

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership



Children's Services Plan 2026-29 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Overview, March 2026

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Introduction

North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership produce a Children's Services Plan every 3 years. This is not a stand-alone action, rather it is a point in time where the Partnership reflect and consider the multiple layers and workstreams, reassessing the governance, context, strategic direction and priorities, to agree and present the shared vision, priorities and actions for the next 3-year period.

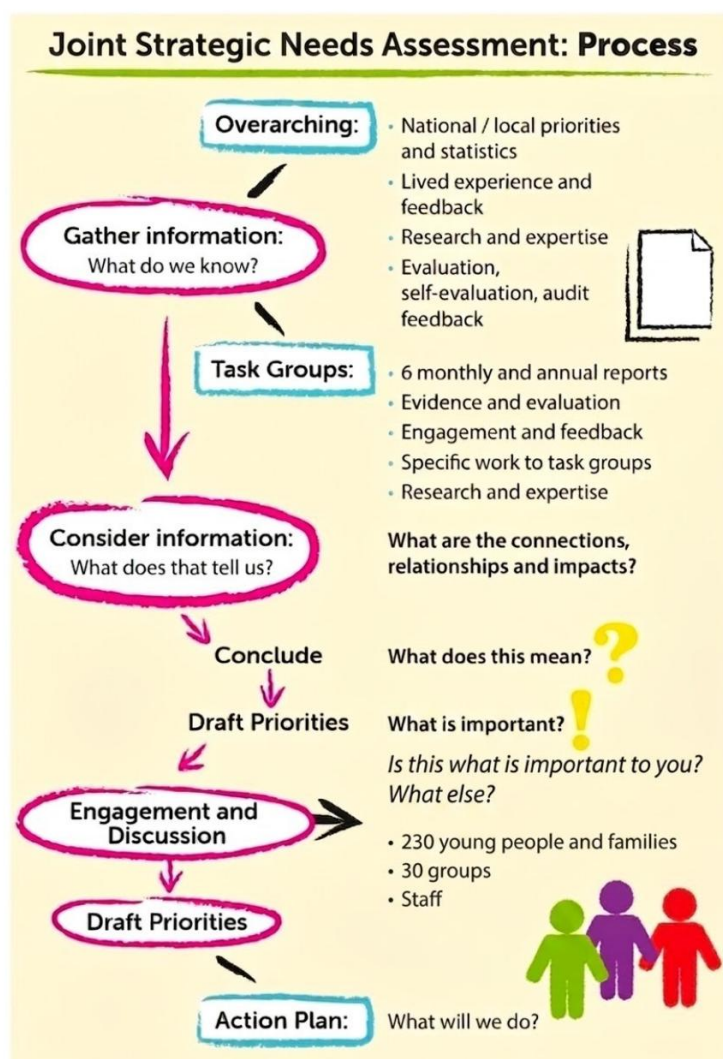
This Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the starting point for North Lanarkshire's Children's Services Plan for 2026–2029. It helps us understand what children, young people, and families need most, so we can focus resources where they'll make the biggest difference. Our work supports *The Promise*, the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). North Lanarkshire is home to around 344,540 people, and our communities are changing—bringing new challenges and opportunities.

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The JSNA process has three distinct parts.

1. Gathering and reflecting on key information sources which have been summarised and linked in this overview paper. This paper will be incorporated into our Children's Services Plan 2026-29.
2. Gathering and analysing task group focused information and reflecting on this and overview information to inform draft priorities.
3. Drafting priorities to share with stakeholders to engage their views and reflections into the planning process.

The following diagram simplifies the process.



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North Lanarkshire Programme of Work

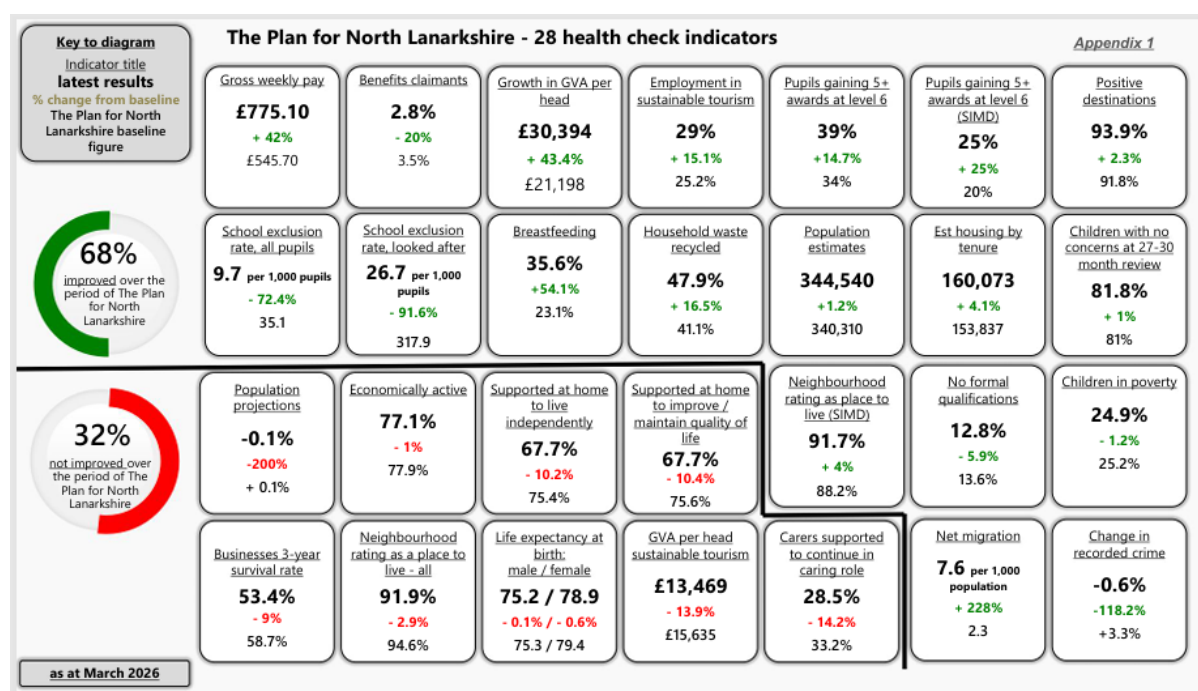
[The Plan for North Lanarkshire](#) is agreed with all partners, driving forward a shared Programme of Work, striving for improvement and positive change.

