Deprivation is 1 or 2.

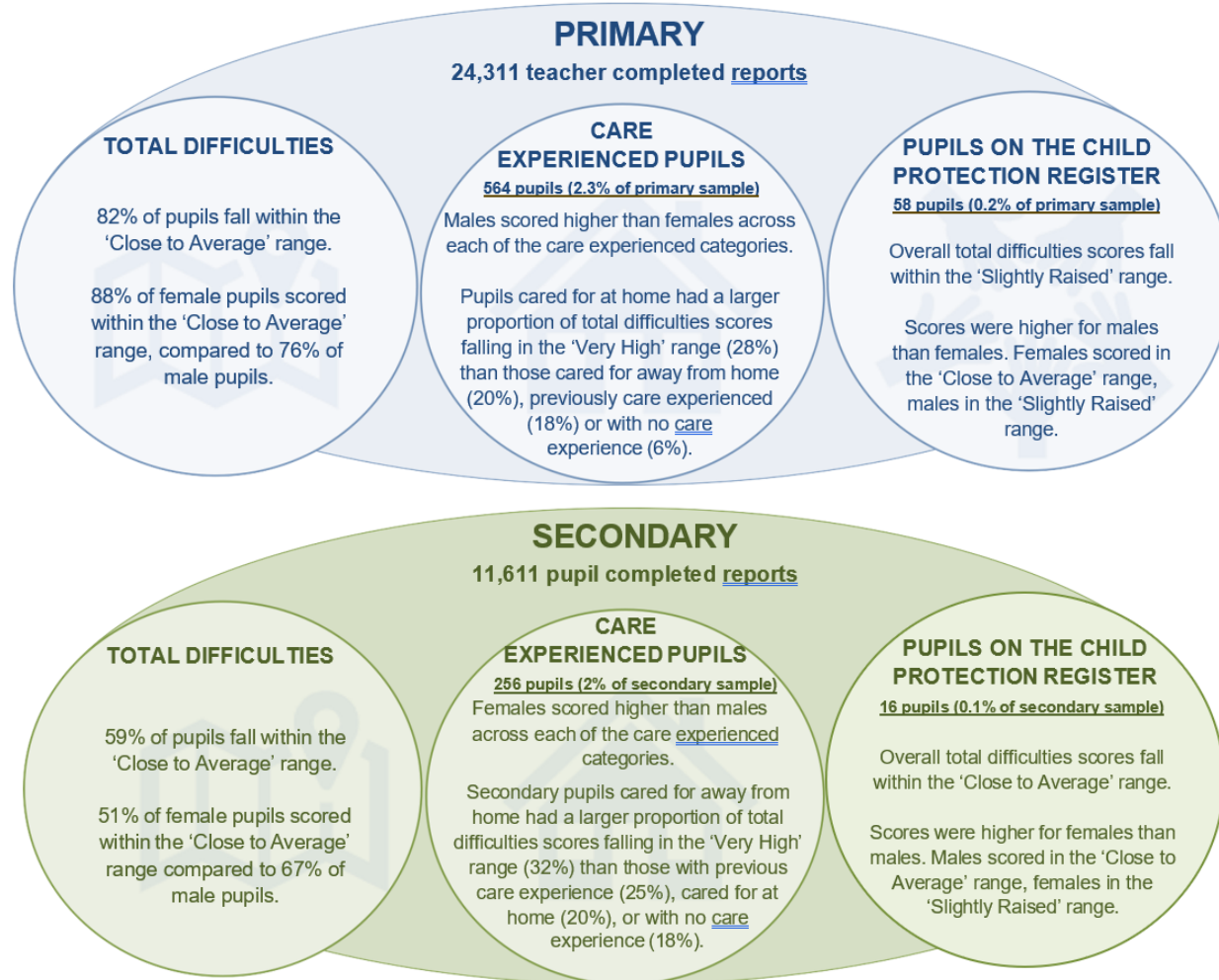
Analysis is considered overall and each school and cluster have their own results that influence improvement planning. The info graphics below offer headline information. More detailed analysis and a technical report is available on request.

