

North Lanarkshire Children's
Services Partnership

Children's Services Plan 2023-2026

Annual Report
2024-2025

June 2025



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Summary

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

The report provides significant updates on the 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

- The [Annual Report for the 2023-24](#) period
- [Strategic Drivers and Plans](#) document



You can hear about the Children's Services Partnership and what it does in short films co-produced with young people.



[North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership and Plan](#) | [North Lanarkshire Council](#)

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

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership (CS Partnership) works together to achieve the outcomes for the shared ambitions and priorities outlined in our [CS Plan](#). The CS Plan includes our vision, information about the CS Partnership, how we best deliver services and supports to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in North Lanarkshire and an action plan to detail how we shall achieve these priorities.

In North Lanarkshire the CS Partnership brings together key partners and stakeholders who work 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.

We are also required to report every three years on how we have further and bettered children's rights. The next Children's Rights Report is due in 2026. The children's rights reporting duties are now part of [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) and there is 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.

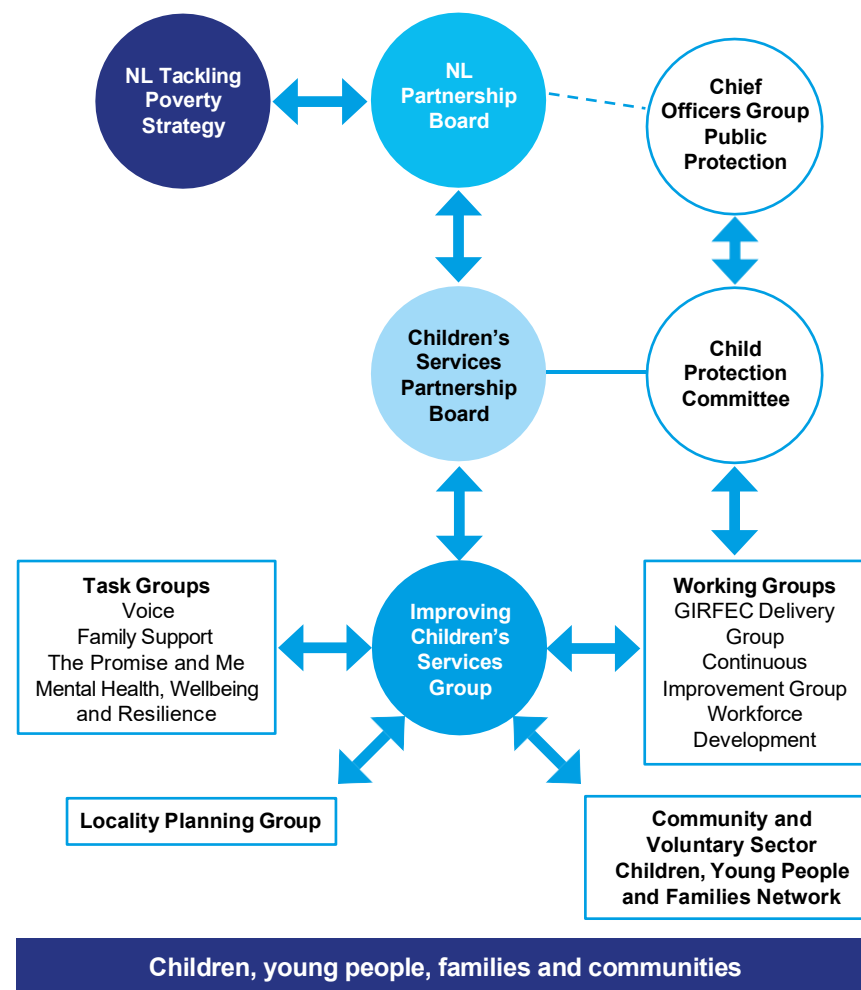
The **Children's Services Partnership Board (CSPB)** reports to the **North Lanarkshire Partnership Board** and provides strategic direction in the planning and delivery of children's services.

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

Links with **North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee (CPC)** includes shared areas of responsibility: Continuous improvement and workforce development.

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

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership



At a local and operational level, partnership staff come together to plan and deliver on priorities in Locality Planning Groups in Task groups. These are:

- Voice (includes UNCRC)
- Whole Family Support
- The Promise and Me Partnership
- Mental Health Wellbeing and Resilience
- Getting it right for every child Delivery Group
- Continuous Improvement Group



Involvement of children, young people and families in the work that we do influences the priorities and decisions made. There are examples of engagement, co production, consultation and feedback across our workstreams. This informs and influences developments and decisions. Although there has been direct representation of young people in the past, a different approach was sought. In August 2024 a proposal from the Voice Task Group was approved that focused on a biennial youth voice conference and chairs and co-chairs attending North Lanarkshire Youth Council meetings at least twice a year.

Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS), Children, Young People and Families Network (CYPFN) is facilitated by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire. with a role to

- Strengthen and develop the representational and delivery role of CVS organisations supporting children, young people and families.
- Increase understanding and appreciation of the CVS contribution amongst partners.
- Represent the sector and contribute to governance, planning, self evaluation, service development and delivery.
- Bring together the diverse roles, interests and contributions and bring that broad reach, knowledge and experience into our CS Partnership.

The CYPFN promotes CS Plan priorities in our communities including work to support breastfeeding, vitamin distribution, best start foods, volunteering and financial inclusion.

Highlights from 2024-25 include

- **Bairns' Hoose** - As part of the planning for this new resource and programme, members of the network were involved in a round table event to examine the role of the sector within the programme. There will be follow up with individual organisations.
- **North Lanarkshire Education and Families, ASN Mapping** - Members supported a mapping exercise to look at what support is currently available in the community and identify any gaps in provision.
- **Training and learning** -The CYPFN supported Signs of Safety briefing sessions and are promoting a one-day course that offers an overview of the principles and practice. CYPFN were part of a Getting it right for every child pilot and roll out that resulted in bespoke training through The Alliance. There has also been awareness raising of Getting it right for every child in North Lanarkshire and access to the North Lanarkshire Getting it right for every child training module.
- **Empowering Clusters** - CYPFN has built relationships and the sector works with the Empowering Cluster model delivering 73 different projects in schools with the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding.
- **The Neuro Developmental Family Support Service** was further developed during 2024-25 providing increased support to children and families in this area where there is increasing need.

Their strategy talks more fully about the aims and work across the CYPFN and will be refreshed during 2025. A full report of the work they have been involved in will be presented to the CS Partnership in Spring 2025.

