

# Our Promise to the Children of Moray

## Moray Children's Services Plan 2023-26

*All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal, because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time*



  
we will  
**#KeepThePromise**

  
Moray Community  
Planning Partnership

  
getting  
it right  
for every child  
in Moray



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# Executive Summary

## Welcome to Moray Children's Services Plan 2023-26

Our plan has been produced by the public sector agencies with a responsibility for Moray's children and families, alongside third sector and community partners. At its heart is the voice and experience of children, young people and families themselves. It sets out our joint vision for Getting It Right for every Family in Moray.

*“All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal, because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time.”*

We have taken time to listen to children and their families who told us where we were getting it right, as well as the improvements that they feel would make the biggest difference to them.

Moray Youth Matters, a group of young people from diverse backgrounds across Moray reviewed the vision they had developed in 2020. They decided to make no changes and highlighted the importance they place on being heard, not just listened to.

*“We live in communities where our voice is heard, and we are built up to be all we can be.”*

This plan outlines how we intend to realise our vision and deliver the improvements children, young people and their families both need and want, building on our success to date. The key areas for improvement identified are; tackling child poverty, keeping children safe, improving the mental wellbeing of families and strengthening support for families. We have also prioritised meeting the needs of specific groups of children and young people; our care experienced and looked after children and children and young people who experience challenges due to disability or neurodiversity. To deliver these improvements we recognise whole system change is required. This plan includes the actions we intend to take to achieve this.

The plan was developed and will be delivered in the uncertain and challenging times we are currently experiencing, both locally and nationally. The longer-term impact of the restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic on the wellbeing of children, young people and families remains unclear. At the same time, family finances are being squeezed in the face of the rising cost of living, particularly, but not exclusively, in the rising costs of energy and food. Both have a direct impact on our services and community supports who continually strive to meet this escalating demand with ever diminishing resources.

As a partnership, we recognise that it has never been more important for us to work closely with our communities, pooling our collective resources to prevent more children and families reaching crisis point. We will build on the real successes delivered over the past 3 years, particularly those led by our communities and third sector partners.

We know that having a skilled, trauma informed workforce who have trusting relationships with children, young people and families is critical to our success. We will place an even greater priority on investing in the development of our paid and voluntary workforce, as well as providing the support they need to safeguard their own wellbeing.

This plan is our Promise to the children, young people and families of Moray. Our grateful thanks go to all those who collaborated on its production. We look forward to delivering it together, keeping children and young people at the heart of all that we do.

### Signatures



**Caroline Hiscox**  
Chief Executive NHS Grampian



**Roddy Burns**  
Chief Executive, Moray Council



**Graeme Mackie**  
Chief Superintendent, Grampian Police



# Introduction

The GIRFEC Leadership Group, which is made up of strategic leaders from Education, Health, Social Work, Police and 3rd sector have co-ordinated the production of this plan on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership.

The plan covers: -

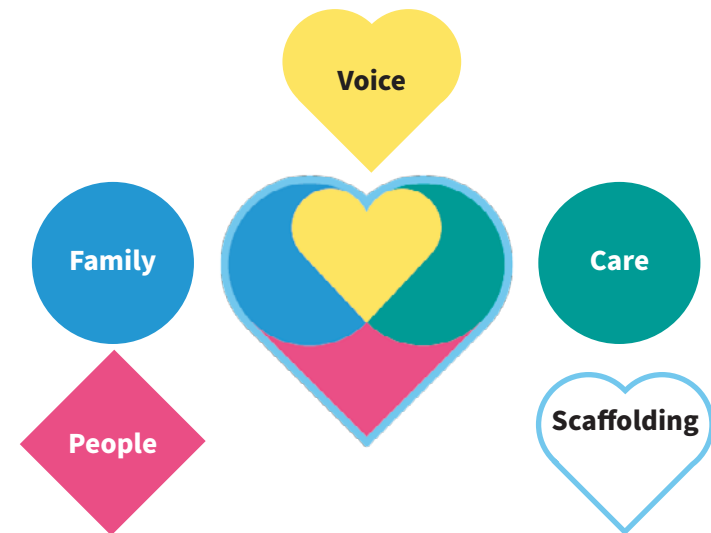
- Universal services available to all children and families such as health visiting and education
- More specialist services for families under pressure or in need of more support. For example, counselling for young people experiencing poor mental wellbeing
- Targeted services for the small number of children and young people who need care and protection.

Building on our achievements from our previous plans, it describes how we will work together to Get It Right for Every Family by delivering high quality, trauma responsive services and supports in a way that works for the children, young people and families of Moray. In accordance with statutory guidance, our focus is early intervention and prevention.

To streamline our strategic planning landscape and better coordinate partnership improvement activity, this plan incorporates the other key partnership plans that have an exclusive focus on children, young people and their families. They are:

- Child Poverty Plan
- Children's Rights and Participation Plan
- Corporate Parenting Plan
- Child Protection Improvement Plan.

On 5th February 2020, a promise was made to Scotland's infants, children, young people, adults and families. The Promise describes Scotland's commitment to children and young people that they will grow up loved, safe and respected. **This Children's Services Plan is our Promise to all children and families in Moray. It outlines our shared priorities, outcomes and actions under the 5 foundations of the Promise.**



# Policy Context

## National

Scotland's National Performance Framework articulates the vision of creating a more successful country by setting out 11 national outcomes we will work towards collectively. All the outcomes interlink and all are crucial to improving the lives of children and young people. **Our improvement priorities and associated actions are aligned with the ambitions for Scotland.**



The Scottish Government's Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach overarches everything that Government and public and voluntary services do that impacts on children and young people. It is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. **Our Children's Services Plan details the improvements we are going to make to get it right for every child in Moray.**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the global “gold standard” for children’s rights. It sets out the rights that all children have to help them to “be all they can be”. They include rights relating to health, education, leisure, play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard. **We have detailed which rights are being met through the delivery of each of our priority action plans.**

The Promise is based on the voices of over 5,500 children and young people of which more than half had experience of living in care. It outlines what needs to happen on a Scotland wide basis to make sure children most in need feel loved and have the childhood they deserve. Keeping the Promise implementation plan outlines what is going to happen at a national level to help ensure the PROMISE is kept. **This plan details what we are going to do together in Moray to #keepthepromise.**

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on the council and NHS Grampian to produce a plan on how they will meet the targets set by Scottish Government to reduce child poverty. Best Start, Bright futures explains how the public, private and third sectors should work with communities to reduce child poverty. **This plan outlines the actions we will take together to reduce child poverty in Moray.**

The Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 sets out what the government and local services need to do to prevent and treat mental health problems. It has a clear focus on prevention and early intervention. **This plan details steps we are going to take together to support children, young people and families to maintain good mental wellbeing and to address problems as soon as they arise.**

# Local

Across the Community Planning Partnership, there is a wide range of local multi-agency strategies and plans which seek to improve the lives of children, young people and families in Moray in different ways. As previously highlighted, the partnership plans which solely focus on children, young people and families have now been incorporated within our Children's Services Plan. Links have been made with the other local strategies and plans whose scope is either broader than children, young people and families e.g. the Community Learning and Development Plan or they have a thematic focus such as the Community Safety Strategy and Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategy.

Individual members of the GIRFEC Leadership Group either chair or are members of the other partnership groups responsible for developing and implementing these related plans. As such, they have an explicit remit to ensure the necessary linkages are made over the 3-year lifespan of this plan.





# Profile of Moray's Children Population

All Children and Young People

## Moray population in 2022

**95,780** people in total  
**18,093** children under 18yrs  
**749** live births in 2021  
**95%** of under 15 year olds identify as White Scottish  
**761** children with English as a second language

## Households with children under 18 years

**20%** single parent  
**62%** small family  
**18%** large family [3+ children]

## School Pupils in 2022

**13,733** pupils in total  
**11%** at Nursery  
**50%** at Primary School  
**39%** at Secondary School  
**452** pupils live in a family with at least one member in the armed forces

Children in need of support

## Children receiving free school meals in 2022

**1,382** children in total  
**12%** at Primary School  
**10.4%** at Secondary School

## School pupils with additional support needs in 2022/23

**250 [16%]** at Nursery  
**2,414 [35%]** at Primary School  
**2,545 [40.6%]** at Secondary School  
The most common reason is social, emotional and behavioural difficulties  
**142** children with a disability open to Social Work  
**164** registered Young Carers  
**182** children assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness

Children in need of care and protection

**174** people under 18 are categorised as Looked After, just under **1%** of the people in that age group  
**13%** living in a residential setting  
**87%** living in a community setting  
**33** children on the Child Protection Register.  
The most common concern is parental substance misuse

# Wellbeing of Moray's Children

## Being Safe

Growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect.

### Neighbourhood Safety

**86%** of P5-S6 children feel safe when out in their local area always or most of the time.

### Bullying

**35%** of P5-S3 children said they were bullied in the last year.

## Being Healthy and Happy

Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

**47%** of S2-S6 children have slightly raised, high or very high Strength & Difficulties score.

### Physical Health

**56%** of P5-S6 children eat vegetables every day or most days.  
**77%** of P1 children are a healthy weight.

## Being All I Can Be (Achieving)

Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

### Positive destinations

**94%** of school leavers moved onto education, training or employment.

### Literacy

**64%** of P1, P4 & P7 children achieved expected CfE literacy levels (reading, writing, listening & talking).

### Numeracy

**68%** of P1, P4 & P7 children achieved expected CfE levels in numeracy.

## Having People In My Life That Care About Me (Nurtured)

Growing, developing and being cared for in an environment which provides the physical and emotional security, compassion and warmth necessary for healthy growth and to develop resilience and a positive identity.

### Pre-school development

**4%** of children with a development concern at their 27-30 month review.

### Trusted Adult

**62%** of P5-S5 children have an adult in their life they can trust and talk to about any problems.

## Being Active

Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

### Physical Activity

**57%** of P5-S6 children have at least 1 hour of exercise a day.

## Being Respected

Being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate.

### Involvement in Decision Making

**54%** of P5-S6 children agree that adults are good at taking what they say into account.

### Children's Rights

**63%** of P5-S6 children know their rights.

## Being Responsible

Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.

### Peer Relationships

**78%** of P5-S4 children have friends who treat them well.

## Being Included

Having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted as part of their family, school and community.

### Digital Inclusion

**99.7%** of P7-S6 children have access to the internet at home.

### Housing

**35 children** are in temporary accommodation.

**Child poverty** rate is **21%**

**School exclusion** rate is

**1.42%**

# What we spend on Children's Services

Service	£
<b>Local Authority:</b>	
Social Work (including commissioned services)	£18,442,475
Early Learning and Childcare	£5,457,018
Schools	£63,456,912
Additional Support Needs - Education	£17,336,156
Youth Work and Family Learning	£465,838
Employability	£214,000
<b>Health</b>	
Health Visiting and School Nursing	£2,144,046
Perinatal Mental Health Services	£996,000*
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	£4,800,000*
Paediatric Allied Health Professional Services	£758,599
<b>Partnership Funding (Confirmed on an annual basis)</b>	
Whole Family Wellbeing Fund	£546,000
Whole Family Approaches –Alcohol and Drugs Partnership	£60,000
Mental Wellbeing Framework Funding	£275,000
Employability Grants from Scottish Government	£2,280,000

\*Grampian budget. Moray breakdown not available

# Our Vision, Core Principles and Values

“ *All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal, because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time.* ”

The principles and values which underpin the delivery of this plan reflect the core principles set out in The Promise and the 10 principles of holistic family support.

## **A relentless focus on what matters to children, young people and their families**

What matters to children and families will be our highest priority and the cornerstone of how our services will operate both on a single agency and partnership basis. It will be centre of all policy, planning and service delivery.

## **Strengths based approach adopted by all**

Inclusive, non-stigmatised approaches will be adopted which build on the strengths of all stakeholders - children and families themselves, the communities they live in and the professionals with a responsibility to support and protect them.

## **Prioritise prevention and early intervention**

As a partnership, we will endeavour to retain a clear focus on identifying needs as early as possible. We will respond quickly and strive to provide the right services at the right time, with the knowledge that early intervention and support delivers better outcomes. We will place an ever-increasing focus on preventative work.

## **Uphold children’s rights and enable participation**

Through the development and delivery of this plan, we will protect, promote, defend and uphold children’s rights. Our partnership is committed to investing in the engagement of children, young people and their families in the development, implementation and review phases of this plan.

## **Tackle inequalities**

Our collective efforts and shared resources will be on addressing the greatest differences in outcomes for children, young people and families living in Moray.