A summary of progress and achievements was shared in March 2026.

[The Plan for North Lanarkshire Health Check – March 2026](#)

[Delivering the Programme of Work- March 2026](#)

Within this, are the baseline figures and up to date figures for the 28 health check indicators, giving a snapshot of relevant statistics and highlighting areas for further exploration and information.



Our population.

- The 2024 mid-year estimate shows a population of 344,540.
- This is an increase of 2,650 people since 2023.
- There were 3,192 live births in 2024 and 4,041 deaths (covering mid-2023 to mid-2024). The natural change of the population, that is the difference of deaths over births was -849.
- 2,600 people migrated to North Lanarkshire although net migration has reduced from 2.3 to 1.6 per 1000 population. The net migration rate is the difference between the number of immigrants (people coming into an area) and the number of emigrants (people leaving an area) per year divided by the population.

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Children and young people

- Children and young people aged 0-16 total 59,947
- Children and young people aged 0-17 total 68,259

More detail about our population can be found at

[Demographic information | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

Census information

The results of the most recent census in Scotland, 2022, give us a more accurate picture of some of the demographic trends in Scotland and in North Lanarkshire.

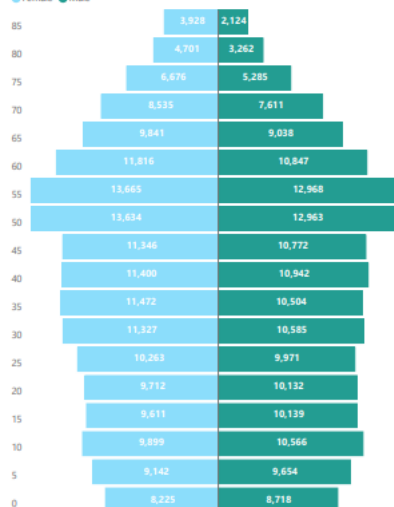
National [Census Maps - Census 2022 data interactive, NRS](#)

North Lanarkshire highlights [North Lanarkshire - results from the 2022 Census.pdf](#)

The population distribution is shown in the table below

Distribution of people across each age group - 2022

Female Male



Population count 2022 from
reference table*

341,117

Population count from 2022 age
groups by sex output

341,274

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Ethnicity

The census information from 2022 offers an updated picture of the ethnicity of the population in North Lanarkshire.

The vast majority of people (96%) identify as white, (white Scottish, white British, white Polish, other white, white Irish or gypsy) and 4% of the population are non -white.

There have been increases in the population in our Polish community and in non-white groups. This highest population group is Polish at 1.6% followed by Pakistani at 1.5% (Pakistani, Pakistani- Scottish, Pakistani- British), Indian at 0.4% (Indian, Indian-Scottish, Indian-British) and Chinese at 0.3%. (Chinese, Chinese-Scottish, Chinese- British).

Schools record the main language spoken on SEEMiS. Information from 31.03.26 tells us there are at least 87 different languages amongst the school population, reflecting the diversity of people and cultures. The vast majority speak English as their first language and the highest numbers whose main language is not English or Scots are:

English	45,226
Polish	887
Urdu	379
Punjabi	199
Romanian	146
Arabic	120
Ukrainian	110

Ethnic group	2001	2011	2022
White	317,026	330,679	327,329
White Scottish	304,784	313,356	302,748
Other White British	6,954	7,892	12,345
White Polish		3,009	5,359
Other White	2,100	1,823	3,546
White Irish	3,188	4,394	3,204
Gypsy/		205	127
Asian	3,122	5,385	8,338
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	1,756	3,003	5,019
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	527	997	1,483
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	607	898	1,120
Other Asian	213	445	635
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	19	42	81
Other	723	960	3,339
African	92	532	1,855
Caribbean or Black	104	171	230
Total	321,067	337,727	341,091

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Population challenges

Between the 2011 and 2021 census there was an increase in the population in North Lanarkshire, this was most significant in the 65+ age bracket with an increase of 2%. In the 16-64 bracket and under 16 bracket there was actually a decrease of 1.5%.

Across Scotland, including in North Lanarkshire the birth rate has declined and population projections estimate a decline of 0.9%

North Lanarkshire's population is ageing, with census data showing growth in older age groups and fewer young people, which is a trend seen across Scotland and the UK. Project figures show a further increase in the over-65 age group and the critical 0 to 15 age group, is projected to shrink over the next decade. To sustain a vibrant and prosperous area, we must attract and retain young people and families, including those arriving through migration and resettlement.

In alignment with national strategies such as [New Scots](#) and the [Plan for North Lanarkshire](#), we will ensure that children, young people, and families, whether local or newly arrived, have access to education, employment, and community participation. This approach supports integration and strengthens the local economy.

Locality Profiles

University Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire regularly update locality profiles in 2025. These can be found under locality plans [here](#) and contain graphs and data on the following areas

- Population
- Life expectancy
- Poverty and deprivation
- Benefits
- Mother and baby indicators
- Immunisations
- Early deaths
- Hospital admissions
- Screening

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North Lanarkshire Community Planning structures include 9 Community Boards. In 2025- 26 the Local Outcome Improvement Plans for each of the Community Board geographic areas are being reviewed to identify community priorities. The most recently published locality profile information for each of these areas can be seen [here](#).

Scottish Public Health Observatory and Scottish Population Health Framework

In North Lanarkshire, recent data from the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) highlights both the resilience of our communities and the significant challenges our families face. While we see positive trends in school leaver destinations and child safety, key indicators around child poverty, mental health wellbeing, and early years development remain areas of concern. For instance, over 24% of our children are currently living in poverty, and there is an increasing demand for mental health support among our young people. These local findings align directly with the Scottish Population Health Framework (2025–2035), which prioritises "The Best Start in Life" and "Healthy Childhoods" as essential building blocks for a fairer society. By focusing our joint strategic efforts on the Framework's key pillars—such as prevention-focused systems, equitable health care, and improving social and economic factors—we aim to bridge the inequality gap and ensure that every child in North Lanarkshire is loved, nurtured, and empowered to reach their full potential.