Information and analysis of the 2023 SDQ has been shared with task groups. Plans are underway to repeat the SDQ in 2024-25.

North Lanarkshire Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, April – July 2023

76% of overall school population completed a questionnaire. 94% in primary school and 56% in secondary school

All data below refers to average Total Difficulties Scores



The Joint Inspection of Services for Children at Risk of Harm

This took place between April and September 2023. Inspection is a process through which we present our self-evaluation and position statement, highlighting what we believe to be our strengths and areas for improvement, and the external scrutiny validates or challenges what we present and evidence. The full report can be found [here](#).

Preparations included updating our self-evaluation using the Quality Improvement Framework and producing a position statement. The inspection activity included;

- 1300 staff responded to the Staff survey.
- Review of 60 child's records, a focus on assessment and planning.
- Site visits and focus groups.
- Direct contact in focus groups with 200 staff from across the partnership and 10 elected members.
- Inspectors listened to the views and experiences of 59 children and young people and 42 parents and carers including face-to-face meetings, and survey responses carried out by telephone conversations. It was acknowledged that a relatively low number of survey responses related to this being undertaken during the school holiday period.
- Inspectors also considered our position statement and self-evaluation as well as other publicly available information on services in North Lanarkshire.

The inspection team concluded that our partnership self-evaluation aligned with the inspection evaluation in terms of strengths and areas for improvement, supporting that we know ourselves well. The inspection methodology only provides a 'scored' evaluation against quality indicator 2.1 within the inspection framework: Impact on Children and Young People. The evaluation of this quality indicator was Very Good. This evaluation was underpinned by evidence of strengths. Key areas of strengths, improvements and future plans are identified in the following table. These almost mirror the areas of improvement we identified in our partnership self-evaluation. The areas for improvement will be key foundations to our improvement plan for the children's services partnership.

The report did not make any recommendations and this decision based on the areas of strengths and in addition, the Care Inspectorate and its scrutiny partners were confident that the partnership in North Lanarkshire has the capacity to make changes to service delivery in the areas that require improvement.

Areas For Improvement	Areas of Strengths	Future Plans
<p>Work is already taking place on identified areas for improvement in our partnership self-evaluation and the inspection evaluation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent quality of written children’s plans and chronologies. • Strengthen the use of advocacy and promote advocacy across the partnership. • Strengthening our use of data to inform practice development. • Enhance practice in transitions. • More consistent involvement of parents in service design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people’s lives improve with high quality planning and support, ensuring they experience sustained living and nurturing relationships to keep them safe from further harm. • Children and young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are safer because risks have been identified early and are responded to effectively. ○ Were listened to, understood and respected. ○ Experience supportive and trusting relationships with staff. • Children, young people and families are meaningfully and appropriately involved in decisions about their lives. They influence service planning delivery and improvement. • Young People over the age of 12 benefited from the broad-reaching contextual safeguarding approach though further outcome data is required to fully determine impact. • Children and young people who required additional help with education, health and wellbeing were identified early and multi-agency approaches taken to support them. • Collaborative strategic leadership, planning and operational management ensure high standards of service delivery. 	<p>The following are ‘work in progress’ which will support our areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation and evaluation of the impact of Signs of Safety and Healing. The model and its approaches are being implemented for assessment, planning and intervention across the CS Partnership. • Development of Bairns Hoose, building on our integrated Joint Investigative Interview/Scottish Child Interview Model Team. • Strengthening our approach to whole family support underpinned by the temporary additional funding of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. This includes prevention and early help through our Cluster Planning for Children’s Wellbeing Model of staged intervention. • Implement the UNCRC legislation to include impact evaluation. Development of UNCRC education peer group. • Building on the positive evaluation by staff of communication and engagement in both preparation for and during inspection, we will review our communication and engagement strategy for staff to promote key developments and priorities. • Further develop contextual safeguarding, including further evaluation of the approach in how it is improving outcomes to safeguard older