[Children-Young-People-and-Families-Strategy-2022-25-Designed-1.pdf](#)

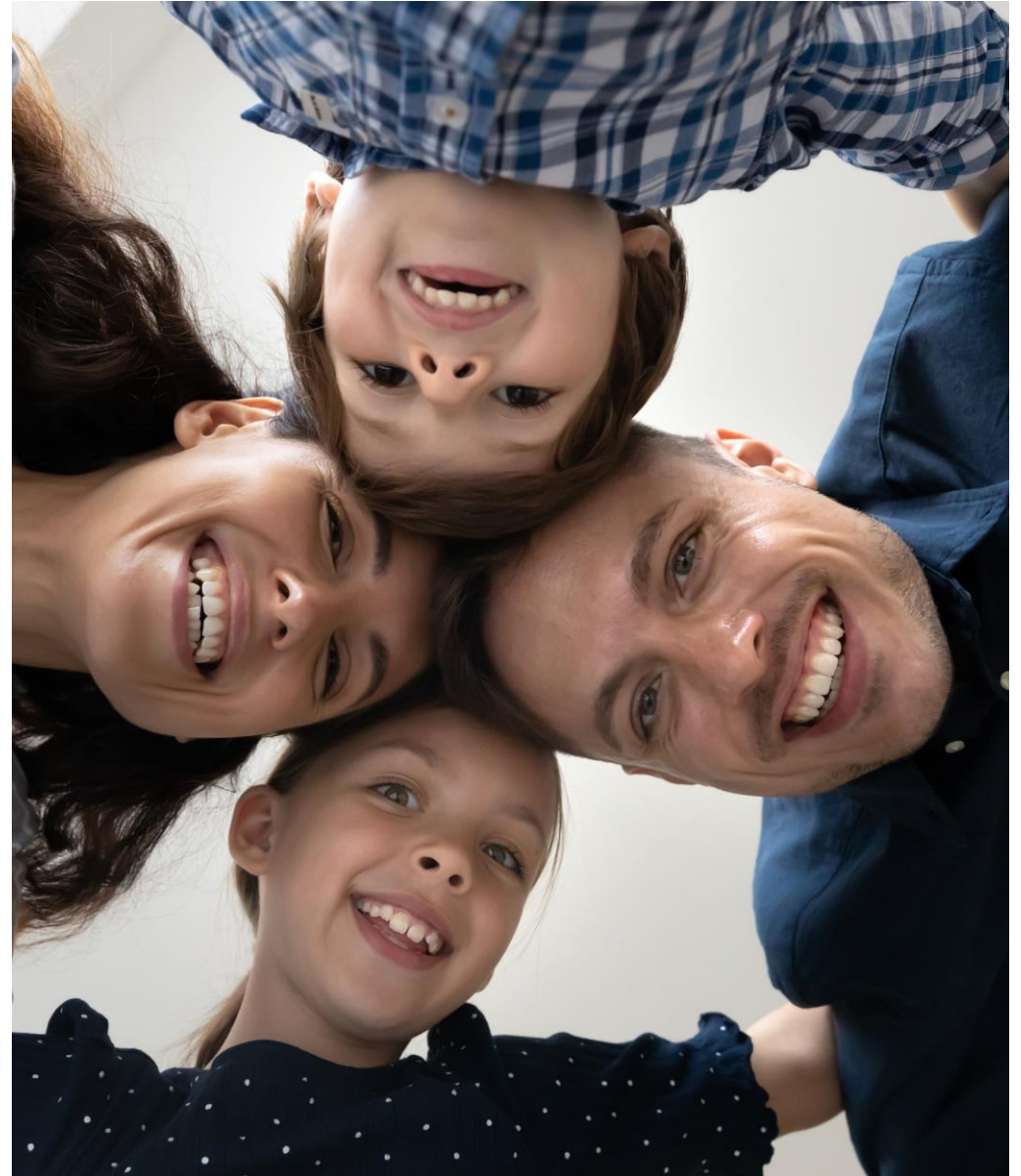


Key drivers

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 and Plans](#) document, reviewed in November 2023 and published in February 2024.

Key drivers for CS Partnership are below

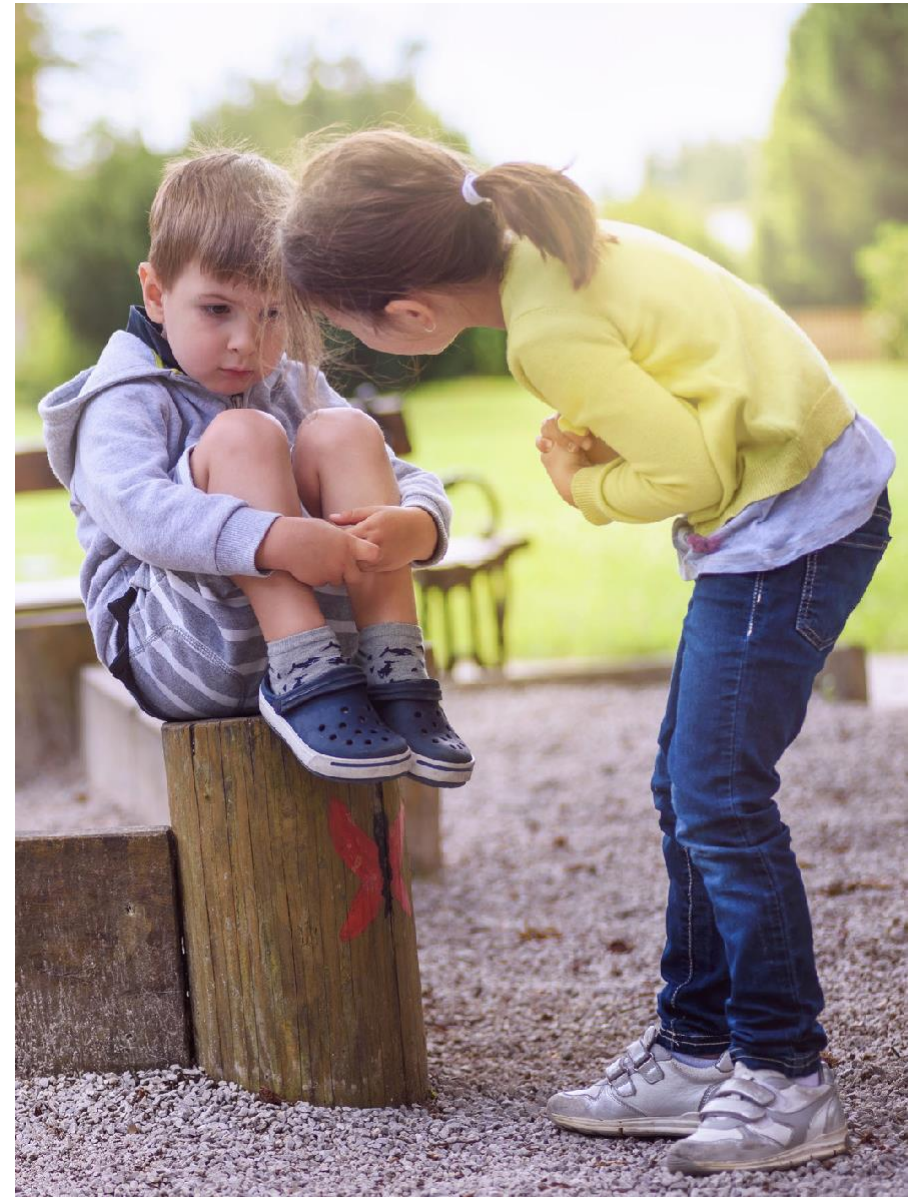
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Getting it right for every child
- The Promise
- Whole Family Support
- Tackling Poverty and Child Poverty
- Child Protection



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

On 16 July 2024 the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 was enacted. This means that public authorities must act compatibly with UNCRC as set out in the legislation. There are additional powers and duties for the Scottish Government, the Children's Commissioner and public authorities as well as the opportunity for children and young people to seek redress through the courts if they think their rights are not being upheld.