[ScotPHO profiles](#)

[Scotland's Population Health Framework - gov.scot](#)

Scotland's Population Health Framework explains how the country wants to help everyone live healthier and longer lives. It focuses on preventing illness before it happens and making sure people have what they need to be healthy, like good housing, safe places to play, enough money, and fair access to health care. The framework has five main areas: working in a prevention-focused way, improving social and economic conditions, creating safe and supportive communities, helping people live healthy lives, and making sure everyone can use health and care services fairly. In addition to these, there are two super priorities: embedding prevention in our systems and improving healthy weight.

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Priority 1: Embedding Prevention in our Systems Develop mechanisms that prioritise addressing inequalities and improving prevention within planning, delivery, budgets and accountability.

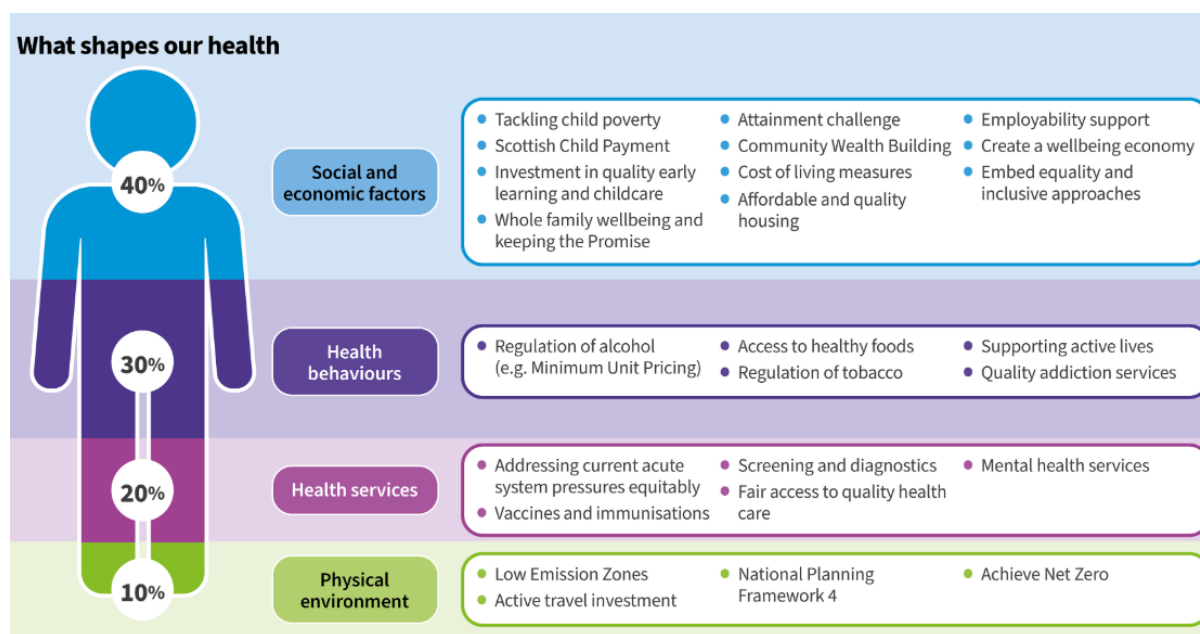


Priority 2: Improving Healthy Weight

Develop a whole system approach to improve food environments; ensure a healthy, balanced diet is accessible and affordable to all; and improve population levels of healthy weight

It also says Scotland should focus on stopping health problems early and reducing the big health gaps between richer and poorer areas by the year 2035. Many things in a child's life—like having enough money, living in a safe home, going to a good school, and being part of a supportive community—can affect their health and wellbeing. These social and economic factors are key parts of Scotland's Population Health Framework and match the aims in North Lanarkshire's Children's Services Plan to reduce inequalities and give every child the best chance to thrive.

What shapes our health?



Adapted from The Kings Fund (<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/vision-population-health>)

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This picture of 'What Shapes our Health?' shows the different things that help keep everyone healthy, happy, and able to do their best. The biggest part of the diagram is about social and economic factors. These are important because they help children grow, feel confident, and enjoy life.

North Lanarkshire's Children's Services Plan aims to make sure all children are safe, healthy, included, and able to reach their potential. The plan works to reduce inequalities, support families, and make communities stronger. These goals match Scotland's focus on prevention, improving living conditions, and making sure everyone has fair access to support. It also highlights key areas like keeping children healthy, safe, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included—all of which help improve health and wellbeing across the community.

Together, both plans show a shared goal: to give children the best start in life, reduce unfair differences in health, and build a future where everyone in North Lanarkshire and across Scotland can thrive.

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Tackling poverty

Each year the North Lanarkshire Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) is produced and published. This can be viewed here.

[North Lanarkshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2024-25](#)

Highlights from this report follow.

Recent child poverty figures evidence improvement in child poverty figures across Scotland, but more than one in five children remain in poverty. In North Lanarkshire the figure is one in four. Devolved policies such as the Scottish Child Payment contribute to overall lower levels.

- **Overall North Lanarkshire has also seen an improvement in the child poverty profile, with child poverty rates dropping from 26.6% to 24.9%.**

Factors such as economic growth and investment in social policies and initiatives contributing to this improvement. Details of actions to tackle child poverty taken are included in the LCPAR. As well as data and statistics.

The improvement is based on the average across all North Lanarkshire and it should be noted that locality analysis, undertaken in early 2025, shows child poverty figures ranging from 11.4% in areas within Cumbernauld to as high as 32.2% within Bellshill.

Fuel poverty, food insecurity and crisis are experienced by many households in North Lanarkshire. Some indicators that inform the strategic ambitions and action plan within the LCPAR are below.

- 34% of households, 861, 000, in Scotland are estimated to be in fuel poverty and 19.4% of households, 491, 000, meet the definition of extreme fuel poverty.
- The consumer price index at 3.8% is the highest since January 2025.
- The food price inflation is 4.9%
- Homeless applications due to default on payment increased by 85%, from 41 to 76
- NLC Tackling Poverty Team received 2,367 referrals for debt advice in 2024/25, an increase of 375 from the previous year. The total amount of debt dealt with was £5,304,616.
- Citizens Advice Bureaux across North Lanarkshire dealt with 6,299 debt advice enquiries and £4,040, 913 of debt.
- Scottish Household Survey estimates that 10% of all households in North Lanarkshire do not have internet access.