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overarching, cultural change in how children’s rights were promoted, and trauma was understood, and how relationships were approached was having a positive impact. 	<p>children when harm out with the home is identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen how we involve people with lived experience.
--	--	--

Signs of Safety and Healing

The planned implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing has now been resourced. Preparations began at the end of 2023 and a two year implementation plan will run from December 2024 to December 2026. This is a significant development that will help us realise our ambitions for transformational change and positively impact on the improvement areas in the self-evaluation and inspection report.

Signs of Safety and Healing is a practice framework that is being implemented across children’s services from early intervention to more intensive support. It will support us to work in a more empowering way with families and complements other strengths and rights based approaches such as Contextual Safeguarding. Together these approaches provide staff with a framework to promote relationships and trauma informed practice. Terminology and practice that we are familiar with will be strengthened through adopting this approach. It revolves around balanced risk assessment, effective safety and care planning, working in partnership, building on the strengths, resources and networks to reduce risks and increase safety.

It is a whole system change programme, involving a culture shift and improvements across assessment and planning for children and relationship based support to families.

To implement Signs of Safety and Healing we have begun a baseline audit of 300 case files. During December 2023 and January 2024 the first group of children’s services managers received their training. This group will support implementation and delivery of the model over the next 2 years.

Our priorities and actions

Our priorities in the CS Plan 23-26 were grouped under the five foundations of The Promise. Although UNCRC underpins the work in all the foundations, it also has a section to reflect the priorities and work that are included in the CS Plan. Mental health, wellbeing and resilience is an area where there are a number of priorities and actions that sit in several of the foundations.

- UNCRC
- Voice
- Family
- The Promise Partnership
- People
- Scaffolding

The following pages provide a summary of the key achievements during 2023-24 and planned actions from 2024-25, in each of these foundations.

UNCRC

In developing our children’s services plan we recognise that children’s rights, as stated in United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, underpin each of the foundations of The Promise. We will further develop a rights-based approach to children’s services in North Lanarkshire as well as advocate, promote and support, across and beyond the CS Partnership, the responsibilities of partners as duty bearers.

Since publishing the CS Plan UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 has been given Royal Assent and during the second year of the CS Plan, 2024-25 the legislation will be enacted.

UNCRC Priorities 2023-26
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everybody, (staff, partners, and the public), is aware of these rights and understands what they are, as expressed in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. 2. We embed a rights-based approach across all services and make children’s rights visible in policy, culture and practice.

UNCRC report 2023-24

Key achievements 2023-24	Planned Actions 2024-25
<p>In continuing to raise awareness of UNCRC amongst children, young people and adults we monitor views and application of the Make it Right campaign assets. The youth led #MakeitRight campaign has 15000 impressions, and the short film has had over 100,000 views since its launch in 2022. Partners have downloaded campaign materials 21 times.</p> <p>The commitment and active promotion of Rights Respecting Schools has resulted in 16 schools registering in 2023-24. Six of these have already received bronze accreditation. Across North Lanarkshire there are now 149 Rights Respecting Schools. The levels of accreditation are:</p>	<p>We will continue to develop and embed our rights-based approach, supported by children and young people in North Lanarkshire. The web pages will be refreshed to reflect UNCRC legislation, relevant information and links to resources for children, young people and families.</p> <p>Rights Respecting School will continue to progress through the levels of accreditation ensuring that children’s rights are ‘learned, taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted’.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold 17 • Silver 44 • Bronze 56 • Reaccreditation 6 • Awaiting accreditation 26 <p>To ensure staff are updated and able to inform their networks and communities the Voice Task Group have shared briefings about UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and Scottish Government Guidance.</p> <p>Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) have been promoted and applied.</p> <p>Progressing from the #MakeitRight campaign a group of young people reviewed UNCRC learning resources. They developed and tested UNCRC workshops to deliver in youth work and school settings. This peer led approach means our workshops for children and young people are created by young people to ensure they are relevant and accessible to the target audience.</p>	<p>Preparations for the enactment of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 will continue for single agencies/sectors and for North Lanarkshire CS Partnership. Preparation for changes to reporting are underway.</p> <p>There are quality assurance measures to gather information and learning from CRWIAs to ensure the processes are reviewed and developed. As practice progresses this information will be reviewed.</p> <p>The planned roll out the peer led UNCRC workshop through North Lanarkshire Youth Forum and locality Youth Voice Groups will progress. We shall evaluate the workshops and review the programme to identify future development.</p> <p>There will be a partnership approach to training and learning opportunities for UNCRC.</p>
--	--