UNCRC has been a driver for children's services in North Lanarkshire for many years. The CS Plan includes shared priorities and actions and progress is reported later in this report. Individual partners and sectors are taking implementation of the legislation forward within their own agency. The CS Partnership will continue to report on shared priorities within the Plan and identify priorities for the next planning cycle.



Getting it right for every child

The Getting it right for every child Delivery Group continue to promote a shared understanding of Getting it Right for Every Child, embedding the National

Practice Model and associated Getting it right for every child practice materials and guidance and adopt a rights-based approach to meet the needs of families, children and young people so they get the right help at the right time.

Early intervention and prevention are at the centre of planning and delivery of children's services to meet the diversity of needs of all children and young people. We will continue to develop our processes and apply a variety of tools and resources to engage children, young people, and families in planning and decision making. Further implementation of Getting it right for every child and Pathways for all children and young people support consistent practice and strengthen staff confidence in applying the core components of Getting it right for every child.



The Promise

The Promise and Me Partnership task group lead on the statutory duty to produce a Corporate Parenting Plan. The task group identifies and progresses the shared priorities which 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)

Whole family support remains a focus throughout this reporting year. The Resilient People Programme, North Lanarkshire Council's Programme of work to 2028 ambition continues to build on delivery of local family support that empowers our children, individuals and families to improve outcomes and increase early intervention and supports at the right time and for as long as needed. 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 (WFWBF) over the lifetime of the Parliament, to support the development of holistic whole family support services. North Lanarkshire received further investment for 2024-25 and we are expecting a further grant in 2025-26.

A significant part of the WFWBF has been invested in ensuring we have a universal offer of family support to prevent families reaching crisis point as far as possible, as required by the conditions of the grant. Based on engagement with families, we have developed services at the universal, additional and intensive levels. The Family Support Task group and Resilient People Steering group continue to actively map gaps and make decisions that effectively respond to identified need.

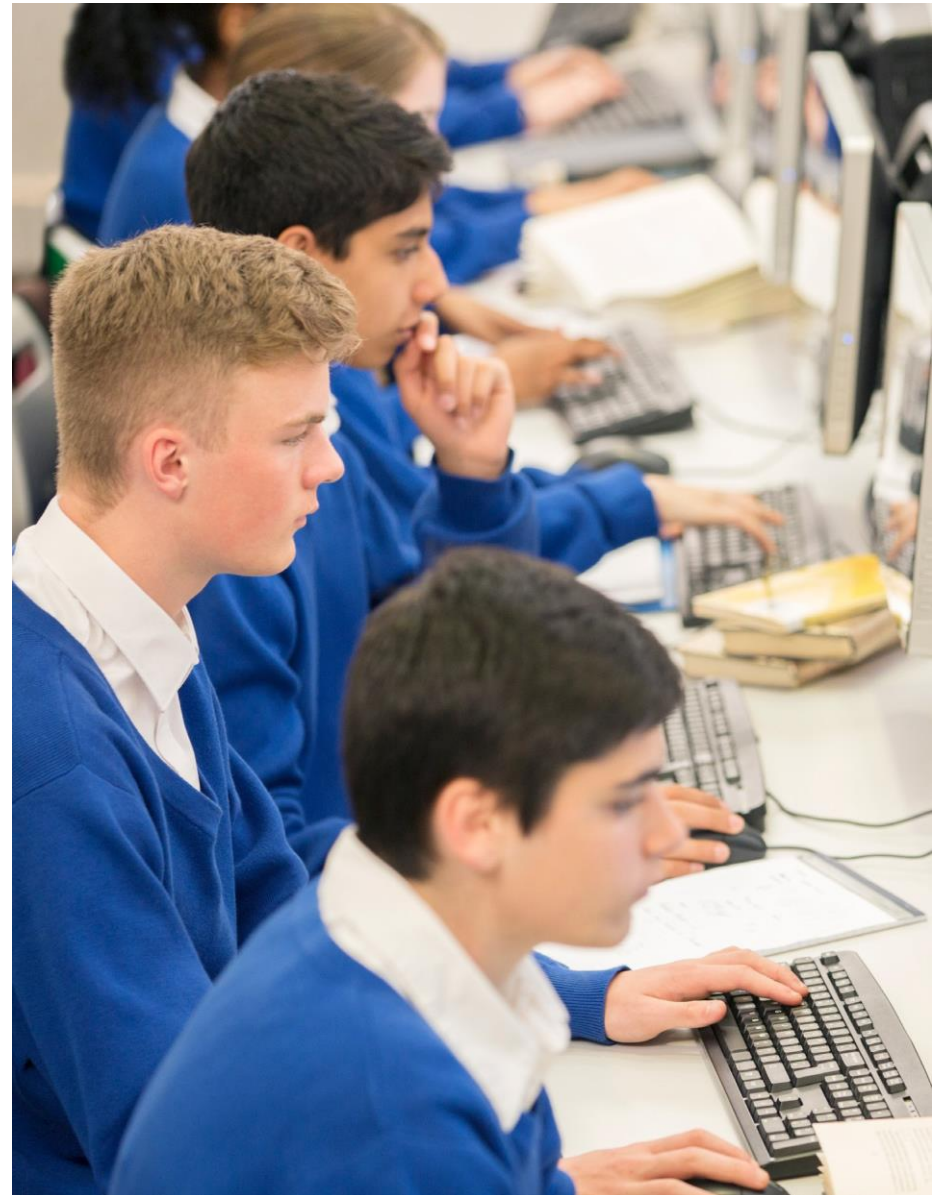


Child Poverty

The work of the CS Partnership is closely linked to the North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Strategy, Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire, and the Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report (LCPAR). The recent child poverty figures for Scotland, show that whilst not meeting the Scottish Government targets there has been a drop in child poverty across Scotland, with North Lanarkshire's over all figure dropping from 20.6% in 2023, to 18.7% in 2024. (comparisons, however, should be met with caution as previous year's figures did not include Scottish Child Payment).

All task and working groups consider how 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



Highlights from work during 2024-25 are:

- The Three Questions encourage pupils to share their views and experiences of poverty and the school identifies actions to take forward such as awareness raising and work on the Cost of the School Day. The programme will have reached all schools except ASN schools by June 25.
- From Aug 24 a temporary welfare rights officer (WRO) was funded in ASN schools with the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and Tackling Poverty Team. The targeted approach has assisted 52 claims for benefit with 22 outcomes to date that generated additional income of over £100,000.
- The Cash First Project started in November 2023, in its first full year (Nov 23-Nov 24) the Cash First Project received **1234 enquiries** from people, resulting in **793** payments being made, meaning that due to the cash alternative 793 people have been diverted away from using foodbanks. Enquiries

generated £1.2million in additional benefit income in the last financial year.

- There is continued promotion of free transport for young people through the Young Scot, National Entitlement Card. In North Lanarkshire we now match the national average uptake which is 74% of young people ages 5-21. As of May 2024, in North Lanarkshire, those aged between 12-18 accessing the travel card has increased to 94%. By November 2024, 699,1740 journeys were made using the card in North Lanarkshire.

In the coming year, focus will be given to the work with priority groups and how we record this work to assess the impact of actions and programmes of work. Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the next planning cycle will consider information relating to these priority groups: One parent families, families with a disabled person in the household, families where the mother is 25 or under, minority and ethnic families, families with a child under one and families with three or more children.