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- 11, 942 pupils receive school clothing grants.
- There are universal free school meals for targeted school years. Where this provision is not universal, 6230 families qualify for free school meals on the grounds of low income.

The linked report includes more detail of these areas and how partners are working together with families to maximise income, alleviate debt and promote cash first.

In addition to these report highlights the CSPartnership explore and promote free transport through the NEC Young Scot card. In Nov 25 uptake in North Lanarkshire was

- Total uptake 81% (Scottish average 83%)
- 5-10 year olds 57%
- 11-18 year olds 96%
- 11-21 year olds 94%

Three Questions

Highlights from the report include the work around the three questions where children and young people were asked

1. How is the cost of living crisis affecting you?
2. How is the cost of living crisis affecting others in the community?
3. What can we do to help?

The following short video offers a flavour of the responses.

<https://vimeo.com/892318427/91d66ad176>

The results from the Three Questions work have been shared and presented to inform strategies and improvement planning. Over the new planning period there will be a focus on the cost of the school day. The cost of sending children to school can place additional burdens on a household budget. The Cost of the School Day looks at all aspects from a child waking up to going to bed at night and all the costs in between. This includes household bills, meals, transport, uniforms, equipment, clubs etc. Children's responses to the Three Questions will be plotted around the school clock. This will include suggested solutions and form the basis of a forward plan to reduce the cost of the school day.

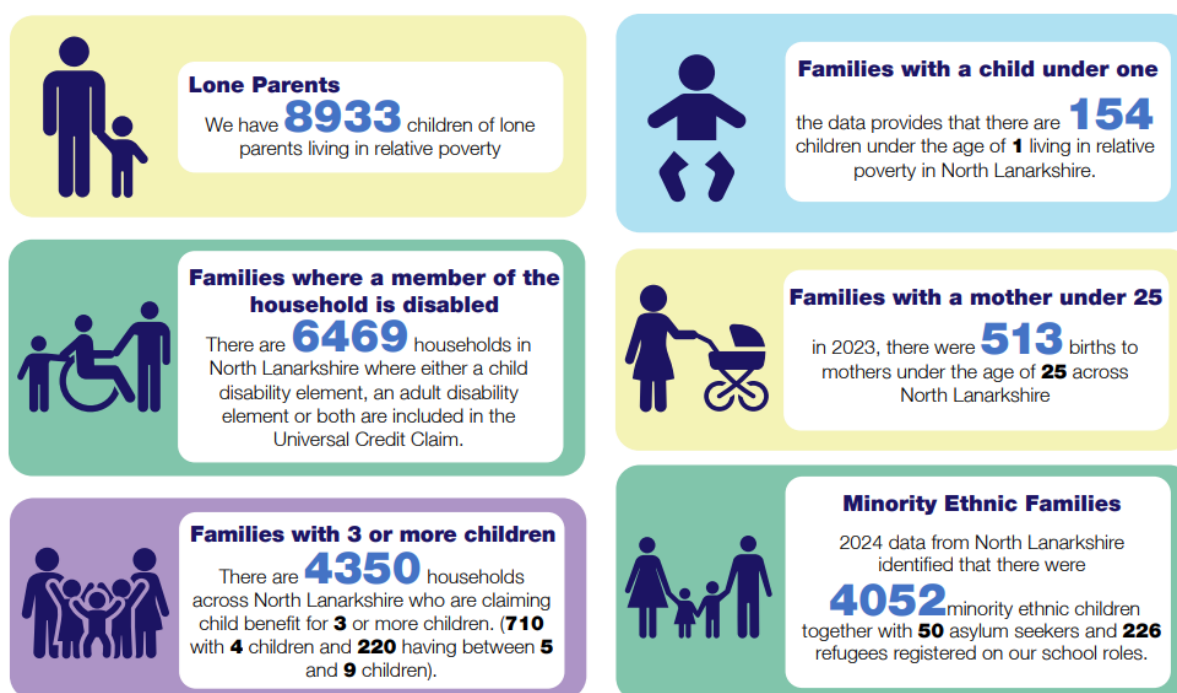
Priority Groups

The Scottish Government identified six priority family types recognised as being at the highest risk of child poverty;

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- ❖ Lone Parent Families
- ❖ Families where a member of the household is disabled
- ❖ Families with 3 or more children
- ❖ Families with a child under 1
- ❖ Families with a mother under 25
- ❖ Minority Ethnic Families

Data from 2023/24, collated by Public Health Scotland from various sources, allows us to draw the priority group picture for North Lanarkshire.



Families often fall into more than one priority group, for example, the Scottish Government report that 49% of children in lone parent families also have a disabled person at home; 50% of children in a family with a younger mother are also in a lone parent household; 49% of children living in a home with three or more children are also in a family in which someone is disabled.

Tackling Poverty- key statistics

- With a focus on maximising income North Lanarkshire's Tackling Poverty Team has generated £6,735,891 in additional benefit income for priority families in our communities. This is detailed in the LCPAR.

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- Income maximisation including active promotion of benefit check has generated £55,340,045 in additional benefit income generated for residents of North Lanarkshire.

The [North Lanarkshire Tackling Poverty Strategy, Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire 2023-26](#) has more information and data to help us better understand poverty North Lanarkshire and partner actions to tackle this. This strategy will be revised and updated in 2026.

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Housing services

Housing and homelessness remain critical issues impacting children, families, and young people in North Lanarkshire and across Scotland. Recent data highlights a rise in families with children living in temporary accommodation and challenges in securing suitable, settled housing.

The [North Lanarkshire Draft Interim Local Housing Strategy \(2026–28\)](#) prioritises homelessness prevention and eradication, with actions to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation and address the specific needs of young people, including care experienced individuals.

Strategic Priority 3 - highlights key issues in relation to homelessness including the number of children associated with homeless applications and a recent rise in number of families with children in temporary accommodation.