Voice

It is important that we listen and respond to the views of children, young people, and families and this is included in the planning of children's services. Those affected by decisions will be engaged and their views included in decision making processes. We will create opportunities for participation in all aspects of services and supports, from assessment and planning to activities, programmes of work and service design. We have worked to improve engagement with children and young people and recognise that we need to do more to engage with parents and families.

Voice Priorities 2023-26

3. Through engagement and participation, we want to know and understand the collective views, needs and aspirations of children, young people, parents and families.
4. We use a range of methods and collaborate with other services to engage with children, young people and families.
5. Task groups and working groups plan for engagement and create opportunities to ensure participation in planning of delivery of the priorities and the co design of services.
6. We engage with children, young people and their families on what is working for them and what improvements to services they think are needed.
7. We want the voices of children, young people, parents and families to be at the centre of the CS Partnership and ensure those with protected characteristics and intersectionality have the same opportunities to have their voices heard.
8. We want to support the participation of individual children, young people and families that we are working with to gather their views, tell us their interests and needs and ensure these are represented and acted upon.
 - Each Child's Plan will include all relevant views and how they will be implemented and reviewed.
 - We will develop and apply a range of tools and resources and ensure inclusion of diverse communication needs.

Voice Report 2023-24

Key Achievements 2023-24	Planned Actions 2024-25
<p>Draft guidance has been shared to support staff, task groups and partners with engagement and participation. Helpful links, documentation and resources are collated and shared on a webpage.</p> <p>In January 2024 elections took place to elect the 9 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament. Membership of North Lanarkshire Youth Council (NLYC) was refreshed.</p> <p>There are now links with Education Parent Voice and a Parent Engagement Strategy has been launched.</p> <p>In response to feedback, we have involved children, young people, and families in developing a child and young person friendly addition to our CS Plan and Report. Young people requested ‘real stories from real people’ to highlight the work of the CS Partnership and have been directly involved in producing short videos from ‘stories’ gathered.</p> <p>All task groups have examples of where they have engaged with children, young people and families to ensure they are influencing the direction of travel and shaping services and supports through feedback, consultation and co-production. E.g. Young people made a video about their experiences of services to support mental health and wellbeing and in response we are now involving them in the selection and commissioning of services. https://youtu.be/bwbdJ1QaRHU</p>	<p>This will continue to develop through the Voice Task Group to ensure all staff and task groups are able to access guidance and supports. Updates will be shared with wider partnership.</p> <p>We will progress plans to refresh our youth participation structures to strengthen youth voice, through pupil participation, NLYC and other representative groups such as Today not Tomorrow.</p> <p>A refresh of our Partnership Agreement with children and young people will take place. We will develop our approach to CS Partnership planning and reporting to make this more accessible to children, young people and families.</p> <p>Publication and promotion of the child and young person friendly addition to our CS Plan and Report is underway.</p> <p>Task groups will continue to be encouraged and supported to embed engagement and participation as part of the governance of the CS Partnership and when progressing each of the priorities in the CS Plan.</p>

Family

We will continue to work together to ensure that children feel safe and loved in their families and are supported to thrive there. This will include:

- Making the early and teenage years of parenting a positive experience regardless of the adversity that families face
- Giving every family that needs support the right help at the right time, in the right place, for as long as it is needed.
- Placing families, children and young people at the heart of our development of community hubs.
- Supporting good mental health, building emotional resilience, and developing trauma recovery for families, children and young people.