# Developing the Plan

## Our Approach

The production of this plan was a collaborative effort. Building on our strong partnership relationships, in July 2022 we established a Children's Services Plan Development Group made up of Managers from all key agencies and other relevant partnership groups including; Education, Social Work, Child Health, Public Health, Community Learning and Development, Public Protection, Adult Health and Social Care, Police and 3rd Sector.

The Children's Services Plan Development Group completed a joint strategic needs assessment to inform the plan. This comprised of:






- Analysis of key quantitative data available across the partnership.
- Findings of the national health and wellbeing survey, which was undertaken across schools in Moray in June 2022. Over 5400 pupils from P5 to S6 participated.
- Findings from two engagement events with members of the locality networks, made up of front-line practitioners and representatives from community organisations from across Moray. They were asked to highlight what is going well, the areas of greatest concern and what children and families are telling them would make the biggest difference. 102 front line practitioners and representatives from community organisations participated.
- The views of young people who participated in the summer school holiday activity programmes.
- Findings from more targeted engagement with children, young people and families whose voices are seldom heard including; LGBTQI+ community, care experienced young people, care experienced parents, young carers, young people with neuro-diverse challenges, parents whose children were born during the pandemic and parents of children with disabilities.

Findings from the strategic needs assessment were shared at a stakeholder event attended by 91 people from across the partnership. We are delighted that our community and third sector partners were particularly well represented at this event. The areas for action both in the short and longer term were identified. They focus on continuing to build on the successes to date, as well as tackling emerging themes and ongoing challenges where a partnership approach is most likely to deliver the improvements required.

The key priority areas agreed are:

- Overcoming challenges experienced by children with a disability or neurodiversity
- Tackling child poverty
- Improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Strengthening family support
- Improving outcomes for our looked after and care experienced children and young people

Our action plans are structured around the five foundations of the Promise.

	<b>Voice</b>	Explains how we will seek out and act on the voice of children, young people and their families
	<b>Family</b>	Details the actions we will take to; tackle child poverty, improve the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families, keep children and young people safe, strengthen family support and meet the challenges children, young people and families face due to disability and neurodiversity
	<b>Care</b>	Outlines how we will support our looked after and care experienced children and young people to reach their full potential
	<b>People</b>	Describes how we will support the workforce to listen and be compassionate in their decision making, develop trusting relationships with our children, young people and families and deliver the services and supports they need
	<b>Scaffolding</b>	Outlines the key actions strategic leaders will take together to ensure that the 'system' supports the delivery of improvements outlined within this plan

Children's Rights underpin every foundation, so we have explicitly highlighted the rights we promise to meet when delivering the different aspects of this plan. As a partnership, we are committed to ensuring every child knows their rights and is heard in matters affecting them.

# Our Plan at a Glance

## Our Vision

*All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time*







## Our Priorities

		Family		
<p>Tackling Child Poverty</p>	<p>Improving The Mental and Emotional Wellbeing of Children, Young People And Their Families</p>	<p>Keeping Children and Young People Safe</p>	<p>Strengthening Family Support</p>	<p>Overcoming Challenges Faced By Children, Young People and Families Who Experience Disability or Neurodiversity</p>
Care		Voice	People	Scaffolding
<p>Improving Outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People</p>	<p>Hearing Children and Young People's Voices</p>	<p>Supporting our Workforce</p>	<p>Working in Partnership</p>	



# Outcomes

Family	
 <b>Tackling Child Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents claim all of welfare benefits they are entitled to and do not feel stigmatised when seeking support.</li> <li>● The impact of poverty on children, young people and their families is minimised.</li> <li>● Young adults and parents experience no poverty related barriers to entering and sustaining training and employment.</li> </ul>
 <b>Improving the Mental and Emotional Wellbeing of Children, young People and their Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents are confident and able to support their child(ren) to sustain good mental wellbeing.</li> <li>● The right mental health and wellbeing support is available to children, young people and their parents as soon as they need it.</li> <li>● Community based mental wellbeing support is strengthened.</li> <li>● Children, young people and their parents experience a smooth transition between support services, including transition to adult services.</li> </ul>
 <b>Keeping Children and Young People Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Workers are confident and supported to identify and understand risk.</li> <li>● Children, young people and families are empowered to participate in child protection processes.</li> <li>● Children and young people develop healthy relationships with peers, online and in the community.</li> <li>● Children and young people are safer because risks have been identified early and responded to effectively.</li> <li>● Children and young people at risk of or who come into conflict with the law are supported with compassion and care.</li> <li>● Children and young people are supported through recovery and do not experience further trauma.</li> </ul>
 <b>Overcoming Challenges Experienced By Children With Disability or Neurodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children and young people's education and care needs are met, regardless of need.</li> <li>● Parents and young people with neurodiversity challenges can access early help and support.</li> <li>● Children, young people and families with additional support needs have improved access to support, leisure and community-based activities.</li> <li>● Families can access a neurodiversity diagnosis in a timely way.</li> <li>● Children with additional support needs experience a smooth transition to adult services.</li> </ul>

## Family

Family

### Strengthening Family Support

- Children and their family's needs are addressed early through implementation of effective child's planning processes.
- There is a clear pathway of non-stigmatised support available to parents throughout Moray.
- Children's transition into Nursery is consistently good.
- Parents are supported and enabled to be the best parents they can be.

## Care

Care

### Improving Outcomes for Looked After and Care Experienced Children and Young People

- The gap in educational outcomes of looked after and care experienced young people is reduced.
- Looked after and care experienced young people enter and sustain education, training or employment after leaving school.
- The health needs of looked after children and young people are met.
- Looked after and care experienced young people and their parents/carer feel their voice has been heard through the provision of independent advocacy.
- The number of range of placements available meets the needs of children and young people in need of care.
- Transitions feel and are experienced as integrated, with maintaining relationships being paramount.
- Siblings are supported to maintain positive relationships with one another.
- Children and young people seeking asylum are fully integrated into school and community life.
- Looked after and care experienced young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
- Our improvement activity is shaped by the voice of our looked after and care experienced young people.

## Voice

Voice

### Hearing Children and Young People's voices

- The voice of children and young people is evident in all things that impact on them.
- Adults successfully seek out and hear the voices of children and young people of all levels of ability.
- Engagement activities are more coordinated, minimising the risk of children and young people being over consulted.

## People



### Supporting our Workforce

- Integrated working practice is enhanced through joint development opportunities that support our shared vision, core principles and values.
- Staff facilitate and enable the relationships, networks and connections that support our children, young people and families.

## Scaffolding



### Working in Partnership

- As a partnership, we are aware of the changing needs of children, young people and their families.
- As a partnership, we maximise all opportunities to lever in additional funding and work together to ensure it supports the delivery of our shared priorities.
- The risk of silo working across children and adult services minimised.
- We more consistently and effectively measure impact of the actions we are taking to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.
- The co-ordination of continuous improvement activity improves.



# Voice

## Hearing Children and Young People's Voices

### ***We promise to...***

#### **Respect Your Views UNCRC 12**

You have the right to express your views in each and every matter that affects you and for your views to be taken seriously.

#### **Enable You to Express Your Views in the Way That Works Best for You UNCRC 13 and 23**

You have the right to express your views in whatever way you choose, as long as you don't harm others.

#### **Make Sure We Understand the Language You Choose to Use to Express Your Views UNCRC 30**

You have the right to use your own language to express your views.

#### **Promote and Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42**

You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

The Promise mandates that we listen properly to the voice of children and families and respond to what they need and want. The voice of the child is used to describe the real involvement of children and young people. It does not exclusively refer to what children say and does not and should not preclude those who cannot communicate through speech.

We believe that the voice of the child is more than seeking their views; it is about enabling children and young people to take as active a role as possible in making decisions about things which affect them. On a departmental, single agency and partnership basis we are using a range of different approaches to successfully engage those affected by the decisions we make.

**Moray Champions Board** is a forum for care experienced young people aged 16years + to come together with key decision makers to influence and affect change in the care system. Our Champions Board has been re-invigorated and 20 young people are now actively participating. Our younger care experienced young people (aged 10-16years) have their own forum called Little Fix. Key successes include young people planning and hosting a series of events to celebrate national Care Day and taking a lead role in the commissioning of advocacy services and residential children's houses in Moray.

*“Every young person should be celebrated here in Moray. We will continue to celebrate our care experienced young people and have those voices of all care experienced young people heard.”*

Bev, Member of the Champions Board

*“We want our meetings to feel like our meetings and that it’s all about me, please keep meetings to 5 or 6 people in the room and give us more choice in shaping where and how our meetings will take place.”*

**The Better Meetings Project** is led by a group of 21 young people with experience of care. This is an ambitious project which aims to ensure that young people have choice and feel fully involved in shaping their meetings. With the support of Out of the Darkness, a local theatre company, they have produced three powerful films through which they voiced their experiences of how meetings and Children’s Hearings feel for them and how those responsible for supporting them could make things better. The young people are now working with professionals to produce guides and checklists for all those involved in meetings, as well as child friendly meeting spaces. They have also showcased their work to Sheriff David Mackie and key members of the National Hearings System Redesign Group.

**Young Carers** in Moray were involved in the development of Moray’s new unpaid carers’ strategy. They participated in a range of activities, including the production of a short film through which they explained what it feels like to be a young Carer in Moray and what they need from the adults around them. The strategy explains what we will do together to deliver the improvements young Carers have prioritised. Young Carers Leads have now been identified in every Moray school with a remit to continue to seek out and act on the voice of young Carers within the school community and a group of young carers have supported the redesign of Moray’s Young Carers Statement.

*“I am proud to be a young carer and want to be recognised and feel supported in school, I want my teachers to talk more about young carers.”*



Voice		Lead: Children's Rights and Participation Group	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The voice of children and young people is evident in all things that impact on them.</b>	Across the partnership, establish how the voice of young people is currently being captured.	Develop a Moray wide 'Youth Voice' which connects with all the other thematic and geographic youth forms that exist throughout Moray.	Feedback from members of Youth Voice.  Evidence of connection and joint working with other youth forums.
<b>Adults successfully seek out and hear the voices of children and young people of all levels of ability.</b>	Develop and roll out a toolkit to strengthen single agency and partnership knowledge understanding and skills to successfully gather the voices of children and young people. This will include under 3s and those with a disability or English as a second language.		Survey of members of all groups which make up the Children's Services Partnership.  Evidence of increase in range of tools being used.  Evidence of seldom heard voices being captured.
<b>Engagement activities are more coordinated, minimising the risk of children and young people being over consulted.</b>	Develop a central portal where findings from engagement activity undertaken across the community planning partnership can be shared and promoted. This includes summary of action taken in response.		Feedback from Moray Youth Voice members.

# Family

## Tackling child poverty

### *We promise to...*

#### **Help You if You Are Really Struggling Because Your Family Doesn't Have Enough Money UNCRC 26**

You have the right money and support if your family is poor.

#### **Help You Grow Up Safe and Healthy UNCRC 27**

You have the right to clothing, good food and a clean and safe home.

#### **Make Sure You Have Opportunities to Play and Participate in Community Life UNCRC 31**

You have the right to have the same opportunities as other children to rest, play and take part in culture and leisure.

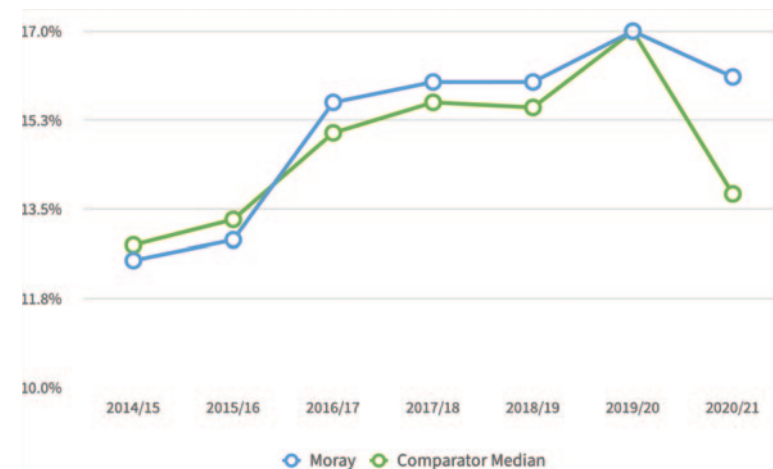
Poverty impacts on the health and wellbeing of the whole family and for children it can have long term effects on outcomes in adulthood.

**Child poverty in Moray has been rising over many years**, with 21.3% of children living in poverty in 2020/21.

**Most of these children live in households where a parent is in employment.** This is not unexpected given Moray has one of the lowest average incomes in Scotland.

**Families experiencing poverty are not concentrated in the areas of greatest deprivation in Moray** - only 7.1% of Moray residents classified as income deprived live in the most deprived geographic areas.