Despite maintaining a stable number of children in temporary accommodation, North Lanarkshire has seen a rise in households with dependent children or pregnant women, highlighting ongoing pressure on family homelessness services. Of all household groups, families spend the most time in temporary accommodation. The recent increases across family-type households suggests that family groups are becoming a more prominent part of the homelessness landscape locally, likely reflecting affordability pressures, relationship breakdown, and limited access to suitable housing.

Strategic Priority 4 - sets out particular needs of young people, including care experienced young people (CEYP). We know that young people can face a number of significant life changes, including leaving home, seeking employment or moving into further education, becoming parents, or moving on from other settings. In some cases, the life experiences some young people have had means that they benefit from additional support and guidance to make the transition into independent living and adulthood.

Our evidence tells us that young people are disproportionately affected by homelessness and that young people can face greater challenges in relation to tenancy sustainment. We also know from both national and local research that CEYP can face particular challenges, of which housing can be a significant one.

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Nationally,

- Households with children spend the longest periods in temporary accommodation, averaging between 254 and 347 days.
- Young people aged 16-24 are disproportionately represented in homelessness applications and face unique vulnerabilities, such as being asked to leave home, lacking basic living skills, and having higher rates of learning disabilities.
- Care experienced young people are particularly at risk of homelessness before age 30, and many young people experiencing hidden homelessness do not seek help due to stigma or lack of awareness.

More information can be viewed [here](#).

[Main findings: 2024-25 - Homelessness in Scotland: 2024-25 - gov.sco](#)

[Tackling Scotland's Housing Emergency - gov.scot](#)

[Housing insecurity and hidden homelessness: research - gov.scot](#)

The Scottish Government's Housing Emergency Action Plan emphasises eradicating child poverty and ending unsuitable housing for children. Measures include increased investment in affordable housing, reducing time in temporary accommodation, and implementing Awaab's Law to tackle damp and mould.

North Lanarkshire's Homelessness Action Plan (2025–28) aligns with this, with actions to develop new supported accommodation models for young people, increase reception flats for care experienced young people, and enhanced wellbeing and sustainability check-ins to improve outcomes.

Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS)

The CVS in North Lanarkshire contribute significantly to prevention and early intervention. Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire facilitate and support the CVS Children, Young People and Families Network. Their strategy can be viewed [here](#)

The CVS in North Lanarkshire has an estimate of 311 groups supporting children, young people and families in some capacity. This includes:

- 105 uniform groups
- 52 faith groups
- 18 school-based groups
- 56 community groups
- 80 charities/social enterprises

(Source: OSCR.)

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Beneficiary groups include but are not limited to

- children and young people
- parents and carers include
- care experienced young people
- LGBT+
- young carers
- people with neurodivergence and/or additional support needs
- mental health and wellbeing
- addictions.

The CVSCYPF Network engages in all CSP task groups contributing to priorities, delivering programmes of work and supporting representation. Evaluation and feedback is channelled through task group bi-annual reporting.

The network brings people together in a range of young persons and family forums and use a variety of engagement approaches and methods to gather views and feedback.

A summary of key messages is

- Accessible support 365 days of the year/evenings & weekends
- Who their views will be shared with.
- Support to understand the process of engagement
- Being kept informed of any outcomes
- A safe place to share
- Easy to understand language

The sector is recognised as diverse and the impact of the work in our communities is often 'hidden' in relationship based practice and practical supports. The CVS recognise that improving the evidence of impact will better represent the contribution to prevention and early intervention delivered by the network of organisations in our communities.

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Identifying children and young people who require universal, additional and intensive support through our GIRFEC approach.

Where available we have used information up to or as at 31 July 2025. There are some areas where the date is 30 March 2025.

Universal and additional Health Visiting Pathway: [Health visiting: action plan 2025 to 2035 - gov.scot](#)

The Universal Health Visiting Pathway (UHVP) in North Lanarkshire is a structured, mandatory service supporting all families from the antenatal period until their child starts school. Integrated within the local Children's Services Plan and guided by the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, the pathway aims for early intervention and support. It mandates a minimum of 11 home visits with formal child health reviews at specific milestones (e.g., 6-8 weeks, 27-30 months), with the Health Visitor acting as the Named Person and a main point of contact. This continuity is designed to build trust, identify needs early, and facilitate multi-agency working with services like education and social work.

The Universal Health Visiting Pathway directly links to the additional needs pathways through a Model of Staged Intervention (Universal, Additional, Intensive).

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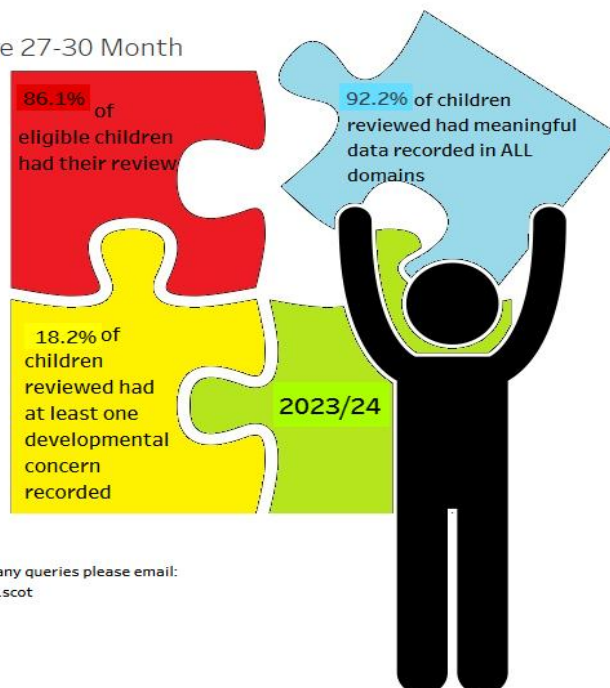
Review
☐ 13-15 Month Review
☒ 27-30 Month Review
☐ 4-5 Year Review

Board/Local Authority
☐ NHS Board
☒ Local Authority

Select Board or Local Authority
 North Lanarkshire

Select Financial Year child became eligible for review
 2023/24

North Lanarkshire 27-30 Month



To provide feedback or for any queries please email:
PHS.childhealthstats@phs.scot

[Dashboard - Early child development statistics - Scotland 2023 to 2024 - Early child development - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

The graphic above, when compared with the previous year, 2022-23, shows a decrease in eligible reviews by 2.5%, a 0.3% drop in meaningful data, and a 2.2% drop in developmental concerns recorded against 2022-23 North Lanarkshire 27-30 month review. This shows that 88.6% of eligible children had their review, 92.5% had meaningful data recorded across all domains, and 20.4% had at least one developmental concern recorded.