We will strengthen our ethos of Whole Family Support, working with families in a preventative way and supporting parents and carers to build on their strengths. Tackling poverty will be a central feature of the approach to family support; providing help to maximise income; develop skills for employment and taking a cash first approach where necessary. The ten principles of family support outlined in The Promise, will underpin all our work to improve the outcomes for families, children and Young People within North Lanarkshire.

Family Priorities 2023-26

9. Use the community hub programme in all localities as a key enabler of earlier intervention, moving and integrating services upstream to improve outcomes, through preventative approaches.
10. Ensure equity of access to services for all children, young people and families including care experienced people up to and beyond the age of 26yrs.
11. Strengthen family supports where children have additional support needs, including those with a Neurodevelopmental profile.
12. Build and develop the mental health and resilience of our children, young people and their families promoting early intervention, establishing community supports, and self-care.
13. Tackle the impacts of poverty to support children, young people and their families to thrive and gain access to economic opportunities.
14. NLC are working towards achieving the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Local Authority award and aim to support, promote and protect breastfeeding in our communities for an increased amount of women to initiate and sustain breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks.
15. Children and families affected by alcohol and drug use will be safe, healthy, included and supported.

Family Support report 2023-24

Key Achievements 2023-24	Planned Actions 2024-25
<p>Following intervention using mental health and family wellbeing funding, 22 out of 2602 (less than 1%) of young people supported were referred onto crisis level supports (social work or CAMHS). Reporting on the framework is detailed in this SWAY.</p> <p>A priority from our needs analysis with families and staff was accessible early help seven days a week. In response we have used our Whole Family Wellbeing Funding support to commission a new service to provide universal early help to complement our targeted and intensive services. Details are in this SWAY.</p> <p>Neurodevelopmental Family Support Service has grown significantly since taking referrals from Education. Between July 23 and March 24, they worked with 142 whole families, often with each individual member, to offer the right support at the right time.</p> <p>Living Life to the Full Programme had 743 young people access the programmes and saw school attendance improve for all young people by 31%. 60% of referrals to our wellbeing practitioner prevented referral to CAMHS.</p> <p>100% of early learning settings have achieved the Breastfeeding Friendly Early Learning Award. 80% of schools have achieved the Breastfeeding Friendly Schools Award. Breastfeeding rates have increased to 30.4.</p> <p>4.5 FTE Family Support Practitioners have now been recruited in early years to support families with young children impacted by drug use (Family Engagement Service).</p>	<p>We will continue to raise awareness and engagement of a range of mental health support options and services at school and community level including the online digital platform Kooth.</p> <p>Implementation of the new service has begun. There will be performance management information that includes assessment of the impact on outcomes for children, young people and families.</p> <p>Whole family support will continue to develop and address the needs as early as possible and continue to work holistically with the families.</p> <p>We will continue to deliver a suite of complementary programmes to support improvements for our young people at Universal, Additional and Intensive Levels.</p> <p>We are committed to continuing to drive up breastfeeding rates.</p> <p>Joint planning with ADP and the family support workers will continue to progress.</p>

The Whole Family Support Task group is now linked to the whole family support group within the ADP to coordinate joint planning to address this priority area.

We have completed Phase 4 of the Community Solutions approach to providing mental health supports. 1135 children and 120 families were supported by a range of providers including Social Track, OutLet, Circle and Make and Create Arts.

We will develop the full range of services and report on outcomes at the earliest opportunity.