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. Getting it right for every child, 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.

Following the **Joint Inspection of Services for Children at Risk of Harm** in 2023-24, the self evaluation and inspection highlighted areas for improvement as:

- 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.

In 2024-25 we published and shared our self evaluation. Over the last 12 months some highlights include:

- Multi agency implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing. (See below).
- Further development of Contextual Safeguarding. (See above)

- A Chronology Working Group across child and adult services has been established as a direct result of our self-evaluation and external scrutiny findings.
- We have fully implemented and evaluated the child protection procedures based upon the child protection Scotland guidance.
- Safe and Together has continued to be embedded within the partnership and this has included small scale audit activity.
- We have developed a central point where all live policies and procedures can be accessed in the form of page tiger.

The full Business Plan and Annual Report can be accessed on this link

[North Lanarkshire Child Protection Committee | North Lanarkshire Council.](#)

Development Areas

Contextual safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm outside of the family home. It supports a shift in child protection systems and practice to move beyond individual casework to recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, the spaces outside the home are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Such places include peer groups, parks, transport hubs and schools. The work of the steering group has been guided by a Theory of Change which sets out the desired outcomes of implementation and an annual plan aligned to the Child Protection Committee's priority outcomes.

Contextual safeguarding is integrated into the 5-day child protection training. This is complemented by an online training module which has been viewed by approximately 800 staff and completed by 544 staff from across council services. 97% of staff said they would be able to apply learning to their work and that the course fulfilled or exceeded their expectations. Partners also have access to the module, but it is not possible to count completions. CPC continues to arrange quarterly multi agency training with evaluation feedback being positive. The next step is to offer more bespoke training to align the contextual safeguarding approach with Signs of Safety and Healing and increase confidence in the use of contextual approaches in assessment work.

During 2025-26, the ongoing work within the partnership will include a focus on refining the data collection and re-evaluating our young person's safeguarding panel. In addition, the working relationship with adult services, specifically with adult support and protection, will consider implementation of transitional safeguarding. This development is a direct result of learning from review activity across adult and children's services.

Trauma informed practice

North Lanarkshire key partners are aspiring to become trauma informed organisations, using the National Transformation Programme and planning across the five national drivers

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

Becoming a trauma informed organisation is now part of the North Lanarkshire Council's programme of work 23-28 with a focus on creating the culture and conditions to enable staff to respond in ways which recognise the impacts of trauma, promote recovery, prevent re-traumatisation, and ensure services and effective supports are accessible to and effective for those who need them most.

To support development across the CS Partnership there is a part time role funded within NHS Lanarkshire and a full-time role in North Lanarkshire Council and University Health and Social Care. There is continued delivery of workforce training at Level 1- Trauma Informed and Level 2 – Trauma Skilled. Level 3- Trauma Enhanced, is available in NHS Lanarkshire.

Community Hubs

Following a £66.9m capital investment we have three new community hubs in operation at Newmains and St Brigid's in Wishaw, Riverbank in Coatbridge and at Chryston. The hubs aim to act as a gateway for support and services, for early intervention, preventative support and targeted activities based on local needs resulting on a greater impact on improving equity and health outcomes across North Lanarkshire.

The developing hub offers modern well-equipped spaces available for community use and will support delivery of the local outcome improvement plans (LOIP's), facilitated through the community board structure, locality partnership teams and locality planning groups. Each of the hubs have different things on offer such as health and wellbeing, education, housing, employment or financial support, surgeries, sport, leisure, or cultural activities they also provide modern and well-equipped community spaces for hire.

We will ensure that everyone can benefit from the hubs and are working to integrate services and encourage a community led approach to the management of them. Three community hub coordinators were hired in January 2025 and, whilst based at the

hubs and responsible for day to day operations, are working across services, partners and communities to shape the delivery of a range of 'needs based' support, information, advice services and activities in the hub with a focus on enabling the delivery of early and inclusive family support during 2025/26. Progress has been made towards a no wrong door, place-based approach to support at the earliest point of need through availability of family support from community hubs and at universal level.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

In the development of the CS Plan 2023-2026, our JSNA identified statistical trends, challenges and opportunities relating to COVID19 and the impact of the pandemic. 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

In 2017, 2021 and 2023 the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was completed in primary, secondary and Additional Support Need (ASN) schools. The SDQ is an internationally recognised measure of wellbeing in young people. The information gathered in 2023, representing 76% of children and young people in schools, continues to support work collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all our children and young people are included, supported, and safe. Each school and cluster have their own results that influence improvement planning.

Information and analysis of the 2023 SDQ includes information about care experienced children and young people and those on the child protection register. Relevant information is shared with task groups and across the CS Partnership. Plans are underway to repeat the SDQ in 2025.

Signs of Safety and Healing

The CS Partnership has continued to support the implementation of Signs of Safety and Healing which is a significant development that will help us realise our ambitions for transformational change. The implementation programme, which will run until 2026 began in Dec 2023. Year one of the implementation programme focused on core training. Lead professionals (social workers) and partners who are involved in the assessment and planning for children and their families took part in five-day training. Bespoke awareness and training sessions were also delivered to partners, including NHS Lanarkshire and education. A leadership engagement event was held for senior managers across the CS Partnership.

Assessment and planning paperwork has been reviewed on a single agency basis, aligning to Signs of Safety and Healing and there have been opportunities for managers and practitioners who attended the training, to use the paperwork, putting the learning into practice when assessing the needs of children and how best to keep them safe and improve their wellbeing while in the care of their family and their family network.

The implementation programme will run until 2026 and year two will focus on embedding the model in practice. There will be ongoing

evaluation of the impact on children, families, managers and practitioners. A multi-agency oversight group has been agreed, it will meet on a monthly basis from May 2025 onwards and if needed will continue beyond December 2025, when the two-year implementation programme ends. There is a working group to review all single and multi-agency paperwork, including Getting it right for every child, child protection and care experience. Further working groups will be arranged and include a review of policies, procedures and guidance, single and multi-agency, to ensure alignment to Signs of Safety and Healing.

Regular reporting will continue to the Child Protection Committee and the Children's Services Partnership Board.



Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024

The staged implementation of this new legislation has begun. The key areas being:

- Bringing under 18s within the scope of the children's hearing system.
- New safeguards for children in court.
- Changes the age which a person is considered for an anti-social behaviour order.
- Ends the use of young offender institutions and remand centres for detaining children.

North Lanarkshire Partners are currently developing an implementation plan to set out what we need to do as single agencies and as a partnership to prepare for each stage. There is much to build on:

- The work to apply contextual safeguarding and trauma informed practice.
- Development of a Children and Families Pathway for children and young people who have been harmed or harm.
- Furthering our Whole System Approach including the Early and Effective Intervention Programme.

Scottish Child Interview Model and Bairns' Hoose

Lanarkshire was a pilot area to implement the new approach to Joint Investigative Interviewing using the trauma informed Scottish Child Interview Model. This has had a positive impact when supporting children to tell their story in a supported and trauma informed way, at a traumatic and difficult time in their life.