With a focus on early years, [Programme for Government 2025 to 2026 - gov.scot](#) is seeking to reduce the 27-30 month development concerns by a quarter by 2030.

Concerns about children out with a healthy weight range links to the Lanarkshire Healthy Weight Action Group and the whole system approach to tackle child healthy weight.

The [Early Years Framework](#) and Scottish Government Early Child Development Programme re-emphasises the importance of pre-birth and early years across all policy areas. Although there are a number of early years priority indicators one that should be highlighted for North Lanarkshire is the teenage pregnancy rate.

Teenage pregnancy in North Lanarkshire for year ending 31 December 2023 was 32.5 per 1000 population. This is above the Scottish average of 25.8 per 1000 population.

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Data also shows that from 2014-2020 there had been a downward trend from 36.7 to 21.8, then in 2021 rates began to increase to 23.7, and again in 2022 up to 31. This is however a similar trend to the national average where rates were at 34.4 in 2014, dropped to 22.2 in 2021, and then increased to 25.8 in 2023.

[table3_teenage_pregnancy_by_local_authority_of_residence.xlsx](#)

[Teenage pregnancies - Year of conception, ending 31 December 2023 - Teenage pregnancies - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

We will continue to monitor and interrogate the data available to us to inform programmes of work including: provision of comprehensive Relationships and Sexual Health and Parenting education (RSHP), improved access to contraception, youth friendly services and targeting areas of socioeconomic deprivation (The national teenage pregnancy rate was more than three times higher for those living in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas in 2023. As the level of deprivation increased, a higher proportion of teenage pregnancies ended in birth rather than termination). Lack of access to contraception, in person services and changes to education delivery due to the pandemic may all be possible reasons to explain the rise from 2020 to 2023.

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School Clusters

North Lanarkshire has 48,300 children enrolled in school with an additional 8,100 attending Early Years Establishments.

There are

- 23 Family Learning Centres
- 16 ASN schools
- 118 primary and
- 23 secondary schools

Schools and centres operate in clusters of establishments with links to other local services. There are currently 15 clusters across the authority.

In North Lanarkshire, the Empowering Clusters model has been developed to facilitate timely and effective support through strong partnerships and integrated cluster working. This model places children and families at the centre of planning processes and ensures access to the right support, at the right time, within their local communities. The model has been endorsed through several external evaluations, including the Joint Inspection of Children's Services, Association of Directors of Education Scotland collaborative improvement activity, and the HMIE National Thematic Inspection on Improvement. This enhanced model places greater emphasis on whole family support, building on a strong foundation of integrated service delivery. Key drivers of the Empowering Clusters model include:

- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Tackling Poverty
- Whole Family Support
- Equity and Inclusion
- Improvement
- Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CLTA)

The data held by schools and centres in North Lanarkshire shows that:

- 32% of children live in SIMD Q1 areas
- 21% have free school meal entitlement
- 24.9% qualify for clothing grants

Across North Lanarkshire 19,665 children and young people in our establishments (36%) have recorded additional supports needs, 56% boys 44% girls. This information is collected by each establishment. Additional support need takes in a wide range of

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factors including neuro-diverse children, those with other disabilities, more able pupils and children affected by family issues. 3.2 % of children are Care Experienced and are included in the wider group of children with additional support needs. Factors requiring support may be temporary or permanent and require a diverse range of additional supports ranging from short term support in school to planned multi-agency support packages. In order to ensure that children get the service that they need when they need it a GIRFEC pathway is in operation which can target resources and supports, working at a universal and additional level. At universal level supports will come from schools' centres and NHS services. At additional level other support may be included, often from the voluntary sector and family support approaches. At intensive level children and families will have jointly planned multi-agency interventions.

This NLC Committee Report highlights key improvements and progress across the service, related to the priorities identified within the Service Improvement Plan for session 2024-25. It includes a link to the five year plan identifying continuous improvement priorities for Education and Families. The report presents data and assesses the impact of the broad range of staff roles, supports and programmes introduced and developed for children, young people and families, many of which focus on prevention and early intervention. Much of the broader work through the cluster model involves partners such as community and voluntary sector organisations, NHS and social work.

[Edu Improvement Report 2024-5 and Plan](#)

Within this report are the figures for attendance and attainment as well as statistics relating to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

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Education and Families, Social Work

Performance scorecard

Children and Families social work monitor a number of different areas each quarter in their performance scorecard. This ensures there is continual oversight of open cases, new referrals and children and young people in need of care and protection. Some of the indicators highlight how our GIRFEC pathways are working in terms of universal additional and intensive supports.

Child Protection, Minimum data set

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) collate, analyse and report on an agreed set of indicators in a consistent and meaningful manner. This minimum data set is followed by all 30 CPCs in Scotland and is produced quarterly. In North Lanarkshire there are 22 indicators. As well as collating the figures for these indicators there is analysis and commentary that focuses in on expected and unexpected changes, relationships amongst indicators and offers evidence-based explanations. This prompts and supports the CPC and staff to identify areas for further scrutiny. Currently the information presented covers just over 3 years (13 quarters)

The indicators cover the following areas

- Early stage
- Child Protection Planning meetings
- Conversions
- Registrations and de registrations (incl- age, concerns)
- Age of Criminal Responsibility and Care and Risk Management (CARM) referrals
- Referrals to the Reporter and grounds
- Timescales and attendance

The CPC links closely to the CS Partnership and highlight concerns and changes through their planning, reporting and direct engagement with partnership staff.

Quarterly and annual reports are produced by the CPC.

The data set ensures we are aware of our most vulnerable children, the flow in and out of the system and indicates the effectiveness of interventions and decision making.