Care

There will always be some children who cannot stay with their families. Some will need to live away from their family for a short time, others will never live with their family again, while many return later and as young adults. Children and young people experiencing care at home, are those who can remain with their families but who need support which is compulsory, through an order by the children's hearing system. There is a presumption that children will stay together with their brothers and sisters if they must be removed from their parents.

The approach for our care experienced children and young people is rights based and priorities for 2023-26 are built around the Promise and the GIRFEC principles. We want our care experienced children and young people to belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed. To enable long-term, loving relationships to develop, we want to recognise the support residential staff and carers need to care for children who have experienced trauma and to support parents who have experienced trauma to enable them to care for their children. We want to provide early help and preventative support so that children and young people who are care experienced can reach their potential.

The Corporate Parenting In North Lanarkshire Families and Professionals Together 2023-2026- Strategy, Action Plan and reporting includes more details of this area of work, planned actions and reporting.

Care priorities 2023-26

16. Develop a systemic approach to involve care experienced children, young people and their families in how all services are designed and/or re-designed to meet all health needs.
17. Provide support to parents that is available when they are ready and tailored to their needs.
18. In our balance of care, reduce the trend of children and young people being removed from and rehabilitated to their families by strengthening opportunities to provide early help and prevent escalation.
19. Support to parents whose children have been removed on a permanent basis helps to sustain or build relationships with their children and maintain direct or indirect contact.
20. Build on the work already progressed to continue to develop our approaches to sustain nurturing relationships for our care experienced children and young people- family relationships with parents, carers and those significant to children and young people.
21. Consider the support that could be provided to unaccompanied asylum seekers and children and young people who are in North Lanarkshire through the National Transfer Scheme.
22. Continue to close the educational attainment gap for our care experienced children and young people. Continue to improve their attendance and provide help to parents and carers to support their children and young people to meet their educational needs.
23. Further development of the Virtual School, building on its success in improving children and young people's attendance and educational attainment and support to enable them to have positive destinations.
24. Care experienced children, young people and their families are involved in the development and redesign of health services.
25. There is a smoother transition from children to adult health services for those who need ongoing support.
26. Use additional funding streams proportionately to develop community supports and therapeutic interventions to enable tailored responses to meet individual needs.

Care Report 2023-24

Key Achievements 2023-24	Planned Actions 2024-25
<p>The Promise team represent the voice of care experienced children and young people on a number of strategic, steering and task groups. Through wider engagement with children and young people across the CS Partnership their voices are being heard and acted upon.</p> <p>One example, involving young people in establishing a peer mentoring service included focus groups, one to one discussions and feedback to those who participated.</p> <p>The resettlement programme continues to collaborate with partners to co-ordinate and link unaccompanied asylum seeking (UAS) children and other resettled children and young people to a broad range of services and supports to meet their needs. This includes increasing the housing options for UAS young people.</p> <p>Virtual School provides outreach to schools and in-house provision. Between Aug 2019 – Jun 2023 amongst care experienced learners there has been an 88% reduction in exclusions and over 400 SQA and wider achievement awards. 146 staff in schools have participated in awareness sessions. The support provided has increased the educational opportunities and achievements for care experienced children, ensuring positive destinations.</p> <p>The Through Care and After Care Hub for care experienced young people has continued to develop and now offers tailored support around housing, money, health and counselling. The Hub continues to develop lifelong links to make sure care experienced young people could reconnect with their families and those significant to them.</p>	<p>The operational arrangements of the Promise Team will be reviewed, taking account of the wider opportunities for participation and engagement across the partnership.</p> <p>We will continue to develop the peer mentoring service, making sure we capitalise on the potential to support children and young people who are in conflict with the law, a disproportionate number of whom have been care experienced.</p> <p>We will continue to strengthen the support offered to UAS children including the children and young people we receive through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Accommodation is an identified priority and will need continued collaboration with housing colleagues including registered landlords and third sector housing providers.</p> <p>The Keeping the Promise Award will roll out across all of our educational establishments to support staff in developing their knowledge and understanding of the Promise and their commitment to our care experienced learners. The Keeping the Promise Award has been recognised nationally and is now being developed in other areas of Scotland.</p> <p>The Hub will further develop the priorities, including financial advice and guidance, housing further education and employment opportunities to improve outcome for our care experienced young people.</p>