The work of the Joint Investigative Interviewing team is central to the development and implementation of the Lanarkshire Bairns' Hoose. Lanarkshire has secured funding from the national Bairns' Hoose Development Fund to support the scoping, development and implementation of Bairns' Hoose in Lanarkshire to provide children and young people with access to trauma-informed investigation, health, justice and recovery supports in a unified approach.

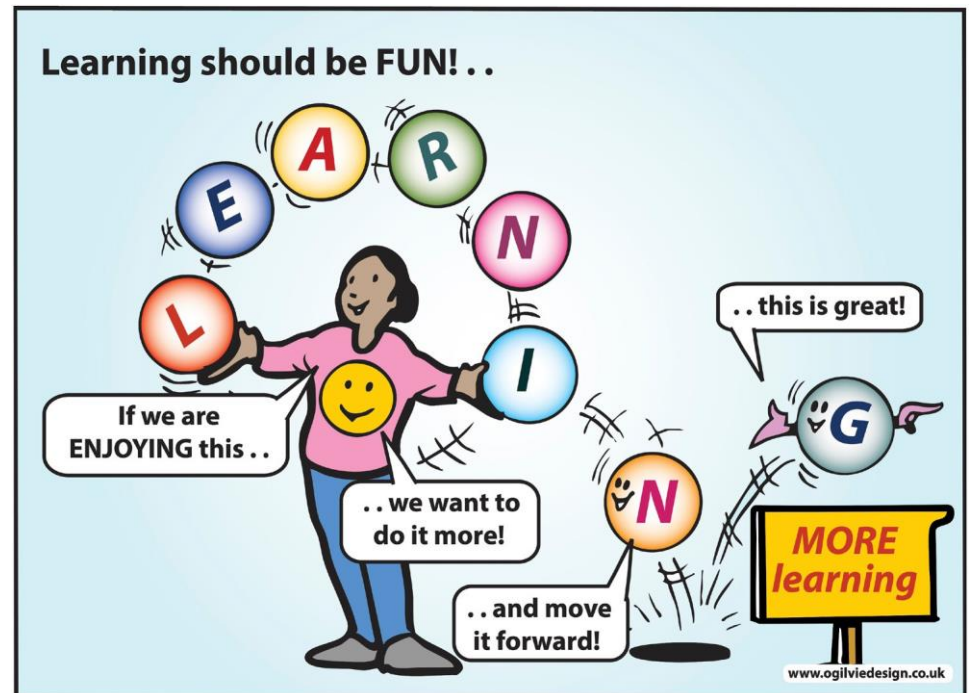
The project plan for year one funding, for 2024-25, was successfully completed, with funding approved for 2025-26 to progress to year two project plan.

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.

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 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.



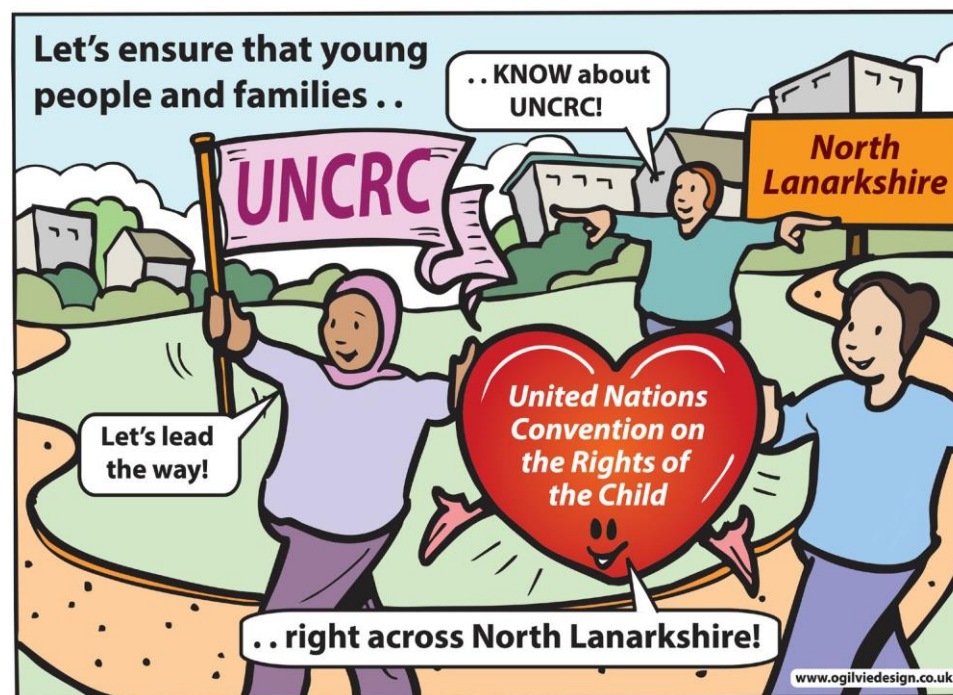
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

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 was enacted on 16 July 2024.

UNCRC Priorities 2023-26

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 2024-25

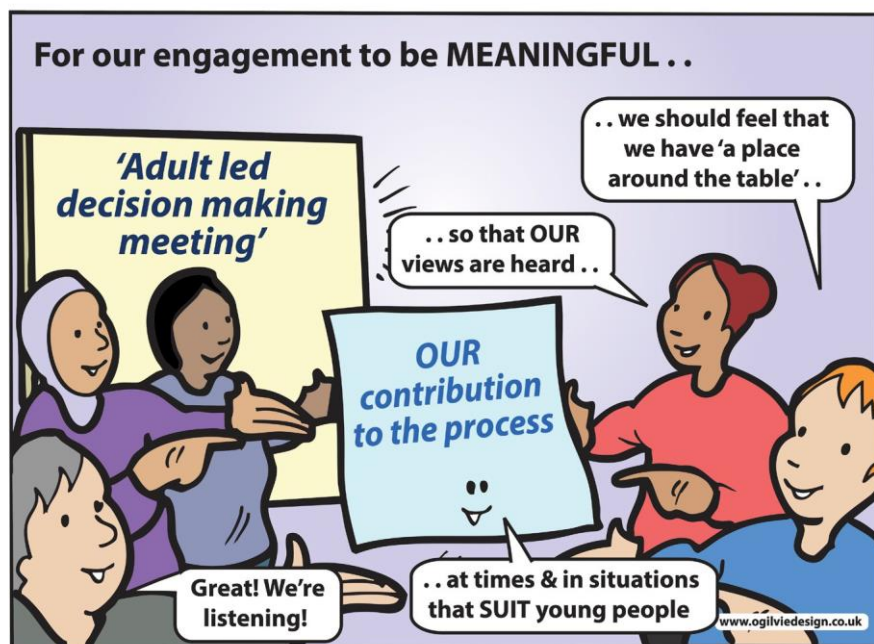
Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>In continuing to raise awareness of UNCRC amongst children, young people and adults. The #MakeltRight Campaign has almost 1000 page views from April 24-Feb 25, and the short film has had over 100,000 views since its launch in 2022.</p>	<p>We will review the UNCRC content on the North Lanarkshire Council website and add a UNCRC page to the Getting it right for every child website</p>
<p>The commitment and active promotion of Rights Respecting Schools has resulted in 148 of our 153 schools taking part in the Rights Respecting Schools Award. 45713 (91%) of the 48112 pupils in North Lanarkshire Council schools as of January 2025 attend schools involved with RRSA.</p> <p>The levels of accreditation, from March 2025, are:</p> <p>Gold - 23</p> <p>Silver - 49</p> <p>Bronze - 57</p> <p>Registered - 19</p> <p>Scottish Government funding has now concluded. UNICEF have tiered discount taking into account internal provisions. North Lanarkshire has met the criteria for a 75% discount and plan to progress this work.</p>	<p>Rights Respecting Schools will continue to ensure that children's rights are 'learned, taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted'.</p> <p>In the next 12 months, our measures of success are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Assessors will undertake silver RRSA visits from April 2025 onwards. • Current levels of progress within accreditation levels will be maintained in the future, with more schools achieving gold standard. • The schools not currently involved in RRSA will become involved.
<p>To ensure staff are able to inform their networks and communities the Voice Task Group have shared information and briefings about UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and taking a children's rights approach: Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1 Guidance Summary • Reporting Duty Summary • Staff Briefing • National updates • Rights at Risk 	<p>Partners who are 'public authorities' will plan and publish a report for the period 16 July 2024- 31 March 2026.</p> <p>With a focus on those furthest from their rights, information and data will be collected to inform future planning and reporting.</p> <p>The training offer for partnership staff will further develop and link to National resources and supports.</p>