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- **Our child protection registrations as at 31 July 2025 were 53.**

Child protection registrations	49
Pre-birth registrations	4

During the year 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 there were 153 child protection registrations (main register and pre-birth). All areas of concern are recorded and the most common reasons for registration continue to be

- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Child affected by parent/carer mental ill health
- Parental drug use

Children and families social work monitor a number of different areas each quarter in their performance scorecard. This ensures there is continual oversight of open cases, new referrals and children and young people in need of care and protection. Some of the indicators highlight how our GIRFEC pathways are working in terms of universal additional and intensive supports.

- For the 12 months preceding 30 April 2025 the number of referrals to childcare was **9541**.
- The average number of referrals per quarter, over the 7 quarters ending 30 April was **2363**.
- This averages **788** referrals each month

Childcare referrals come from a range of sources. Numbers from each source are listed. The highest percentage come from Police Scotland. For the 12 months preceding 30 April 2025 this was 63% of referrals to social work childcare. Approximately 10% come from Education and a further 10% from NHS services including NHS 24.

Other referrals come from a broad range of sources that include other social work services, addictions, housing, GPs, community organisations. Although low, the % from carers, relatives/friends and the general public is approximately 3.4% and self-referrals average 1.4%.

The majority of referrals, 64%, come through emails and 15% by phone. Requests for assistance are 14% of referrals and 6.6% are notifications of concern.

All referrals to social work are screened to identify both the strengths and needs of a family and identify if this or another resource would be most appropriate. Where Social

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work is identified as an appropriate support, the family will be allocated to a worker for assessment using the Signs of Safety approach. Intervention would align to identified needs and the individual plan for the child.

Through the performance scorecard open and closed cases are monitored including where there is a plan recorded. There is also information about children's hearings, care experienced children and young people and those leaving care.

The following tables provide an overview.

Care Experienced Children and Young People As At 31 July 2025

Placement Type	Number	
At home with parents	189	
With friends/relatives	338	
With foster carers provided by Local Authority	98	
With foster carers purchased by Local Authority	44	
In Local Authority children's house	21	
In external residential placement	6	
In secure accommodation	1	
Total	697	
Care Setting	Number	Percentage
In a home setting / kinship care	527	75.6%
Other community (foster care)	142	20.4%
Residential setting	28	4.0%
Total	697	100.0%

Aftercare / Continuing Care

Legislation Type	Number
Community based aftercare	311

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Supported care aftercare	7
Continuing care - Kinship	25
Continuing care - Foster care	57
Continuing care - Children's house	9
Continuing care - External residential	2

Please note - aftercare figures are as at 06/06/25 due to migration issue with Mosaic.

Compulsory Supervision Orders As At 31 July 2025

Age	Number
0 to 4 years	95
5 to 11 years	180
12 to 15 years	131
16 years and over	43
Total	449

The Scottish Government website includes an overview of the statistics the Scottish Government gathers on children's social work. There is a report for each area and year that can be accessed from here for national and local authority figures.

[Children's social work statistics - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/children-social-work-statistics/pages/1.aspx)

The Promise and Me Partnership is the task group that includes a focus on children and young people experiencing care. There is a statutory requirement to produce and report a Corporate Parenting Plan where priorities relating to the Promise are expressed and monitored.

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Care and Justice

From 2025 the Children's Services Partnership have oversight of the North Lanarkshire Youth Justice Plan. The main aim of this is to increase early and effective intervention (EEI) and decrease the number of referrals to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) on offence grounds.



250728Nlyouthjusticeplan (002).pdf

[Rights Respecting Approach to Justice](#)

A key source of data informing the plan can be found on the SCRA dashboard.

[Online Statistical Dashboard - SCRA](#)

North Lanarkshire referrals on offence grounds reduced from 216 in 2023/4 to 209 on 2024/25. The reduction in numbers is so small that caution should be applied to stating this as a reduction, rather it is consistent with the average of 204 referrals on offence grounds since 2021/22.

In 2024/5 the total number of referrals was 518 and the average from 2021/22 to 2024/25 is 512.

Of the 518, 314 were males and 204 females. The majority, 284 were in the 12-15 age bracket.

Significant case reviews and child death reviews

Significant case reviews are part of multi agency child protection processes. The aim is to learn from cases of child abuse and neglect to improve child protection practices and outcomes.

A significant aspect of learning and one that can lead to changes in practice is the lessons that come from child death reviews. These are undertaken for all deaths from 22 weeks gestation to 18 years old and up to 26 for those who are care experienced. The aim is to identify modifiable and preventable factors that could inform changes and reduce future deaths.

There is data telling us about cases not known to child protection. In 2024/25 the rate of deaths have remained highest in the most deprived areas demonstrating a link with poverty and maternal health.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland [reports](#)

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Additional information and analysis

JSNA -Task Groups

The information and links gathered in this document complement and inform additional work in task groups. In addition to this overview, each of the task groups undertook an exercise to collate information with a focus on the task group priorities and actions from the current planning cycle, 2023-2026;

- What do we know?
- What have we learned?
- What have CYP and Families told us?

referring to research, performance information, 6 monthly reports, engagement, evaluation, and feedback.

Further strategies, plans and reports are developing in tandem with the Children's Services Plan. This includes:

- Corporate Parenting Plan
- UNCRC Report and Forward Plan
- Tackling Poverty Strategy
- Whole Family Wellbeing Fund planning and reporting
- Mental Health and wellbeing framework
- University Health and Social Care Strategic Commissioning Plan
- Review of Local Outcome Improvement Plans

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Conclusions and discussion summary

This information was discussed across the CS Partnership and the following section includes summary highlights from these discussions. This section also includes research and scoping that will take place during 2026. The conclusions of which will be shared across the CS Partnership. Any developments as a result will be updated in task group and annual reports.

Children's Services Policy Drivers

- Poverty and inequality continue to present significant challenges for all partners. Analysis of data gathered frequently shows increased prevalence in areas of deprivation. Figures for North Lanarkshire are helpful and we know that in SIMD 1&2, more often than not, figures exceed or fall short of the presented average.
- There has been further integration between the CS Plan and the Tackling Poverty Strategy. This is demonstrated in a number of shared areas of work and priorities. How priorities and actions impact on poverty will continue to be articulated by task groups and linked to the Child Poverty Action Report. The Three Questions and Cost of the School Day will remain a focus for the partnership. Cash First and Fairer Futures are also an area of crossover and impact.
- Our focus on prevention is a significant aspect of policy, strategy and previous plans. Reflections suggest a refresh on how we express our focus on this, given the amount of work across all task groups. This would better articulate the investment, experience, knowledge and outcomes.