### Proportion of children living in low-income families



Through the Health and Wellbeing Survey, **8%** of children reported that they often or always go to bed or school hungry.

**Research tells us that poverty is a significant risk factor for children.** “Changes in income alone, holding all other factors constant, have a major impact on the numbers of children being harmed. Reduction in income and other economic shocks increase the numbers of children being subject to neglect and abuse, whilst improvements in income reduce these figures “(Neglect: New Evidence March 2022).

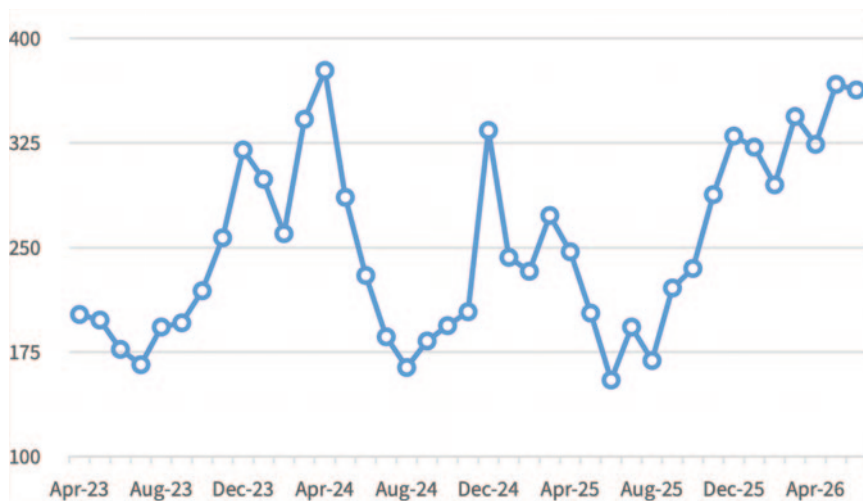
*“I didn't have a breakfast this morning, as there wasn't enough bread left”*  
 Child attending summer holiday activities

*“Energy bills have increased from £100/month to £300/month”*

**There has been a steep rise in demand for emergency food, clothing and financial support.** Through the wide range of engagement activities undertaken to inform this plan, families, community organisations and front-line professionals have painted the picture of a perfect storm of low pay, increasing costs and insufficient income from benefits. Large families, single-parent households and those with additional needs are most often experiencing ‘deep poverty’, but the impact is being seen across a broad range of families in Moray. This is reflected in the steep rise in demand for emergency food provision, clothing and financial support.

*“Had to pay deposit for new boiler so no money left for the next two weeks”*

**Number of referrals to Moray Food Plus for emergency food provision, by month**



*“Client requires oxygen machine and electricity bill has gone up considerably but been told not entitled to help with running costs of vital equipment”*  
 Moray Food Plus – reasons for needing support

*“Universal credit has been cut. Direct debits took all the money out of my account in the same week. I now have 4 weeks to wait until the next payment”*

*“Sanctioned for missing appointment due to COVID-19. I appealed and the decision was reversed but had to wait for the balance to be paid. No money for food or power”*



**Fuel poverty is a significant issue in Moray**, with the most recent data (2017-19) identifying nearly a third of households as fuel poor and 19% as being in extreme fuel poverty. An even greater proportion of the Moray population is now likely to be living in fuel poverty.

**The housing stock in Moray is very poorly insulated making the cost of heating houses even more expensive.** Also, a high percentage of households are not connected to the gas grid and use oil to heat their houses. A tank of oil must be paid for prior to delivery. This is a further barrier to heating for families on low incomes.

**Families have told us that they are struggling to pay for activities for their children. This has prevented them from joining their peers as equal members of their community.** In addition, a survey of 110 parents, showed us that families living rurally struggle to afford public transport to access groups and activities for their children.

**Families tell us that they struggle to ask for help and professionals struggle to initiate conversations with families, whom they suspect are struggling financially.**



In 2022, research into the Early Years Financial Inclusion Pathway highlighted that parents were fearful about drawing attention to their financial problems, some saying they would deny they were struggling, if asked.



Through the Locality Networks, frontline professionals and community representatives have highlighted that they don't know how to start a conversation with a family whom they suspect is struggling due to lack of money, but aren't asking for help.



*"I'm glad all the activities are free, or I wouldn't have been able to go."*  
Young people who participated in our summer activity program.


*"I didn't tell anyone because I've been too nervous or too, too frightened... I've just been like, no, say it's okay"*  
18yr old mother of 2yr old



Family: Tackling Child Poverty		Lead: Child Poverty Group	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>What poverty looks like in Moray is understood by all.</b>	 Establish a child poverty data set, which includes data relating to the key priority groups*.	Build on the data set to ensure all the statutory elements of child poverty can be captured and accurately monitored.	Dataset is informing improvement activity.
<b>Parents claim all of welfare benefits they are entitled to and do not feel stigmatised when seeking support.</b>	Map and promote support available across Moray.		Children, young people and parents report they are aware of support available and feel able to access it.  Child Poverty Group and Locality Network members can clearly articulate the support available.
	 Develop and implement a financial inclusion pathway for parents of children under the age of 5 years.	Evaluate impact of the financial pathway.  Based on evaluation findings, extend the pathway to include parents with children over the age of 5 years.	Increase in sign posting and referrals to supports available.  Dip sample of family's experience of accessing support.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Parents claim all of welfare benefits they are entitled to and do not feel stigmatised when seeking support cont.</b>	 <p>Work alongside parents to understand and overcome barriers to engagement with financial support services.</p>	<p>Embed income maximisation support within intensive family support services.</p>	<p>Families entitled to benefits will have a financial gain to household income.</p>
<b>The impact of poverty on children, young people and families is minimised.</b>	<p>Understand the extent of maternal and infant food insecurity within Moray.</p>	<p>Roll out and embed the emergency Infant formula pathway within Moray.</p>	<p>Increase in uptake of emergency access to infant formula.</p>
	 <p>Develop poverty toolkit guidance for practitioners.</p>	<p>Roll out poverty toolkit guidance and associated training across frontline practitioners and community organisations who have contact with children and families.</p>	<p>Number of practitioners trained.</p> <p>Increase in numbers referred for support by practitioners utilising the toolkit.</p>
	<p>Promote subsidised and free supports and activities.</p>	<p>Better understand and address reasons for low uptake of subsidised and free support available to families.</p> <p>Initial focus on free school meals, bus passes and leisure activities.</p>	<p>Increased uptake of free school meals.</p> <p>Increased uptake of bus passes.</p> <p>Increased participation in and evaluation of free/ subsidised activities.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The impact of poverty on children and young people is minimised cont.</b>	 <p>Rollout the revised Cost of the School Guidance and adopt a partnership approach to ensure costs are equitable across Moray.</p>		<p>Number of schools engaged with the cost of the school day indicatives.</p> <p>Number of breakfast clubs available.</p>
	 <p>Improve joint working between Child Poverty Group and Transport and Housing Departments to better understand and address the specific challenges faced by families experiencing poverty.</p>	<p>Build improvements into revised transport and housing policies and strategies.</p> <p>Through ongoing review of poverty dataset, identify other policies/strategies which require to be reviewed through a child poverty lens.</p>	<p>Impact of improvement activity.</p>
<b>Young adults and parents experience no poverty related barriers to entering and sustaining learning, training and employment</b>	<p>Promote access to Moray Pathway Local Employability Partnership support and provision for those young people who are aged 15yrs + and no longer in Education.</p>		<p>Increase in young people accessing Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and other grants/allowances through Moray Pathways.</p> <p>Increase in young people aged 15yrs plus and no longer in Education who are participating and sustaining employment, learning and training opportunities.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Young adults and parents experience no poverty related barriers to entering and sustaining learning, training and employment cont.</b>	 Develop and test affordable wrap around childcare options (Led by short life working group).	Further develop and upscale affordable, wrap around childcare throughout Moray based on learning from tests of change.	Increase in the number of school aged childcare places available.  Increase in the uptake of school aged childcare places by those in the six priority groupings.  Parental feedback and case studies on the impact of school aged childcare.  Increase in household income.
	Raise awareness of and embed the Moray Pathways local employability partnership support and provision which is available for all young people 16 years and beyond.		Increase in referrals to Moray Pathways local employability partnership.  Increase in parents from the six priority groups participating and sustaining education, training or employment opportunities.
	As a partnership, promote all existing free and subsidised school holiday provision in one central place and support families to access it.	Pool existing resources to provide year round programme of holiday provision for priority family groups. Maximise opportunities as a partnership to lever in additional external funding streams to maximise supply.	Increased uptake of school holiday provision by those in the six priority groupings.

\* The 6 priority groups are; families with 3+ children, lone parent households, families where the mother is aged under 25years, families with child aged under 1yrs, ethnic minority families and households where someone is disabled.

All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal, because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time

# Improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families

## *We promise to...*

### **Support Your Parents to Help You Stay Mentally Well UNCRC 5**

You have the right to receive guidance from your family and community around you.

### **Help You to Develop in the Best Possible Way UNCRC 6 and 24**

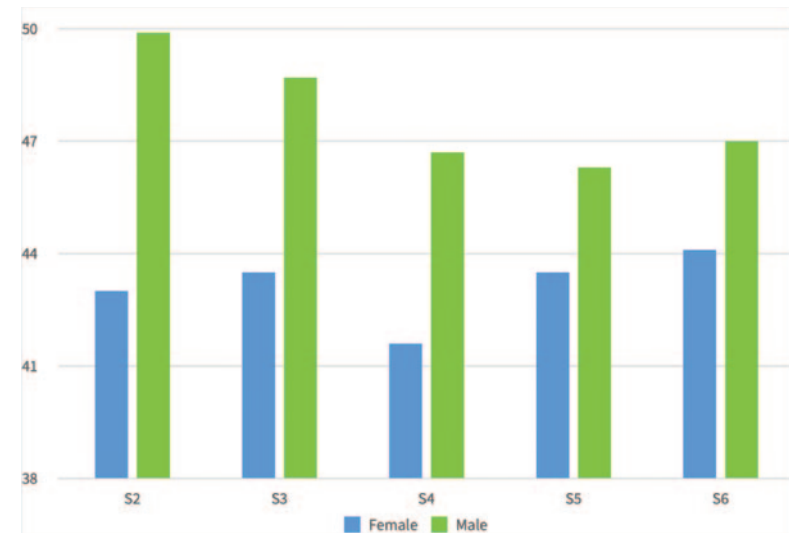
You have the right to get the help you need to stay healthy and to recover should you become ill.

Positive mental wellbeing greatly improves the experience of growing up and provides a solid foundation upon which a person's lifelong health and wellbeing outcomes.

The mental wellbeing of young people, particularly adolescents has continued to decline both locally and nationally. In 2022, the national health and wellbeing survey was undertaken across schools in Moray. Over 5400 young people from P5 to S6 expressed their views on their own wellbeing. Between 47-51% of the teenagers reported experiencing some mental wellbeing difficulties. Loneliness steadily increased with age, with 13% of S1 young people feeling lonely rising to 26.4% in S4.

**The mental wellbeing of girls has declined much more rapidly than that of boys** and is a specific concern in Moray. Girls scored lower than boys on almost all measures. 2 in 5 girls reported feeling confident "rarely" or "none of the time". As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, mental wellbeing services across Moray have experienced a significant rise in referrals, particularly in relation to increased levels of anxiety. Teenage girls are most affected.

**Average WEMWBS score for each year group by gender.  
From Moray Schools HWBC, 2022**



**We know we are still not identifying and addressing mental wellbeing concerns early enough.** There has been a rise in referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, an increasing percentage of which relate to eating disorders and self-harm. There has also been a rapid rise in the number of young people presenting out of hours in relation to significant self-harm, overdose and suicide risk. A significant number of those presenting at crisis were not previously known to services.

**Young carers, children and families experiencing poverty, children and adults in single parent households, children with disabilities and their parents as well as LGBTQI+ young people report a higher prevalence of poor mental health and wellbeing.**

**Mental wellbeing is impacting on young people's ability to attend and engage in Education.** Children across all ages have struggled to transition back to school post COVID-19 and schools are reporting that children who were doing well before COVID-19 are now struggling. Declining school attendance rates reflect these challenges.

**We need to get better at identifying and addressing the mental wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people**

The Promise places a specific responsibility on us to identify and address the mental wellbeing needs of our looked after and care experienced young people. Worryingly, we have seen a decline in numbers receiving a health assessment and a decline in numbers being referred for support. This is very different from the national picture.