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) have been promoted and applied in NHS Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Council.	Application of CRWIAs will be reviewed and further developed
Following the #MakeitRight campaign, Phase 2 was a peer led UNCRC workshop and resource pack developed and launched in June 2024. Young people, known as UNCRC Ambassadors, rolled out their workshop which was delivered across youth networks, at the Youth Voice Conference and adapted for staff groups.	Links will be established to the pupil voice in all schools and the UNCRC workshop will be cascaded through pupil councils. UNCRC Ambassadors are now involved in Phase 3 of our awareness raising, produce podcasts to explore areas where children's rights are at risk. The podcasts will be published during 2025-26.



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 2024-25

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>The Task Group have supported engagement and participation of children, young people and families by collating and updating guidance and resources on a website accessible across the CS Partnership. The Voice and UNCRC Task Group Bulletin board.</p>	<p>Task Group members will continue to add relevant resources and information, sharing updates with the wider partnership.</p>
<p>In August 2024 a proposal to better involve young people in the CS Partnership and Planning was agreed that included a biennial conference and task group chairs attending North Lanarkshire Youth Council (NLYC) twice a year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Voice Conference led by young people, attended by 53 staff and 75 Young people took place in Nov 24. • NLYC discussed their recommendations from the Conference with task group chairs when they met for the first time in Feb 24 	<p>We will progress plans to further strengthen youth voice, through pupil participation, NLYC and other representative groups such as Today not Tomorrow.</p>
<p>Young people directed the work and guided content for a child and young person friendly addition to the CS Partnership and Plan, launched in October 24. Engagement across the CS Partnership generated stories from people who had been involved in supports. North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership and Plan North Lanarkshire Council</p>	<p>Consider future child and young person friendly materials for the next planning cycle and for UNCRC reporting.</p>
<p>The revised Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy was launched in March 2025 and is being implemented across all schools and with Parent Councils. The focus is on three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement and engagement • Family learning • Home learning <p>The strategy is intended to maximise parental engagement in school life and promote richer involvement in school policy making and improvement planning. Parental Engagement Strategy 2024 Final.pdf</p>	<p>Schools and Parent Councils are working together to identify priorities for session 2025/26 which will be incorporated into each school's planning and reporting processes.</p>

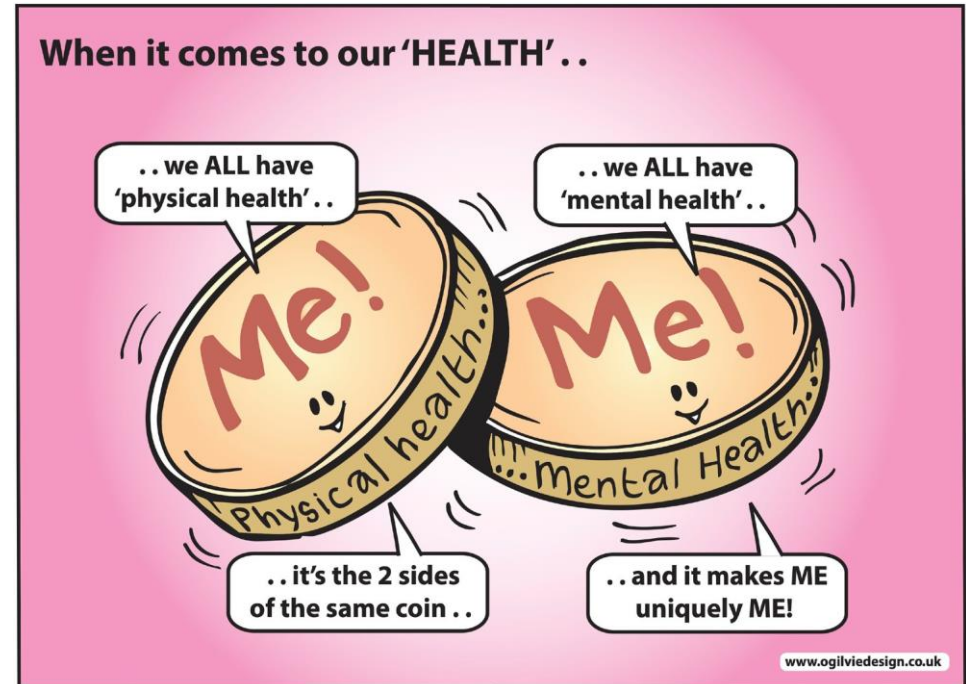
Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>Pupil Conference, 'What Matters to Us'</p> <p>All mainstream primary and secondary schools were represented at the conference in October 24. Their views were sought around their right to be heard in matters that impact on them in terms of education with a focus on curriculum design and offer. Pupils indicated that overall, they are seeking a more holistic and engaging educational experience, with a strong emphasis on their well-being and voice. This includes improvements to the school environment, updated resources, and more comfortable spaces, both indoors and outdoors.</p>	<p>The collated outputs of the conference are forming the next stage of curriculum development processes at Service level in terms of key themes identified by pupils. ASN and Early Years views have been sought in a different format and are currently being analysed to add to the overall 'big picture' of pupil voice in this area. Schools and centres will continue to be encouraged to seek the views of pupils in curriculum decision making and leadership of learning.</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.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people worked together in a pre-panel to score and evaluate the applications that were part of the current round of funding for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework. • Whole Family Support involved parents and carers in the procurement of the Early Help and Support Project. 	<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. North Lanarkshire Council 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 number 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 Report 2024-25