Partners and partnership developments

- The role as a partner and partnership working with **Housing Services** is significant in all areas of work. The ambitions set out in plans and strategies demonstrate this and have relevance in task groups, priorities and actions.
- Colleagues in **Housing Services**, having considered the impact on children and young people of homelessness and temporary accommodation are undertaking an exercise to look closely at the information and evidence available to inform future actions.
- **The Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) – Children, Young People and Family Network** have launched their new strategy. The extends to work across the Community Planning Partnership.
- **The CVS Community Solutions Programme**, supported by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL), includes preventative work and engagement within our communities. VANL have been conducting a health check survey and some locality mapping. They have a six month internship for a researcher that will

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include work with the Children, Young people and Families Network to explore the impact and role of the sector. As a result the network will be able to better articulate their role in prevention and early intervention. Findings will influence future actions.

- North Lanarkshire Council are scoping a model for a **Lanarkshire Bairns Hoose**, in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire and Police Scotland. In 2026-29, the scoping of the Lanarkshire Bairns Hoose model will continue with the view to progressing to implementation. Bairns' Hoose is all about connecting services around the needs of the child by collaborating across agencies and disciplines, bringing child protection, health, justice and recovery services into one setting. This will reduce the number of times children are asked to retell their stories prioritising trauma-informed practice and supporting recovery in a safe, respectful, friendly, and welcoming environment. The connections with all tasks groups and a broader agenda will develop further.
- **The Care and Justice Implementation Plan 2025-27** will report annually to the Improving Children's Services Group. This work has a renewed focus in light of the Care and Justice (Scotland) Act 2024.
- **Contextual Safeguarding** seeks to identify respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people risk. North Lanarkshire has developed a Contextual Safeguarding approach overseen by a multi-agency steering group. Recent developments include a Safety Summitt within a local high school and a CLD Youth Work approach in collaboration with schools, police, and social work to engage young people identified at risk to harm outside the home and create opportunities for participation in community-based activities improving outcomes in health and wellbeing, attainment and reducing their risk of harm. This work will further develop during the 2026-29 planning cycle.
- Work with Police Scotland and NLC Education and Families will focus on **Violence Against Women and Girls**, working with 15 young women from secondary schools and linking to a future pupil conference.
- There is a changing picture for **children and young people with additional support needs**. Like all local authorities, North Lanarkshire Council has a statutory duty under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to secure continuous improvement in educational outcomes and to reduce inequalities. There has been a significant growth in the number of children identified with ASN. The ambition is to create an inclusive and sustainable ASN system. Plans will strengthen mainstream provision for an increased number of ASN learners

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supported within local schools through enhanced support models. This includes infrastructure investment and continued reconfiguration of the ASN estate.

- The **Signs and Safety and Healing (SoSH)** assessment and planning approach completed the two year implementation programme in January 2026. This strength based, relational and solution focussed approach provides a framework for consistent practice, shared language, enabling a joined up approach working towards shared goals. As a partnership we are now embedding the model with Social Work as lead professionals. Continuous improvement, including audits, evaluates the impact of SoSH including feedback from children and their families.

Task Groups

UNCRC and Voice

- Rights at risk: Emerging groups where rights are at risk including refugees in our communities and unaccompanied asylum seekers. Work relating to the UNCRC report and forward plan is focusing on rights at risk and linked through the Voice Task Group. Additional emerging areas include
 - Anti racism
 - Gender-based violence
- Parent voice, including fathers, are an area for development for all task groups. Infant voice is emerging as area where there is increasing knowledge, understanding and practice.

Whole Family Support

- Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, planning and reporting has a significant role in the Family Support Task Group. The growing evidence base from the programmes and projects will support future planning and integration in practice.
- There has been an evolving neurodevelopmental focus, initially through Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience and Whole Family Support tasks groups. The shared learning and understanding across the partnership has resulted in this area of work becoming more significant to all task groups.
- North Lanarkshire is participating in a survey by CELSIS to map services and supports for pre-birth to 3 years old. Information collated for the survey will support our own understanding of the provision of services and supports from pre-birth through early years.

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- NESTA were commissioned by Scottish Government to look at early years and pre-birth to establish level of integration and impact. NESTA will work with North Lanarkshire as one of 6 local authority areas in Scotland to look more closely at the higher than average numbers of teenage pregnancies and link with work on pre-birth pathways, sexual health provision and Family Nurse Partnership.
- The information available to us for early years in this JSNA will be further analysed. The NESTA data dashboard for NL brings together a range of statistics that focus on pre-birth to 5. It is hoped that information will help us to develop a better understanding and initial discussions may lead to a test of change.

Mental Health Wellbeing and Resilience

- Emerging work around digital health is being explored including the impact of social media. A pan Lanarkshire group has been established, and the Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience Task Group have been exploring research and evidence relevant to this.
- Young People told us they needed to see better promotion of current services for mental health & wellbeing, and the task group has worked with young people to develop this work during 2025-6. This is an ongoing action to improve communication of early intervention and prevention sources of support.

The Promise and me Partnership

- Promise and Me Partnership stocktake will inform the work of the task group. Running parallel with the development of the Children's Services Plan is the planning cycle for the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Plan. The development of this plan will take similar steps – needs assessment, engagement and consultation, priority setting and action planning – with a similar completion deadline.
- The recently published Promise Roadmaps are relevant to all task groups and have been applied to the process to identify priorities for 2026-29.
- It is established that there is a need to focus on children and young people with care experience who are looked after at home or in kinship care with particular attention from a voice perspective.

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Next Steps

1. Combine this overview JSNA with the needs assessment work in Task Groups to reflect on and analyse the information to draft priorities for the next 3 years.
2. Engage with children, young people and families to seek their views on the shared priorities for the Children's Services Plan 2026-29.
3. Publish this report as part of North Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan 2026-29.
4. Share with partners and ensure there are links to the broad range of strategies and plans.
5. Reflect on the JSNA process and learning to identify improvements for the next planning cycle