### Parental Mental Wellbeing

There is a lack of local data available on perinatal and infant mental health, however we know nationally that perinatal mental health disorders are the most common complication of child-bearing women and anxiety, and depression affects nearly 20% of expectant and new mothers. Through local engagement activities parents of babies born during COVID-19 reported feeling isolated and lonely. They explained how lack of peer and family support has impacted on their mental wellbeing.


We know that to improve the mental wellbeing of children and young people of all ages we need to address the mental health needs of their parents too. To do this we need to work more closely with adult mental health services, adopting a holistic family approach.

*“Need to have parent support groups, it’s especially hard when you’re a single parent family, you need people to talk to”*


*“I would say it was the loneliest time of my life having a new baby and being pregnant again soon after with the restrictions, no groups to go to and no family close by”*



### Knowledge and self-help



There is a strong desire from young people and their parents to build their own knowledge and ability to maintain good mental wellbeing, as evidenced through consultation activity undertaken with 150 children, young people and their families as part of the local mental wellbeing improvement programme. The consultation also highlighted that both professionals and families were unclear about the support available to them and how to access it. A concerning number of young people said they didn't feel connected to their community, and this was impacting on their social, physical and mental wellbeing.

Family: Improving Mental & Emotional Wellbeing		Lead: Mental Wellbeing Partnership Group	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Parents are confident and able to support their child(ren) to sustain good mental wellbeing.</b>	 <p>Collate and promote the existing tools, training and community assets available to meet parents wishes to feel more confident to recognise and address problems as soon as they arise.</p>	Identify and address gaps in training and support available to parents and overcome barriers to access.	<p>Numbers engaging with training.</p> <p>Training feedback.</p>
<b>The right mental health and wellbeing support is available to children, young people and their parents as soon as they need it.</b>	Complete the mapping of existing mental wellbeing services and supports and promote widely to families, communities and front-line services who have regular contact with children, young people and families.	With families, identify gaps in mental wellbeing provision and overcome barriers to accessing existing provision.	<p>Survey with young people and families and frontline professionals via Locality Networks report increased awareness of support available.</p> <p>Reduction in referrals which are declined by services.</p>



Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The right mental health and wellbeing support is available to children, young people and their parents as soon as they need it cont.</b>	 Develop and embed a coordinated pathway of mental wellbeing support for children, young people and their parents.	Quality assure the mental wellbeing support pathway, prioritising and addressing areas for improvement on a partnership basis.	Increased provision.  Service user feedback on accessibility and impact of service provision.  Evidence of improvement through quality assurance activity.
	Establish whether the newly established Grampian Perinatal & Infant Mental Health Service is accessible to families in Moray and meeting their needs.	Establish the Infant Mental Health Team to provide specialist support for families with children 0-3years.	Uptake of services and supports.  Parental feedback on impact of support provided.
	Overcome barriers to access and shape delivery of provision with families.  Establish the need for perinatal peer support provision and the extent to which this need is currently being met.	Develop a sustainable model of perinatal peer support, which meets local need.	
	Trial the extension of counselling in schools to younger children.		Counselling in schools outcome data.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The right mental health and wellbeing support is available to children, young people and their parents as soon as they need it cont.</b>	 <p>Progress the implementation of the mental wellbeing system redesign project, which focuses on meeting the mental wellbeing needs of families with pre-school children.</p>	Upscale the mental wellbeing system redesign, based on the learning from the test of change.	<p>Reduction in wellbeing concerns at point of school entry.</p> <p>Further measures to be identified as part of the development of this project.</p>
<b>Community based mental wellbeing support is strengthened.</b>	Explore how a coordinated participatory budgeting approach could be developed to enhance existing community-based provision.		<p>Evidence of increased community led provision.</p> <p>Numbers accessing provision.</p> <p>Feedback from young people and parents on impact of provision.</p>
	 <p>With Health and Social Care Moray, design and test a social prescribing model for young people in the Forres and Lossiemouth locality. A component part includes young people shaping improvement of community-based supports and services.</p>	Based on learning from the pilot, roll the social prescribing model out across Moray.	<p>Feedback from young people, their parents and relevant professionals on the impact of the pilot.</p> <p>Evidence of impact from data collated through outcome measurement tool.</p> <p>Increase in community provision shaped by young people.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Community based mental wellbeing support is strengthened cont.</b>	Through the Locality Networks, explore how community organisations and local services can work more effectively together to address the escalating number of young people not engaging in school and community life due to low level anxiety.	Test new approaches within 2 localities.	Evidence of partnership working leading to reduction in the number of young people not engaging in school or community life due to low level of anxiety.
<b>Children, young people and their parents experience a smooth transition between support services, including transition to adult services.</b>	 Improve coordination of mental health and wellbeing support provided to children and families by CAMHS, Counselling in Schools and the Tier 2 Family Mental Wellbeing Service.		Dip sampling to explore experience of joint up practice.  Feedback from services.
	 Journey map care experienced young people who have recently transitioned between children and adult services and use learning to prioritise improvement activity for all.	Implement improvements identified and quality assure.	Feedback from young people and their parents.  Evidence from quality assurance activities.

## Keeping children and young people safe

### *We promise to...*

#### **Act in Your Best Interests UNCRC 3**

When we make decisions, we will consider how these decisions will affect you.

#### **Respect Your Views and Keep you Informed UNCRC 12 and 17**

You have the right to express your views in each and every matter that affects you, and for your views to be taken seriously. You have the right to receive information, in a way that you can understand.

#### **Work to Keep Families Together UNCRC 9**

You have the right to live with your parents if this is what's best for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

#### **Keep You Safe UNCRC 20**

You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your family.

#### **Protect You UNCRC 33, 34 and 36**

You should be protected from dangerous drugs, sexual abuse, being taken advantage of, being sold, and from doing things that could harm you.

#### **Support You to Recover UNCRC 29**

You have the right to special help if you've been hurt, neglected or treated badly.

The safety of children and young people is recognised as a core component of their wellbeing. To be safe means growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect. Our children and young people have the right to be protected from all forms of harm and abuse. Child abuse can take many forms: physical, sexual or emotional abuse - or a combination of all three. It can also come in the form of neglect, exploitation, and anything else that puts children at risk. Sometimes the harm caused isn't intentional but happens because someone doesn't have the skills or support needed to care for someone. That doesn't make the impact of it any less, but it can help us to understand how it happened.

### People, Places and Spaces

It is everyone’s job to keep children safe and it is crucial that we raise awareness with professionals and public about how they can recognise and respond to children at risk of harm. Children who are at risk of or experience harm may not recognise or understand what is happening to them, they may be too young or not have the words to tell their story. Some children and young people may be made to feel afraid or ashamed to talk to someone, so it is important that we create safe spaces with trusted adults in our children's services settings.

Where we live and how safe we feel there can be a key factor in our wellbeing. 86% of P5 students and 94% in S6 tell us that they feel safe in their local area. Teenage girls and young women are less likely to feel safe than boys and young men. Young people with disabilities, neurodiversity, and LGBTQI+ told us they can feel unsafe and want to be able to access safe spaces to meet and talk in school and the community.

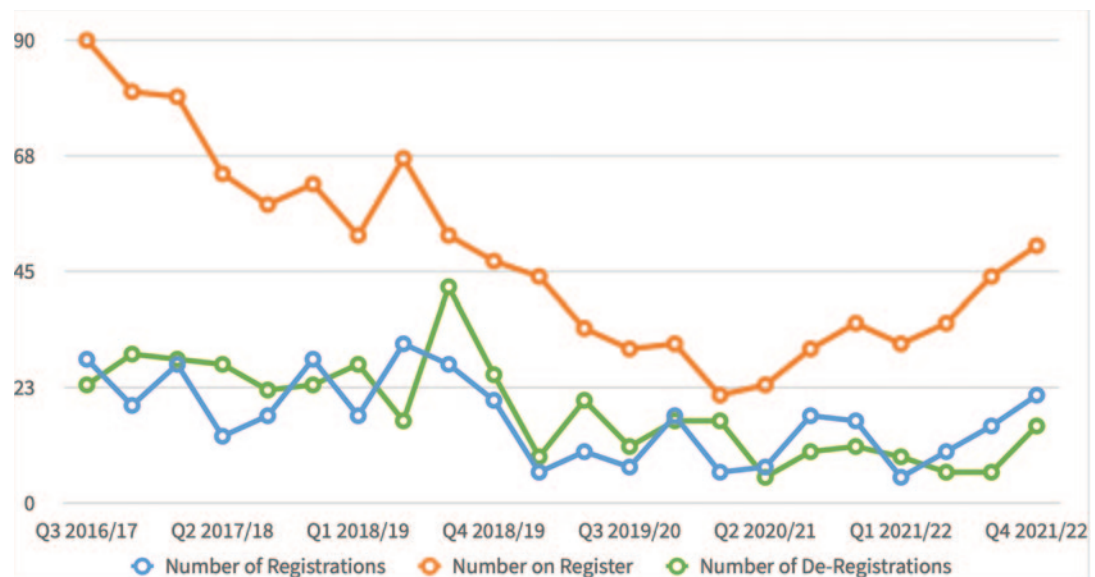
Bullying in childhood and adolescence can have severe and long-lasting impacts on both those victimised and those engaging in bullying. We have found that the proportion of children reporting that they feel bullied reduces with age with 44% of P5 pupils telling us they have been bullied in the past year against 24% of S3 students.

**Child Protection** provokes constant developmental challenges for every individual practitioner and for every team. The Moray Child Protection Committee provides leadership for safe systems and practice by placing an evaluative focus on outcomes and promoting systematic learning from case reviews.

Child Protection services have remained categorised as critical and protected throughout the COVID-19 pandemic so support, advice and response to child protection issues did not change. However, it is widely recognised that school closures and disruption of early year’s services meant that children at risk were less visible to professionals.

In Moray, the most common reasons for children to need a protection plan and have their name placed on the child protection register are parental drug use, domestic abuse, parental mental health and neglect.

**Child Protection registrations, de-registrations and number on the register in Moray, by quarter.**



## Supporting Families

There is significant research that demonstrates the pervasive impact and relationship between substance use, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse and likelihood of children being removed from the care of their parents. We know that families experiencing these issues must be supported with flexible, creative services and relationships. Our workers need to be confident, knowledgeable, skilled and supported to be effective in complex situations, and be able to spend time with families to really understand what they can do to make a difference. Families should feel able to be open and honest with workers and receive the same in return.





Poverty is a significant contributor to stress and potential to develop harmful coping mechanisms and can increase the risk of abuse and neglect. It is important therefore that we assess the impact of all structural factors such as poverty and poor housing as part of our care and protection planning, to support more holistic approaches that reduce stressors in families and communities to help reduce the risk of harm to children.




**Gender-Based Violence** is a major health, human rights and social justice issue. The prevalence of gender-based violence increased during COVID-19 and the restrictions in place made it more difficult for those experiencing violence to leave and access support. The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Police in Moray is below national average however, the rate of increase in Moray is well above and the cost-of-living crisis exacerbates the financial barriers to leaving an abusive relationship and increases the potential for coercive control.

Moray Child Protection Committee and Moray Violence against Women and Girls Partnership are working together to roll-out the Safe and Together practice approach. This evidence-based model will help to ensure that our systems and services are Domestic Abuse informed. Preventative initiatives are also delivered to young people throughout schools in line with Moray's Equally Safe Delivery plan to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.



## Young People's Behaviour that is Antisocial or Harmful

There has been a slow but consistent upward trend in the number of reported crimes in Moray. The number of offences where young person is aged under 18 years has increased by 24% since 2019/20, however the number of young people has remained relatively stable meaning the same number of young people are offending more often. The offences with the largest increase include fire raising, malicious mischief, vandalism and miscellaneous (mainly assault and threatening and abusive behaviour).