<p>Two throughcare/aftercare nurse posts have been appointed and implemented in North Lanarkshire.</p> <p>We developed a framework for family time including brothers and sisters for our care experienced children and young people. Family time and sustaining connections with those significant to those children who are care experienced away from home, is developing in practice.</p> <p>In response to care experienced young people identifying a difficulty in accessing counselling support that is flexible enough to meet their needs, we involved them in the design, commissioning and procurement of a dedicated counselling service. To date the service has worked intensively with 42 young people, with 78% reporting improved wellbeing.</p>	<p>The impact on the health and wellbeing of care experienced young people referred to the through care/after care nurses will be evaluated and reported through the Promise and Me Partnership and the Continuous Improvement and Performance Sub-Group.</p> <p>We will continue to embed family time into practice. This is aligned with the Promise and the implementation plan for Signs of Safety and Healing. We will ensure relationships with children and adults significant to care experienced children, will be maintained when it is safe and nurturing for the child.</p> <p>As we deliver the service we will continue to seek feedback from young people and apply performance management information to assess the long term impact of the range of services and supports introduced or redesigned.</p>
--	--

People

‘The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.’ The Promise 2021.

Those involved in the lives of children, young people and their families have a primary purpose to develop nurturing, compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships that keep children, young people and their families safe. The workforce across children’s services in North Lanarkshire will be supported to be trauma informed and relational. Our approach is to support the workforce, managers and practitioners, to be confident in their work to support children, young people and their families. Our ‘workforce’ includes staff, volunteers and carers.

People-Priorities 2023-26

26. Continue to advance and develop our children’s services workforce. We will provide opportunities for career advancement and promote collaborative working across the children’s services partnership and adult services.
27. Continue to develop workforce skills, confidence and competence developed in GIRFEC methodology, pathways, assessment planning and interventions.
28. Continually evaluate and update training and learning in line with legislation, strategy and policy
29. Make sure that staff supporting kinship, foster and adoptive families provide additional support when they need it, recognising that they too may need early help and preventative support to feel confident in caring for their children and young people who have experienced trauma.
30. Provide early help and preventative support to all families who need it and when they need it, including those parenting teenagers.
31. Consult with communities to identify gaps in service provision, how and where they want to access services, what is working well and what they think needs to change.
32. Work collaboratively across the range of strategic partnerships.
33. Work within our strategic frameworks to promote wellbeing within and across our communities ensuring equity of opportunities to improve life choices and chances.
34. Communicate effectively with our children, young people, families and communities.
35. Further develop our use of technology for families and the wider community to access and engage with services.

People Report 2023-24

Key achievements 2023-24	Planned Actions 2024-25
<p>The workforce development programme delivered training and learning opportunities aligned to our core values and supporting a coherent framework for relational and trauma informed practice. This includes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIRFEC • Trauma informed practice • Nurture programmes- Solihul • Child protection • Contextual safeguarding • Safe and Together • Signs of Safety and Healing <p>Access to information and services and supports has been widened through increasing our online presence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIRFEC NL has been updated to include information about supports and resources for families. Home Page - GIRFEC in NL • Care experienced young people asked for a ‘one stop shop’ for information about their rights and entitlements to aftercare and support, accessible where and when needed. In response a young people and partners worked to develop and launch Aftercare Northlan. • The online platform Kooth has been commissioned to give young people greater choice and control in how they access mental health supports. As at January 24, 500 young people had registered to use the site, there have been repeat log-ins and 92% of young people reported that they would recommend the website to a friend. • Partnership development of the Children & Young People Mental Health Services and Resources Directory, including co-design with young people from New College Lanarkshire. 	<p>The co-ordination and delivery of multi-agency training and learning opportunities across the different programmes of work will continue.</p> <p>Multi agency implementation groups oversee how learning is embedded and impacts on practice and outcomes for children, young people and families.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of courses includes feedback and assessment of the impact of the learning on practice and outcomes for children, young people and families.</p> <p>We will continue to gather information to monitor the use of websites, seeking feedback from staff, those who are care experienced and those who have used the supports available through Kooth. We know anxiety is the most reported issue for all age groups, apart from 10-12s, and we will use this information in the allocation of resources.</p>