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
Since April 2024, 1,192 young people have participated in Community Learning and Development's (CLD) mental health and wellbeing programmes to enhance their wellbeing with 67% reporting improvements. For those in high-risk groups, this figure rises to 86%. As part of this work, CLD staff have introduced SQA awards that directly support improving wellbeing, with 71 young people being certificated since April 2024.	Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire results, and other data sets relating to the needs of children and young people, will continue to be used to target resources in response to need.
Using the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework funding from the Scottish Government we have developed a range of programmes and interventions designed to prevent need escalating to crisis. Further information available: https://sway.cloud.microsoft/KyBY4cUkxvZ6b7fq?ref=Link	Road map to Recovery Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Education and families is being reviewed as part of the process of producing the next strategy.
Families Here and Now Service were commissioned to provide accessible support to families, starting in one area of North Lanarkshire in April 2024.	The service will expand North Lanarkshire wide in January 2025.
Neurodevelopmental Family Support workers based in North Lanarkshire Carers Together have supported 248 whole families between 2024 and 2025, improving outcomes for 125 children and 156 carers. ASN Project officers based in CLD have worked with 143 individuals and impact is measured using the CLD family learning objectives.	Representatives from across the partnership met to identify how support is currently delivered, where gaps are and if there is a better way to deliver the right support to people in need.
Empowering Clusters: A phase Four 2023/24 flash report was developed by VANL to demonstrate the breadth of work ongoing across schools in North Lanarkshire. The full report is available on the Community Solutions website. Family Engagement Support Assistants (FESAs) work with families of children where attendance within education is a concern, and they are working across every cluster.	The empowering cluster approach offers a variety of supports and services to children and young people in schools. A review is underway which will consider the views of those involved in allocating funding and determine options for the group to consider going forward, which will continue to support the voluntary sector, support local needs and provide the right support to young people of school age.

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>Scottish Ambulance service (SAS), Kooth, Distress Brief Intervention providers and partners identified key themes about the needs of children and young people who present on an emergency basis with mental health needs.</p> <p>In June 24, Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) services engaged in Celebrating Families Week, a national campaign led by Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs. People accessing services were asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What family means to people? • Peoples experience of family support? • What can be done to tackle stigma experienced by families across North Lanarkshire? <p>The ADP held its first lived and living experience panel meeting. 23 people attended including individuals, family members and staff who have an interest in wider engagement and participation approaches</p> <p>North Lanarkshire council was the first in Scotland to achieve the gold standard breastfeeding friendly award due to a focussed 3-year programme to transform culture and attitudes towards breastfeeding, which boosted breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks by 8.8%</p>	<p>Some areas of improvement were recognised and pathways are to be aligned between supports and services for all children and young people.</p> <p>Information will be reviewed and planning is underway to ensure the best ways possible to deliver the right support to people in need at the earliest opportunity.</p>

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 Getting it right for every child 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 2024-25

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
The Peer Mentor Service has been active since July 2024- with three lived experience peer mentors offering both individual services or group work to children who might be marginalised in their communities or in conflict with the law. In addition to the work the Peer Mentors undertake with young people, they have also gained a significant amount of qualifications in the process and contributed to the shaping of the service at every stage.	This will continue in 2025-26
Corporate Parenting Strategy, consultation complete. Strategy Published:	Establishing Task Groups linked to the priorities of the improvement plan
<p>A revised Improvement Plan has been developed and agreed with a focus on key areas which have been identified by children and young people as being important to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice • Home • Positive Destinations • Health and Well -being • Leisure 	The Improvement Plan will continue to be progressed and monitored by the Corporate Parenting Group – The Promise and Me Partnership.
CMHWP funding is provided for support workers who deliver both planned and responsive support to care experienced young people across North Lanarkshire, from the Aftercare Hub. This support is often required during periods of life challenge, mental health or transition, such as from care placements to independent living which can be critical and the 7 day support is essential to deliver the right support.	Support will continue to be delivered during this critical period of YP transitions.

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>The NHS have funded two nurses who are aligned with the 'aftercare hub' and are seeking views of young people who have experienced difficulties accessing health support – both primary and secondary care to ensure all CEPY receive the best healthcare they can.</p> <p>The Exchange Counselling service was commissioned in response to a gap in support for Care Experienced young people, using a flexible procurement and commissioning process and has resulted in a successful first 2 years of service delivery. More info: https://sway.cloud.microsoft/KyBY4cUkxBZ6b7fq?ref=Link</p>	<p>The views of YP will be listened to and will be used to inform practice to ensure they receive the best healthcare they can.</p>
<p>A thematic review of services for care experienced young people was recently undertaken by the care inspectorate and feedback regarding some of the services funded through MHWB monies was extremely positive, relating to the strong, proactive outreach and support offered by the throughcare and aftercare team, the ways in which young people influenced service design, including their commissioning of a counselling service.</p>	<p>This will continue to be developed throughout ensuring CEYP are involved as much as is practical in service design and commissioning.</p>
<p>The kinship family support worker has supported 32 families and actively prevented 3 placement breakdowns.</p>	<p>This role will continue to support families during 2025-26 as part of the programme of work using Whole Family Wellbeing Funding.</p>
<p>The Virtual School family support worker has contributed to the support of 176 care experienced young people, contributing to the National 3/ 4 qualifications of 29 young people and the 93% reduction in exclusions for care experienced learners since 2019/20.</p>	<p>The work of the Virtual School will continue during 2025-26.</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 Getting it right for every child 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 2024-25

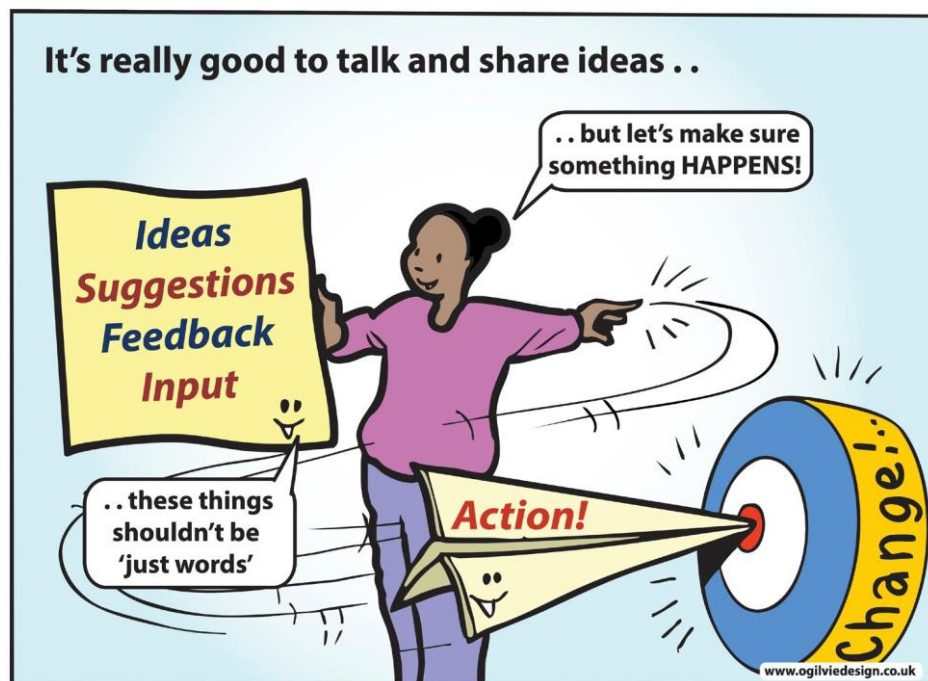
Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>The workforce development programme delivered training and learning opportunities aligned to our core values and supporting a coherent framework for relational and trauma informed practice. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma informed practice • Nurture programmes- Solihull • Child protection • Contextual safeguarding • Safe and Together • Signs of Safety and Healing • Assessment of care toolkit training <p>The Child Protection Committee has worked to strengthen operational learning forums, alongside adult support and protection consider topics such as neglect, lifespan chronologies and contextual safeguarding.</p>	<p>Joint workforce development opportunities continue to develop and progress. Training is evaluated to inform future development.</p> <p>Community and voluntary sector staff are able to access these opportunities through the Children, Young People and Family Network.</p>
<p>Getting it right for every child training and resources have been updated to reflect the refreshed materials. These are available on the Getting it right for every child website (Link below). A generic introduction to Getting it right for every child has been developed and shared with partners. Updates to the e learning module for assessment and planning has been made available across key partner agencies.</p>	<p>Website analytics will provide feedback on numbers accessing the new materials and guidance- The Child's Plan, My World Triangle assessment model and resilience matrix. Alongside evaluation of the refreshed training this will inform further development.</p>