Family: Keeping Children with Young People Safe		Lead: Moray Child Protection Committee	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Workers are confident and supported to identify and understand risk.</b>	 <p>Develop a learning and practice development programme that is informed by an assessment of training needs.</p>	<p>Develop a learning culture through local implementation of multiagency training and learning reviews.</p>	<p>Workforce survey and course evaluations.</p> <p>Supervision audit.</p> <p>Evaluation of Learning Reviews.</p>
<b>Children, young people and families are empowered to participate in child protection processes.</b>	 <p>Introduce a solution orientated approach to Child Protection Planning Meetings and Core Groups.</p>	<p>Develop resources about our child protection processes with and for children and families.</p>	<p>Reviewing Officer quality assurance activity.</p> <p>Feedback from parents, children and young people.</p>
	 <p>Ensure all children and young people can access independent advocacy as early as possible.</p>		<p>Advocacy service contract reporting.</p>
<b>Children and young people develop healthy relationships with peers, online and in the community.</b>	<p>Encourage parents and carers to have conversations with children and young people about online safety.</p>		<p>Feedback from parents, young people and professionals.</p>
	 <p>Deliver education programmes in youth settings on issues of consent, gender equality and healthy relationships.</p>	<p>Support schools and organisations in Moray to take part in the LGBTQI+ Charter programme.</p>	<p>Uptake of sexual violence prevention programme.</p> <p>No. of LGBTQI+ Charter awards gained in Moray.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Children and young people develop healthy relationships with peers, online and in the community cont.</b>	Identify young people who are vulnerable to extremist and terrorist ideologies and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support at an early stage.		Referrals to and outcomes from Prevent Multiagency Panel Meetings.
<b>Children and young people are safer because risks have been identified early and responded to effectively.</b>	 Work in partnership with families to enable the reduction of factors causing risk.	Develop our relationship with commissioned services to best understand those who require intensive family support to reduce risk factors in the home.	Referrals to Functional Family Therapy.  Child planning quality assurance.  Safe & Together evaluation.
	 Continue to embed domestic abuse informed systems and practice.		
	 Ensure our child protection processes are reviewed and in line with national guidance.	Adopt a place-based approach to safeguarding young people at risk of harm beyond the family home.	Child protection minimum dataset and associated quality assurance.



Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<p><b>Children and young people at risk of or who come into conflict with the law are supported with compassion and care.</b></p>	 <p>Review our whole systems approach (WSA) to develop and deliver an implementation plan towards rights based and trauma informed justice services, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The needs and rights of young people who pose risk of serious harm to others, and the systems in place to support them</li> <li>● Developing our diversion activities with young people and reducing the criminalisation of our youth</li> <li>● Interventions that take a family-based approach</li> </ul>		<p>Partnership self-evaluation: Youth Justice Standards, performance monitoring and feedback.</p>
<p><b>Children and young people are supported through recovery and do not experience further trauma.</b></p>	 <p>Embed a child centred and trauma informed approach to our Joint Investigative Interviewing of Children &amp; Young People.</p>	<p>Develop a joined up holistic model of therapeutic recovery support for children who have experienced or witnessed abuse.</p>	<p>Application of Scottish Child Interview Model Self-Assessment and Quality Assurance Framework.</p> <p>Partnership self-evaluation: Bairns Hoose Standards.</p>

## Supporting children and families who experience challenges due to disability and neurodiversity

### *We promise to...*

#### **Act In Your Best Interests UNCRC 3**

When we make decisions, we will consider how these decisions will affect you.

#### **Remove Obstacles To Independent Living UNCRC 23**

You have the right to become independent and actively participate in school, work and community life.

#### **Help You Grow Up Safe And Healthy UNCRC 24**

You have the right to the best health care available.

#### **Provide You With An Education Which Meets Your Needs UNCRC 28 And 29**

You have the right to be educated on a full time basis. We should help you learn in a way that works best for you.

#### **Enable You Play And Participate In Community Life UNCRC 31**

You have the right to have the same opportunities as other children to rest, play and take part in culture and leisure activities.

#### **Promote And Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42**

You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

### **Children in Schools with Additional Support Needs**

In Moray between 2017 and 2022 the number of children in schools with an additional support need rose by 50%. There are currently 2414 primary pupils and 2540 secondary pupils with additional support needs, of which 396 pupils are recorded as requiring additional support for their autism. The most common reason overall is social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. The escalation in volume and complexity of needs is also being noted by Social Work who currently support 142 young people with complex disabilities and their families.

### Support for Parent Carers

It is well evidenced both nationally and locally that the pandemic has profoundly impacted families with children with a disability or long-term condition. UK-wide research conducted by the Family Fund found that around 80% of the participating families had lost formal and informal support due to the pandemic. Parents and the front-line practitioners who know them best including; school and nursery staff, 3rd sector organisations and health visitors have told us that this is a significant gap in Moray. The re-establishment and further development of peer support provision is a priority for our parents. They would also like training built into this provision, so they can understand how to best support their child.

### Support for Learning Differences and Neurodevelopmental Conditions

Significant concerns have been raised around the particular needs of neurodiverse young people. Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the different ways in which people think and feel, or the different ways that brains 'work'. Parents of neurodiverse children and young people have told us that they want more opportunities for their child to be involved in activities within communities. This includes additional support to access the activities available to all, as well as groups and activities specifically for them. Families who have the added pressure of limited finances and single parent families are least able to access the activities which are available.

*"It helps me that I know I have Autism. I want to be able to talk about it and find out more so that I can chat to others and be part of a group"*

Young person

The Neurodiversity GIRFEC survey 2022 found that there was not enough support available to families before diagnosis and there were real frustrations with delays in diagnosis. Current waiting time in Moray is over 12 months. Parents also told us they don't know where to go to find the help available to them. They don't feel heard and are worried that they will be left until things get really bad before they get help.

The specific number of children with disabilities on reduced school timetables is unclear at present, as the current recording system does not collate the detail required. However, Education, Social Work and parents highlight it as an issue which requires to be better understood and addressed. Reduced education provision not only impacts on the child, whose rights to an education are not being fully met, but there is wider impact on family. Finances are stretched as parents can't work fulltime and the additional strain of caring responsibilities can impact on both their physical and mental wellbeing.




*"We think that other people listen more once there is a diagnosis"*


Parent








## Family: Overcoming Challenges Experienced by Children and Young People with Disability or Neurodiversity

Lead: Disability & Neurodiversity Partnership Group

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Children and young people's education and care needs are fully met, regardless of need.</b>	 <p>Develop and implement a framework of support for all children and young people who cannot access their education in a school setting. Framework is twofold:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council Team structure to provide education out with school settings</li> <li>● Procurement framework comprising of 3rd sector and other external suppliers of wellbeing and learning support</li> </ul>		<p>Number of young people who cannot access education in a school setting receive an education which meets their needs.</p> <p>Reduction in out of area placements.</p>
	 <p>Explore options to extend nursery provision for children with complex needs.</p>	<p>Increase in sustainable nursery provision suitable for and available to children with more complex needs.</p>	<p>Increase in provision available and uptake of this provision.</p>
	 <p>Better understand the impact of reduced school timetables on children and young people with a diversity of needs.</p>	<p>Create and implement a policy and associated processes to ensure effective oversight of the use of reduced school timetables.</p>	<p>Increase in the time children and young people spent meaningfully engaged in education.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Parents and young people with neurodiversity challenges can access early help and support.</b>	Establish the specific gaps in peer support provision for parents of children with neurodiversity challenges and barriers to accessing existing provision.	Enhance existing peer support and establish additional provision to meet identified gaps.  Build peer support into the commissioned unpaid carer contract.	Number of peer support opportunities available, shaped by parents.  Feedback from parents on impact of peer support.
	Promote information on disability specific financial support and identify barriers to access.	Overcome all barriers to access.	Parents supported through the commissioned Carer Service report they are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● aware of the benefits available</li> <li>● able to access the benefits they are entitled to.</li> </ul>
	 Work with existing providers to improve access to support and development opportunities for parents who want to better understand and manage their child's behaviours, with a specific focus on under 5s.	Increased range of opportunities for parents to engage with training and development opportunities.	Range of provision on offer.  Numbers engaging in training.  Feedback on impact of training.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Children, young people and families with additional support needs have improved access to sport, leisure and community-based activities.</b>	 Understand and remove barriers to inclusion in existing community, sport and leisure opportunities.		Feedback from children and young people.  Increase in number of young people reporting they feel able to access opportunities they want to.
	Establish the needs, costs and current availability of specialist out of school and holiday activities for families with additional support needs.	Develop and implement a programme of specialist weekend and holiday activities.	Availability and uptake of provision.  Feedback from parents and children.
	 Respond to the request from community organisations to better understand neurodiversity and be able to support young people to engage in the activities they offer.		Feedback from activity providers on their confidence to welcome and support neurodiverse young people to enjoy the activities they provide.  Increase in neurodiverse young people participating in activities.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Families can access a neurodiversity diagnosis in a timely way.</b>	 <p>Autism Diagnostic Assessment Pathway Team (ADAPT) will transition to the Grampian Neurodevelopmental pathway</p>	<p>Roll out the Grampian Neurodevelopmental pathway across Moray thus ensuring all children impacted by neurodiversity have access to timely diagnosis and early support.</p>	<p>Number of children referred and seen under ADAPT.</p> <p>Reduced time between referral and assessment, reduced number of re-referrals.</p> <p>Families report receiving the support they need whilst waiting for assessment and diagnosis.</p>
	 <p>Refresh and implement the autism strategy, ensuring the voice of children, young people and their families is central.</p>		<p>Autism strategy launched.</p> <p>KPIs within the strategy are achieved.</p>
<b>Children with additional support needs experience a smooth transition to adult services.</b>	 <p>Understand barriers to effective transition to adult services.</p>	<p>Implement clear transition pathways into adult services.</p>	<p>Feedback from young adults.</p>

## Strengthening family support



#Keep  
The  
Promise

*“Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they **must stay**.*

*Families must get support together to nurture that love, and to overcome the difficulties which get in its way.”*

Promise 2020

### *We promise to...*

#### **To Be Guided by Your Family UNCRC 5**

You have the right to receive guidance from your family and community.

#### **Work to Keep Families Together UNCRC 9**

You have the right to live with your parents if this is what’s best for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

#### **Help You to Grow Up Safe and Healthy UNCRC 24 and 27**

You have the right to clothing, good food, a clean and safe environment, and to see a doctor if you are ill.

#### **Promote and Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42**

You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

**Holistic Whole Family Support** involves a range of services that help families meet their individual needs, to thrive and to stay together. We want to make sure that families can access the help they need, where and when they need it. Holistic support should address the needs of children and adults in a family at the time of need rather than at crisis point, helping families to flourish and reduce the chances of family breakdown.

**Community Based Support:** Keeping the Promise requires us to have places in every community where parents of young children can meet, stay and play and get the support and advice they need. The restrictions put in place during the pandemic isolated families from their normal support networks and this has had wide ranging impact on family member’s health and wellbeing.

*“[Looking to] meet new people.  
There’s no groups.  
It’s so isolating at the moment...  
I’ve met some lovely people which  
has really helped“*  
Parent attending Parent Wellbeing  
Walks



### Support for Parents

Through survey and focus group work undertaken as part of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with both parents and locality group members who support parents, the following needs were highlighted:-

- Targeted support for new parents, especially those who became parents for the first time during COVID-19
- Ongoing support with return to nursery, school and community life post COVID-19
- Specific support to help with routine and boundary setting
- Support for parents struggling with their own mental wellbeing and/or that of their child
- Support for families where a member; is LGBTQI+, has a disability or long-term health condition

**Early Learning Centres and nurseries are reporting a significant increase in the number of children with a diversity of needs entering nursery,** although the number of children in Moray with at least one developmental concern at their 13-15 month and 27-30 month reviews has not increased. This is concerning given numbers with developmental concerns in our comparative authorities and Scotland wide are between 5 and 6 times higher.





### Families under Pressure




Whatever issues families face, we must ensure that intensive family support is available, proactive and characterised by the 10 family support principles. Alongside our work to refresh child’s planning processes in Moray, we are working with families and using methods for improvement and service redesign to build support systems and services that follow these principles. Together with the Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership, our key focus is to improve the supports for parents experiencing problematic substances and adopting whole family approaches to support.





Through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, we will continue to build on the work across adults and children’s services to establish responsive and relationship based models of family support across a wide range of specialist service areas.