Scaffolding

'Children, families, and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there to provide support when and where it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.' The Promise 2020.

The challenge presented here requires leadership and coordination at both a national and local level. Across the CS Partnership, during the lifetime of this plan, we will work together with our values, framework and priorities to realise our vision. We will ensure that our governance, culture, systems, and processes empower the workforce to support children, young people, and families to realise our shared vision. We will ensure that our approach fully embeds the strategic drivers referred to earlier and our continuous improvement activities are robust.

Scaffolding- Priorities 2023-26

36. Our vision is shared across the partnership and each partner is actively participating in the leadership and delivery of our shared priorities.
37. Further the implementation of GIRFEC and Pathways for all children and young people.
38. Implement changes in legislation and national guidance.
39. The CS Partnership is aligned with and contributing to North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty strategy and actions.
40. Through information and research, we are aware of need, changing drivers, policy and connections.
41. We are aware of the impact of our work and we are continuing to improve wellbeing for children, young people and families.
42. The knowledge gained is integrated into our planning and reporting.

Scaffolding report 2023-24

Key Achievements 2023-24	Planned action 2024-25
<p>A partnership approach to planning and delivery of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and Whole Family Support funding has continued. There has been increasing involvement of children, young people and families in the planning of this work, which includes the commissioning for mental health supports that resulted in contracting Kooth.</p> <p>Field visits were conducted in May and June 2023 with a 5-day programme of field visits for new members of the CS Partnership to gain firsthand knowledge and insights to the work of the partnership. Evaluation was positive, identifying benefits for both members and for the partners who were involved in hosting elements of the programme.</p> <p>Presentation have been hosted for the wider CS Partnership staff. These have included: Families Outside Research about the impact on children and families having a parent or loved on in prison, and the introduction of Kooth, the online mental health support for children and young people in North Lanarkshire.</p> <p>GIRFEC Pathways are established and continue to be strengthened – Universal Health Visiting Pathway, Cluster model and Wellbeing framework, 16+ pathway.</p> <p>The work to incorporate contextual safeguarding includes a self-evaluation specific to the approach and its impact on young people at risk of harm outside the home and/or who are reported missing is being progressed.</p> <p>Work has begun to tackle poverty within the education cluster model, starting with the Clyde Valley Cluster. This involves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consultation with pupils on three questions about poverty. - poverty awareness sessions for teaching staff. 	<p>We will progress the current plans and prepare for longer term changes in delivery beyond the additional funding period. Feedback from children, young people and families about their experiences and outcomes as a result of these programmes will be gathered and will inform further development.</p> <p>Further opportunities for the wider CS Partnership members to come together to share information and learning will be planned.</p> <p>Task groups have identified areas of work for future presentations such as young cares, UNCRC peer led workshops and increasing use of vapes.</p> <p>Launch of the pathway for planning and support for pre-birth is planned for 2024-25.</p> <p>We will gather and apply insights from the self-evaluation to further develop practice.</p> <p>Responses and information gathered will be applied to each school's Cost of School Day information and plan. Once complete the approach will be rolled out to other clusters.</p>

The report above offers a summary of the key achievements across the CS Partnership. These have been taken from the biannual reports collated by each task group and presented to North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership Board quarterly meetings. Fuller details of all the reported achievements from these reports are available on request.

The next Annual Report will be collated and published in Spring 2025.