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
<p>Contextual Safeguarding events have taken place in partnership with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Community Learning and Development. This is to promote the use of shared spaces between young people and professionals to ensure that young people have a supportive environment to have their voices heard and offer realistic solutions to the complex problems they face.</p>	<p>In order to support our workforce key focus has been on understanding the complexities associated with working with children who may be at risk of exploitation. Staff requested further information on Contextual Safeguarding and a resource has been developed to share across the CS Partnership during 2025-26.</p> <p>risk - 1</p>
<p>Access to information and services and supports has been widened through our online presence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIRFEC NL continues to promote information about supports and resources for families. Home Page - GIRFEC in NL • Care experienced young people were involved in developing a 'one stop shop' for information about their rights and entitlements to aftercare and support. Aftercare Northlan. Analytics since its launch show that from April 2024- March 2025 there were 2100 active users, with around 86% from UK. • The online platform Kooth gives young people greater choice and control in how they access mental health supports. In 2024, 735 young people registered with Kooth, 68% of logins were out of hours. 	<p>The Getting it right for every child website will be refreshed during 2025-26 with content being more public facing.</p> <p>Promotional materials including cards with QR codes will better target young adults in North Lanarkshire to access the AfterCare website and resources.</p> <p>Quarterly reports offer detailed analysis that will inform the future promotion and direction. The Youth Voice Conference recommended that Kooth is relaunched and there are workshops about this in schools.</p>
<p>The Children & Young People Mental Health Services and Resources Directory was co-produced with young people in January 2024. Throughout 2024 this has been promoted by all partners and as part of Children's Mental Health Awareness Week in February 25. Data analytics have been rising and show that over 17,000 people have viewed the website, with a peak in February 2025 during the awareness week.</p>	<p>Feedback from users is that they find it easy to navigate and it is allowing them to connect to the services that are important to them. A 6 monthly quality assurance process will ensure contacts remain up to date.</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 Getting it right for every child 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 2024-25

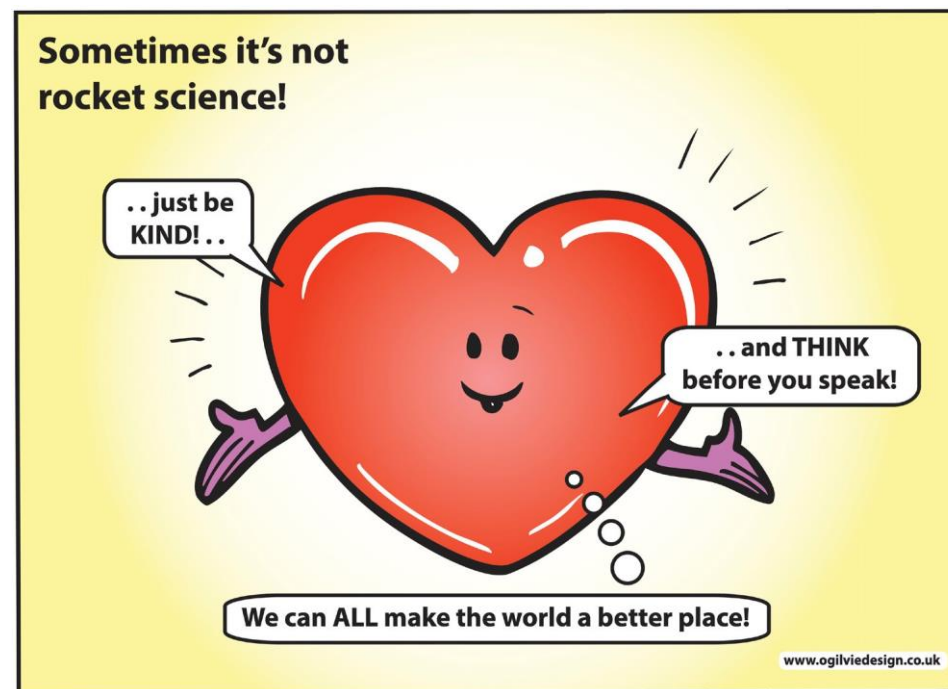
Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
A partnership approach to planning and delivery of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework and Whole Family Support funding has continued. In Aug 24 young people were involved in pre assessing funding applications, making recommendations and sharing their views.	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.
Presentations have been hosted for the wider CS Partnership staff. These have included: Young Carers, use of vapes, Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interviewing and Bairns Hoose, and UNCRC ambassadors delivering a short workshop.	Task groups have identified areas of work for future presentations that are of interest to the wider partnership.
<p>The child and family's journey is supported through the Universal Health Visiting Pathway when under 5 and the Cluster Model for school aged children. Getting it right for every child pathways are established and are being strengthened in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of our pre-birth pathway has been ongoing and will be launched in 2025 • The 0-5 pathway now fully integrates with nurse admissions pathway and transitions • Development of the 16+ pathway has explored a named person model 	<p>Launch the pre-birth pathway, sharing this with staff across agencies and in the community and voluntary sector.</p> <p>Feedback will be gathered to support evaluation of the developed pathways.</p> <p>Engagement with young people on the development of the 16+ pathway.</p> <p>Multi agency evaluation will include audits of the Child's Plan</p>

Key achievements 2024-25	Planned Actions 2025-26
Throughout 2024 the insights and learning from the Joint Inspection of Services for Children at Risk of Harm. Planned actions and updates been shared through the Continuous Improvement Task Group. Our established self-evaluation framework now includes a shared online continuous audit calendar.	We will gather and apply insights from the self-evaluation to further develop practice. An improvement action is how the partnership extends it reach to include a wider group of children, young people and their families in self-evaluation to inform service improvement and development.
Gathering information and data, performance reporting and feedback from experience has been increasingly embedded in the work across the CS Partnership. As part of the Continuous Improvement Group a Data sub-group has started work on performance indicators and developing a dashboard to support the work of the CS Partnership and Child Protection Committee.	The Data sub-group will work on the Promise Progress Framework, seek solutions to identified data sharing barriers and progress work on a shared dashboard. Work on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the next planning cycle will begin in June 2025.

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 illustrations in this report were created at our Youth Voice Conference in November 2024.

The next Annual Report will be collated and published in Spring 2026.



This document can be made available in a range of languages and formats, including large print, braille, audio, electronic and accessible formats.

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getting
it right
for every child
in North Lanarkshire