**10 Principles of Intensive Family Support**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Based</li> <li>● Work with Family Assets</li> <li>● Flexible</li> <li>● Therapeutic</li> <li>● Patient and Persistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Responsive and Timely</li> <li>● Empowerment and Agency</li> <li>● Holistic and Relational</li> <li>● Non-Stigmatising</li> <li>● Underpinned by Children’s Right</li> </ul>
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Family: Strengthening Family Support		Lead: Family Support Strategic Group	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Children and family's needs are addressed early through the implementation of effective child's planning processes.</b>	 Test the revised child's plan paperwork and associated guidance in one Associated School Group area.	Based on feedback from families and Team Around the Child, roll out revised plan and associated guidance across Moray.	Dip sample survey of Team Around the Child and families in child's planning.
	 Develop a bank of solution oriented trainers across Social Work, Health and Education.	Design and roll out a programme of training to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of named persons and Lead Professionals to implement child's planning processes.	Quality assurance of child's plans through Multi Agency Practice Hub.
	 Further develop the role and function of the Wellbeing Coordinators and Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) based on findings of the external evaluation and ongoing self- evaluation activities.		Feedback from children, families and Team Around the Child.  Evidence of impact captured on child's plan.
	 Develop and implement a multi-agency child's planning self-evaluation calendar, which includes voice of children and families, child's planning at points of transition.		Improvements measured through self-evaluation activity.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Children and family's needs are addressed early through the implementation of effective child's planning processes cont.</b>	 <p>Develop a central repository of information and supports available to children, young people and families in Moray and a system in place to keep it current.</p>		<p>Numbers accessing the repository.</p> <p>Feedback from families and front-line practitioners.</p>
<b>There is a clear pathway of non-stigmatised support available to families throughout Moray.</b>	 <p>Utilising Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, recruit a skilled manager to coordinate the development of holistic family support in Moray.</p> <p>With parents and frontline practitioners, undertake self-evaluation of existing provision, utilising the national family support evaluation tool.</p>	<p>Based on self-evaluation, identify gaps in provision.</p> <p>Pool resources across the partnership and maximise external funding streams to develop a pathway of support with and for parents.</p> <p>Quality assure impact of pathway and implement improvements.</p>	<p>Increase in provision and evidence of impact from suppliers.</p> <p>Feedback from parents and the frontline practitioners who know them best on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessibility of support</li> <li>● Whether support meets their needs</li> <li>● The difference support has made.</li> </ul>
	 <p>Based on learning of pilots to date, roll out PEEP across Moray on a partnership basis covering the antenatal to 5yrs age range (Health, Early Years and 3rd sector).</p>	<p>Further develop PEEP programmes, maximising opportunities for parents and senior phase pupils to gain qualifications which could lead to employment in childcare.</p>	<p>Increase in number of PEEP groups operating.</p> <p>Feedback from parents on impact of PEEP.</p> <p>Increase in the number of children meeting developmental milestones.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Children's transition into nursery is consistently good.</b>	 Undertake Quality Improvement (QI) activity within the Speyside Associated School Group (ASG) to establish an information sharing protocol between Health and Early Years.	Roll out the findings from the QI project across Moray.	<p>Increase in the number of children transitioning into nursery with their needs clearly identified.</p> <p>Practitioner's feedback evidences smooth transition.</p>
<b>Parents are supported and enabled to be the best parents they can be.</b>	 Commission specialist services that provide tailored support to families under pressure (Social Work).	Embed commissioned services in the pathway for family support.	Evidence of impact utilising robust outcome measurement tool.
	 Test the intensive family support redesign, utilising Whole Family Wellbeing Funding.	Scale up and roll out the Intensive Family Support Service across Moray.	Reduction in family breakdowns.
	 Roll out the vulnerable pregnancy pathway across Moray.	Quality assure the vulnerable pregnancy pathway to ensure it is fit for purpose and having the desired impact.	Finding from quality assurance and evaluation activity including feedback from parents.

# Care

## Improving Outcomes for Looked After and Care Experienced Children and Young People

### *We promise to...*

#### **Act In Your Best Interests UNCRC 3**

When we make decisions, we will consider how these decisions will affect you.

#### **Work To Keep Families Together UNCRC 9**

If you can't live with your parents, you have the right to be helped to stay in regular contact with them, when it's safe to do so.

#### **Make Sure You Grow Up Feeling Loved And Safe UNCRC 20 And 21**

If it isn't possible for you to live with your own family, you have the right to be loved and cared for in a family setting where you are enabled to thrive.

#### **Help Children, Young People And Families Seeking Asylum UNCRC 22**

You have the right to get the help and protection you need.

#### **Check In Regularly With You If You Are Living Away From Your Parents UNCRC 25**

You have the right to live in a loving home and to be asked regularly whether it's working for you.

#### **Work Together To Overcome The Barriers You Face When Trying To Access Education UNCRC 28 And 29**

You have the right to be educated on a full time basis. We should help you learn in a way that works best for you.

#### **Promote And Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42**

You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

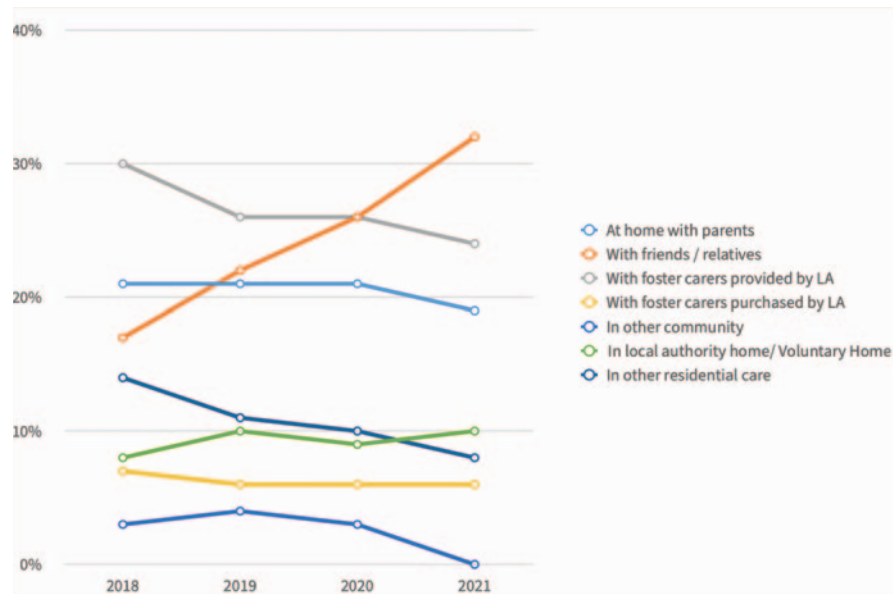
In 2022, there were 174 people under the age of 18 categorised as ‘Looked After’ in Moray, representing just under 1% of young people in that age group.

### Education

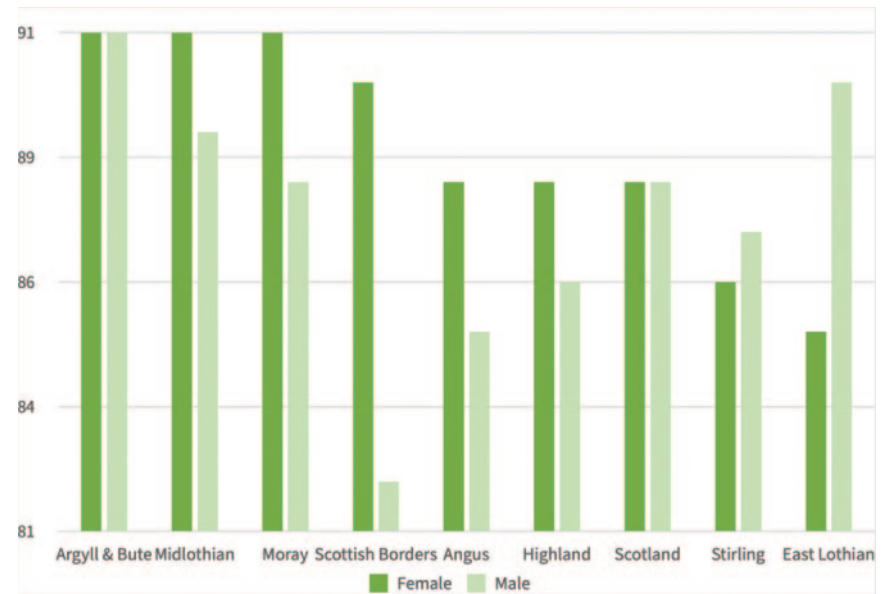
Care experienced young people’s school attendance and attainment levels are lower than their peers and a high number are not in education on a full-time basis. Attendance rate for care experienced children highlight that looked after girls have an attendance rate of 91% and looked after boys of 88% whilst their non-care experienced peers attendance remains stable at around 94%.

Exclusion rates have reduced across Moray but the number of looked after children and young people being excluded from school remains higher than their non-looked after peers. In 2020/21 there were 125 exclusions per 1,000 looked after pupils compared to a rate of 14.2 per 1,000 for the whole school population. This data highlights looked after children were 9 times likelier to be excluded from school.

### Looked After Children and Young People (LAC) by accommodation type in Moray, 2018-21



### Percentage school attendance for children looked after within the last year, by gender, 2020/21

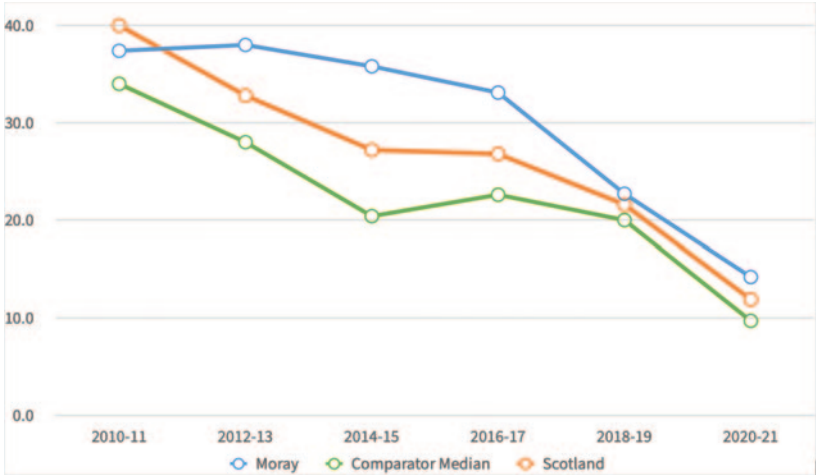


Our looked after and care experienced young people are at risk of being further marginalised from their peers, communities and educational opportunities by being on a reduced timetable. The table on the right shows the number and percentage of care experienced and looked after and care experienced young people on a reduced timetable.

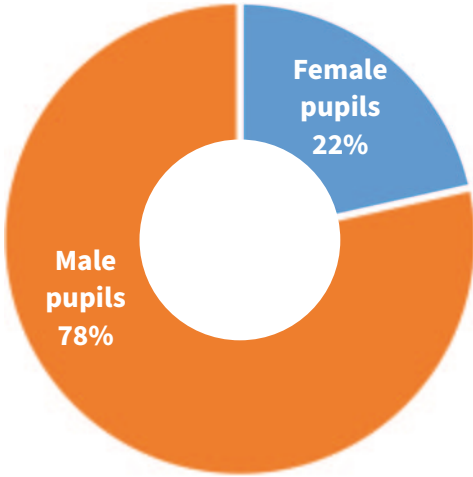
**Percentage of Looked After and Care Experienced Young People on Part-Time Timetables by School in Moray.**

School	No. of LAC pupils on reduced timetables	% of LAC School population
Buckie High School	10	42%
Elgin Academy	1	7%
Elgin High	6	26%
Forres Academy	2	9%
Keith Grammar	2	33%
Lossiemouth High School	0	/
Milnes High School	0	/
Speyside High School	0	/

**School rates of exclusion per 1,000 pupils, by year**



**Proportion of cases of school exclusion by gender in Moray, 2020-21**



Care experienced young people in Moray continue to have poorer educational outcomes than both the national average and all but two of our local authority comparators. The proportion of young people achieving at least one qualification at SCQF 3 is 73% compared with 97% of all school leavers. For SCQF 4 65% compared to 96% for all school leavers. 29% of looked after children are not receiving any qualifications at SCQF 3 or above.

### Positive Destinations

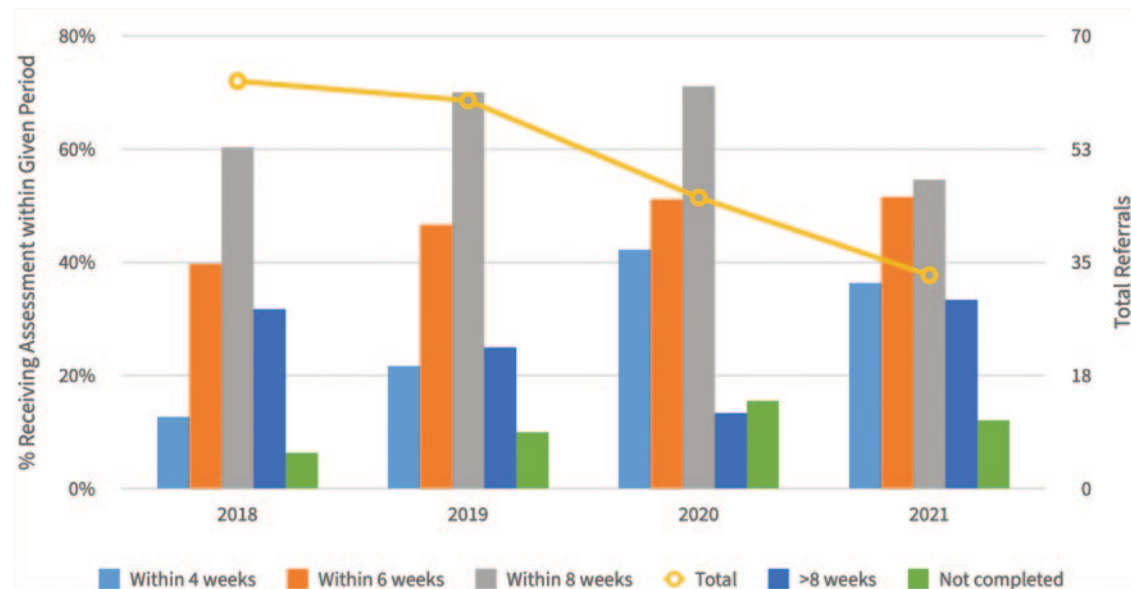
75% of the 16 looked after and care experienced young people in Moray moved on to a positive destination after leaving school in 2021.

### Health & wellbeing

Looked after and care experienced children and young people are more likely to experience poor health than other young people. All children who become looked after receive an initial health assessment within 4 weeks of becoming looked after. The number of initial health assessments completed within nationally agreed timescales remains low at just over a third of referrals. The proportion of health assessments not undertaken within 8 weeks has increased to 45% (33% undertaken after 8 weeks and 12% not undertaken).

LAC Initial destinations			
Establishment	Year	% of Schools Leavers in a Positive Destination	Number in Cohort
<b>Moray</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>75.00%</b>	<b>16</b>
Virtual Comparator	2020/21	91.25%	160
The Northern Alliance	2020/21	82.79%	122
The National Establishment	2020/21	87.94%	1045

**Total referrals of Looked After Children and Young People in Moray (yellow line, right-hand axis) and % receiving their initial health assessment within given times (bars, left-hand axis), by year.**





The number of looked after children and young people being referred to CAMHS has significantly dropped during 2021/2022 resulting in looked after children and young people potentially not receiving the mental well-being support they need.

### Care Experienced Parents

In order to truly understand the impact of care on families in Moray, we need to understand the needs of care experienced people as parents. Care experienced parents reported feeling judged and stigmatised as a poor parent. They told us that they place great importance on having someone they can trust such as Health Visitors and Support Workers. They want opportunities to mix with other care experienced parents in a community setting.

*“I think [it would help] if there were groups. Especially when I was a young mum, I had no-one else to talk to, nobody spoke about being care experienced.”*

Care experienced parent

*“[It would help] being able to talk about being care experienced. Groups for mums and dad – being in care is one part, your journey how you ended up in care would be good to talk to others who have been through similar experiences.”*

Care experienced parent

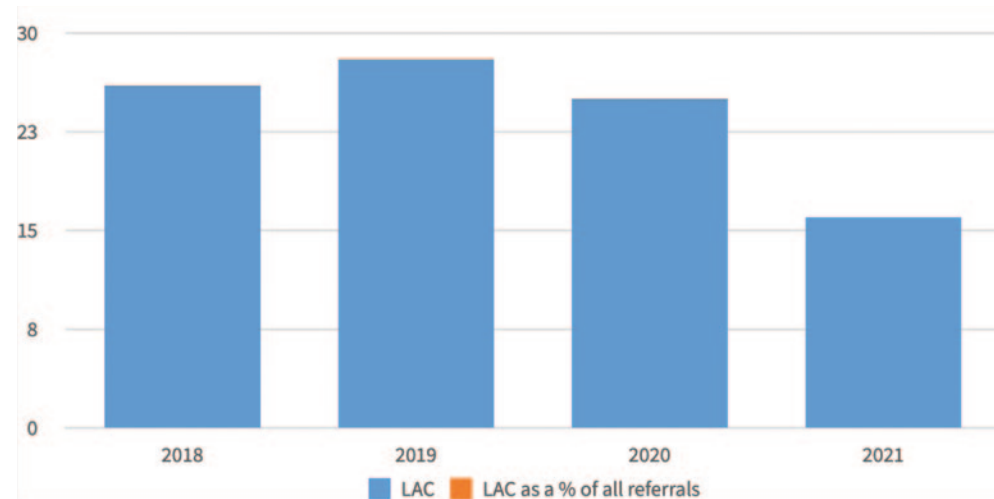
### Moving on

There is a lack of affordable housing options available for young people leaving care and transitioning on to independent living. During 2021/2022, 6 care experienced young people were living in homeless accommodation. Young people have told us they want continued support when they leave care from the people they have relationships with and trust.

*“I am really struggling since I left care, managing all my bills and living on my own is difficult, I feel very lonely and isolated.”*

*“Living in homeless accommodation on the outskirts was hard, it was a place where no one spoke to me. I felt so isolated. No one in there ever spoke to me I felt really alone. I didn’t know anyone in that area as I’m not from there so I couldn’t even go out to talk to people.”*

**Number (left-hand axis) and proportion (right-hand axis) of CAMHS referrals in Moray classified as Looked After Children and Young People.**



### Youth Justice

A disproportionately high number of care experienced children and young people are represented in the youth justice system. The majority are boys and young men. This raises important questions about gender norms prevalent in our society, which lead more boys and young men than girls and young women to offend; but also, about whether systems are working appropriately to support boys before they come into contact with the Police and the Criminal Justice System.

### Voice

To better understand care experienced children and young people's journey within the care system and where improvements are needed qualitative data was captured through a range of engagement activity. Children and young people told us:

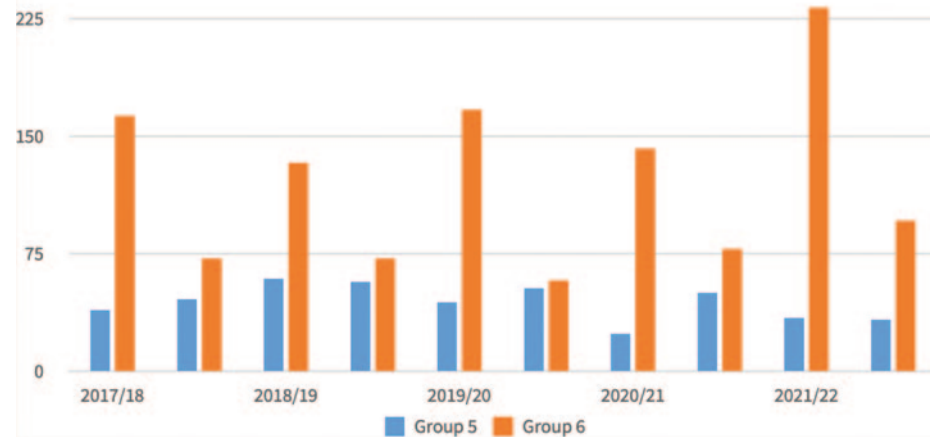
*"To move around from foster placements is challenging and just being in care is hard in case people at school find out."*



*"I would like for better understanding at school of what it means to be care experienced."*



*"I would like to see family especially parents and siblings more frequently"*


*"I feel like I'm treated differently because I'm in care. It holds me back doing what I'm able to do."*



**Number of offences in Moray where the accused is under 18yrs old, by age group, by category, by year.**









Care: Improving Outcomes for Looked After and Care experienced Children and Young People		Lead: Corporate Parenting Strategic Group	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The gap in educational outcomes of looked after and care experienced young people is reduced.</b>	 <p>Improve the identification, tracking and monitoring of looked after children and young people within schools, nurseries and other preschool settings.</p>	<p>Embed systems and processes that allow for the ongoing monitoring of support to looked after children and young people.</p>	<p>We will know what support our looked after young people are receiving.</p>
	 <p>Recruit a Virtual Head Teacher who will work alongside local partners to better understand the barriers to attendance, engagement and achievement in Education.</p> <p>With care experienced and looked after children, design and test new and improved interventions to overcome the barriers identified.</p>	<p>Implement improvements on a partnership basis and quality assure effectiveness.</p>	<p>Improvement in attendance.</p> <p>Findings from quality assurance activity. This includes feedback from children, young people and their parents.</p> <p>Improvement in educational outcomes.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The gap in educational outcomes of looked after and care experienced young people is reduced cont.</b>	 <p>Improve understanding on the use of reduced timetables and internal/external exclusions for looked after children and young people.</p> <p>Adopt a multi-agency approach to improve engagement in Education.</p>	Develop and implement a policy and governance structure around the monitoring and tracking of reduced timetables.	<p>Increased attendance in meaningful Education.</p> <p>Reduction of informal and formal exclusion.</p>
<b>Looked after and care experienced young people enter and sustain education, training or employment after leaving school.</b>	 <p>Identify the challenges and barriers to looked after and care experienced young people accessing further/higher education, training opportunities and alternative awards.</p>	Adopt a partnership approach to improving accessibility of further/higher education, training opportunities and alternative awards.	School leavers outcome data via SDS, Moray Pathways and further/higher education.
	Track and monitor care experienced destinations up to the age of 26 years old – to measure the effectiveness of existing supports and identify if there are gaps in current provision.	Develop and implement a partnership action plan to improve positive destinations for care experienced and looked after young people.	Annual dip sample of care experienced young people measuring positive destination outcomes.





Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Looked after and care experienced young people enter and sustain education, training or employment after leaving school cont.</b>	 <p>Raise awareness and access to funded early learning and childcare provision for care experience parents.</p>	<p>Monitor uptake of early years provision for care experienced parents.</p>	<p>Increase in care experienced parents accessing training and employment opportunities.</p>
<b>The health needs of looked after children and young people are met.</b>	<p>Better understand and overcome barriers to consistent completion of Initial Health Assessments within agreed timescales (4 weeks from NHS Grampian receiving notification).</p>	<p>Review best practice around Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) and how they support onward referral to CAMHS services where required.</p> <p>Investigate systems to strengthen SDQ data capture and electronic scoring within Moray.</p> <p>Understand the needs of looked after children who are living at home and ensure they all have an initial health assessment completed.</p>	<p>Increase in number of children receiving IHA within 4 weeks.</p> <p>Increase in number of children referred to CAMHS or other services because of elevated SDQ's at the three-month review.</p> <p>Audit of 'child's voice' in the health assessment process.</p> <p>Improvements in children and young people's health related outcomes.</p> <p>Increase in the number of Looked after children living at home receiving IHA.</p>





Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The health needs of looked after children and young people are met cont.</b>	Ensure mental well-being needs are identified early, a range of support (up to age 26 and beyond) is accessible and outcomes monitored.		<p>Increased referrals for mental health and well-being support where evidenced it is required.</p> <p>Services provide evidence through impact reporting of improved outcomes.</p>
<b>Looked after and care experienced young people and their parents/carers feel their voice has been heard through the provision of independent advocacy.</b>	 <p>Appoint a single service advocacy provider who will provide independent advocacy to care experienced children and their families at all stages of their care journey.</p>	<p>With care experienced young people and their parents, quality assure the advocacy support delivered via commissioned services within Social Work and Education. Agree improvements and begin implementation.</p>	<p>Annual dip sample to collect views of children and families who have accessed advocacy support.</p>
<b>The number and range of placements available meets the needs of children and young people in need of care. (Including those who experience disability/have complex needs, young people seeking asylum and brothers and sisters who should be accommodated together).</b>	 <p>Increase focus and resources on the recruitment of foster carers, drawing on the assistance of local, regional and national partners.</p>	<p>Review the impact of the foster carer recruitment campaign and further develop building on success to date.</p>	<p>Increase in number of foster care placements available</p> <p>Increase in children and young people accommodated in foster care placements.</p> <p>Decrease in out of area and residential placements.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>The number and range of placements available meets the needs of children and young people in need of care. (Including those who experience disability/have complex needs, young people seeking asylum and brothers and sisters who should be accommodated together) cont.</b>	 Identify and address the training and development needs of foster, kinship and residential care workers employed by Local Authority.	Update and implement revised training provision provided by the Local Authority.	Numbers attending training.  Feedback on impact of training.  Reduction in placement breakdowns.
	 Better understand what peer support foster and kinship carers want.	Develop and implement peer support opportunities with and for foster and kinship Carers.	Feedback from foster carers and kinship carers on the how this impacts their ability to care for children and young people.
<b>Transitions for children and families feel and are experienced as integrated, with maintaining relationships being paramount.</b>	 Review the current pathway plan to ensure young people receive support before, during and after they move on to independent living.	Implement changes identified through the review of the current pathway plan and quality assure.	Care experienced young people voice their transition to independent living felt positive and they are maintaining the relationship which are important to them.  Number of care experienced young people up to the age of 26 years with a pathway plan in place.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Transitions for children and families feel and are experienced as integrated, with maintaining relationships being paramount cont.</b>	 Develop and implement a care leavers Housing Needs Policy which includes a homelessness prevention pathway.	With the Housing Support Officer (care experience) and care experienced young people identify a resource for young people transitioning from care to trial living independently.	Reduction in homelessness.
	 Understand young people's experience of the current support received when transitioning out of care and identify gaps in provision.	Improve Through Care and Aftercare support provision for care experienced young adults up to the age of 26 years ensuring support is based on individual need not on 'age of services' criteria.	Young people voice feeling supported as they transition on to adulthood.  Increased uptake of Through Care Aftercare Support Services.
<b>Siblings are supported to maintain positive relationships with one another.</b>	 Embed the learning from PACE in policies and procedures relating to the placement of children and young people in care.	Quality assurance implementation of policies and procedures.	Increased proportion of siblings growing up together.



Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Siblings are supported to maintain positive relationships with one another cont.</b>	 <p>With care experienced children and young people develop a local maintaining relationships policy with a specific focus on siblings.</p>	Implement and evaluate maintaining relationships policy.	Services report increased numbers of young people maintaining relationships that are important to them.
<b>Children and young people seeking asylum are fully integrated into school and community life.</b>	 <p>Understand what barriers there are for children, young people and their families seeking asylum with regards to education, health and inclusion within their community.</p>	Adopt a partnership approach to supporting asylum seeking children, young people and families to access education, health and community life.	<p>Children and young people who are seeking asylum achieve educational outcomes in line with their peers.</p> <p>Feedback from children, young people and their families who are seeking asylum report they feel included in their community.</p>
<b>Looked after and care experienced young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.</b>	 <p>Evaluate effectiveness of current support system.</p>	Improve early and preventative supports for young people at risk of offending.	Reduction in the number of care experienced young people in justice services.
	 <p>Develop and implement robust guidance in on the use of restraint across the care system.</p>	Support the workforce to adopt a trauma informed, rights-based approach when responding to children and young people in distress.	Reduction in use of restraint.

Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<b>Our improvement activity is shaped by the voice of our looked after and care experienced children and young people</b>	 Develop and monitor a corporate parenting data set which reflects looked after and care experienced children and young people's experiences within the care system.		Areas for improvement identified.  Evidence of impact of improvement activity.
	 Increase the voice, choice and participation of looked after children in their hearings and meetings through implementing and evaluating the Better Meetings Practitioners Guide.	Create with children and young people, safe trauma informed spaces for looked after children and young people attending their hearings and meetings.	Children, young people and their families report positive experiences of their meetings.
	 Develop and embed the role of Promise Keepers across the partnership ensuring the Promise remains at the forefront of service design and delivery.	Extend the network of Promise Keepers across the Health and Social Care partnership (adult services).	Children and young people report that they have been included in the design and delivery of services they access.
	 Further develop forums through which care experienced children and young people can both socialise and affect change. Initial focus on younger children and those with additional support needs		Increase participation in Champions Board and Little Fix. Vehicle established with and for younger children and those with additional support needs . Young people involved report that they are affecting change.

# People

## Supporting our Workforce

Our workforce includes all volunteers, carers and employees who have a role in improving wellbeing of children, young people and families. This might be through direct contact or indirectly through a supporting role. It may be within a statutory service or as part of a community group or organisation. There are a broad range of professions and roles, and therefore diversity, of staff across the partnership.



*“Maintaining a stable and motivated workforce is central to the delivery of effective high-quality services for children, young people and families. Pivotal to this is valuing and supporting the workforce and promoting their wellbeing”*



The Promise 2020

**Relationship building** is key to providing the correct support to children, young people and families. In practice this requires an understanding of the ways that trauma can impact on children and young people's development and wellbeing. This involves working in consultation with the child or young person and taking all reasonable steps to understand what is going on in that child's life and how current and past life experiences may influence relationships. The work required to keep The Promise for all our children and young people will be a key area of our workforce development. We recognise there is much to build on including changes we have made to our language, introducing love, kindness and relationships as key concepts and practices in the work across children's services.

We will continue to build on our trauma informed and compassionate approaches to work with families. We know that workers must also feel valued and supported to respond to the individual needs and wishes of a child or young person and their family. We will strive to create the conditions for best practice through leadership, supervision and support for workers to feel empowered and confident so they can, in turn, instil that feeling in the children and families they work with.

### **Learning and Practice Development**

We need to be aware of the learning and development needs of our workforce to ensure learning opportunities are relevant and delivered in a way that makes best use of resources. We previously undertook an options appraisal for children's services partnership training and are now working to develop a joint workforce development strategy and engagement plan. This will take into consideration changes in legislation, policy, priorities and working practices.

People : Supporting Our Workforce		Lead: Multi Agency Learning and Development Group	
Outcome	High Level Actions		How will we know if we have made a difference?
	Short Term	Longer Term	
<p><b>Integrated working practice is enhanced through joint development opportunities that supports our shared vision, core principles and values.</b></p>	<p> Review our workforce training needs and ensure we have all we need to meet them, incorporating national developments.</p> <p>Develop a workforce development plan that supports our vision and values and priorities established in the creation of this plan.</p> <p>Continue to deliver joint workforce development programmes to implement National Child Protection Guidance and GIRFEC policy.</p>		<p>A partnership workforce plan with a baseline, measures and reporting is agreed.</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting of single and multi-agency training activity.</p>
<p><b>Staff facilitate and enable the relationships, networks and connections that support our children, young people and families.</b></p>	<p> Embed the principles of trauma-informed and strengths-based working across all multi-agency/sector training and development activity.</p> <p>Change our language and introduce love, kindness and relationships as key concepts and practices.</p>		<p>Reflective feedback incorporated into planning cycle.</p> <p>Audit of minutes, plans and papers.</p>

# Scaffolding

## Working in Partnership

Through the development of this plan, we have sought the views of children, families and our workforce to better understand what's getting in the way of progress at both a strategic and operational level. Our ongoing self-evaluation activity that includes learning reviews, file auditing and journey mapping has also informed the actions we plan to take to strengthen our scaffolding. During the lifetime of this plan, we will strive to ensure that our governance, culture, systems and processes empower our paid and voluntary workforce and local communities to deliver the improvements children and young people have told us matters most to them.



*“Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed: the scaffolding of help, support and accountability”*  
The Promise 2020

Successes we will build on:



**Revised governance structure** with streamlined partnership groups each with a clear focus on statutory responsibilities and the delivery of actions to progress priorities within the Children's Services Plan.



### **Pooling of single agency budgets to meet partnership priorities**

Our revised locality networks, which are made up of front line practitioners and community organisations, have operated as a successful means of identifying and addressing emerging themes. The need for a substance use service for young people aged under 18 years was identified through the Buckie Network. A successful partnership funding bid was made to CORRA, led by Aberlour Childcare Trust. Health, Education, Social Work, Moray Drug and Alcohol Partnership and the 3rd sector pooled their budgets to provide match funding, in recognition that the new service supports the delivery of both our partnership and their single agency objectives.

### **Building the capacity of the 3rd sector to take a lead role in the identification and delivery of our partnership priorities**

Through a competitive procurement process, 3rd sector organisations are bidding to become chairs of the locality networks. Their remit is to coordinate the identification of emerging needs within the communities that make up Moray and facilitate creative joint working at a local level to meet those needs.

Scaffolding : Working In Partnership		Lead: GIRFEC Leadership Group
Outcome	High Level Actions	How will we know if we have made a difference?
<p><b>As a partnership, we are aware of the changing needs of children, young people and their families.</b></p>	<p> Identify a dedicated resource to coordinate the annual update of our partnership Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Integrate the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment into our continuous improvement framework.</p> <p>Host the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in a central repository, accessible to all and ensure it is used to inform all other relevant single agency and partnership strategic plans, including; LOIP, Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care Moray, Community Learning and Development Plan and Moray Council Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Current Joint Strategic Needs Assessment accessible to all.</p>
<p><b>As a partnership, we maximise all opportunities to lever in additional funding and work together to ensure it supports the delivery of our shared priorities.</b></p>	<p> Raise awareness across GIRFEC Leadership Group of external funding allocated to single agencies and the partnership to address priorities within this plan. Agree how this funding can be used to best effect.</p> <p>Maximise opportunities to work with the 3rd sector to lever in additional funding.</p> <p>Develop and resource a joint commissioning process through which funds will be allocated and monitored.</p>	<p>There will be an overall increase in external funding.</p> <p>External funding is being targeted to priorities of this plan.</p> <p>A joint commissioning process is operational.</p>

Outcome	High Level Actions	How will we know if we have made a difference?
<p><b>The risk of silo working across children and adult services is minimised.</b></p>	<p> Agree and implement a reporting process across children and adult services.</p> <p>Improve communication and joint working with relevant adult services including drug and alcohol partnership and adult mental health services.</p> <p>Ensure members of partnership groups responsible for improving outcomes for children and families highlight silo working on both a single agency and partnership basis.</p>	<p>A clear oversight of activity across the partnership evidences coordination.</p>
<p><b>We more consistently and effectively measure impact of the actions we are taking to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.</b></p>	<p>Build on the quality assurance process to ensure that the intersectionality across our thematic priorities is well evidenced, widely understood and all mitigating actions are co-ordinated.</p> <p>Listen to the views and opinions of children, young people and families and collate information together to evaluate overall impact.</p>	<p>Findings from our self-evaluation activity.</p>
<p><b>Improve co-ordination of continuous improvement activity.</b></p>	<p> Develop a robust performance management and quality improvement framework and implement on a consistent basis.</p> <p>Celebrate and build on good practice.</p>	<p>Framework will be in place and there will be evidence of what works.</p>

# Our Performance Framework

## Measuring Progress

### Self-evaluation

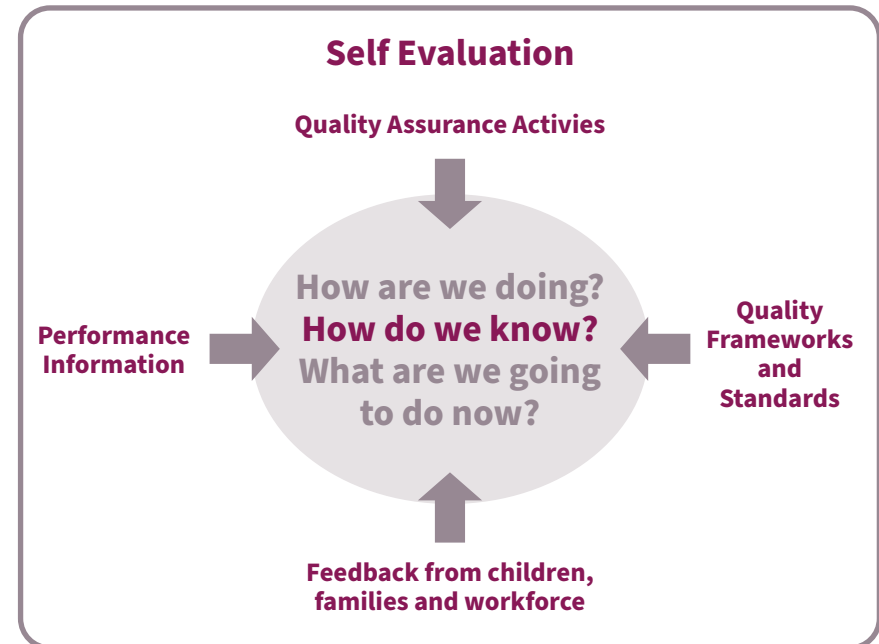
Self-evaluation is a useful process that enables us to identify what's working well and where we need to target efforts to support improvement and achieve better outcomes for children. Self-evaluation is a complex area which involves the measurement of what we do (actions), what we deliver (outputs/products), and the difference that this makes to children and their families (outcomes and impact).

In children's services planning, both in Moray and nationally, one of the challenges has been to focus more effectively on outcomes for children and their families. We can measure our outputs, systems and processes but demonstrating the impact of these in terms of improved wellbeing outcomes is more difficult. In practice, there may be many different actions and process improvements that together lead to improvement in one or more outcomes, and it is not always possible to evidence a direct linear relationship between activity and outcome.

This challenge led the Scottish Government to work with stakeholders to develop a Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Outcomes Framework to provide an overall holistic picture and understanding of children and young people's wellbeing in Scotland. The CYPF Outcomes Framework will sit below Scotland's National Performance Framework at an intermediate level and will be aligned to this. The aim is that the proposed framework will contain a 'core' suite of indicators which authorities will supplement with their own local indicators. Use of these core indicators will allow us to compare the holistic picture of children and young people in Moray with that of other authorities in Scotland.

We are using the core suite of indicators in this plan along with our own locally identified indicators which will be developed. Any changes to the final suite will be reflected as our Children's Services Plan is reviewed and revised.

The proposed core suite of indicators from the Outcomes Framework is shown overleaf.





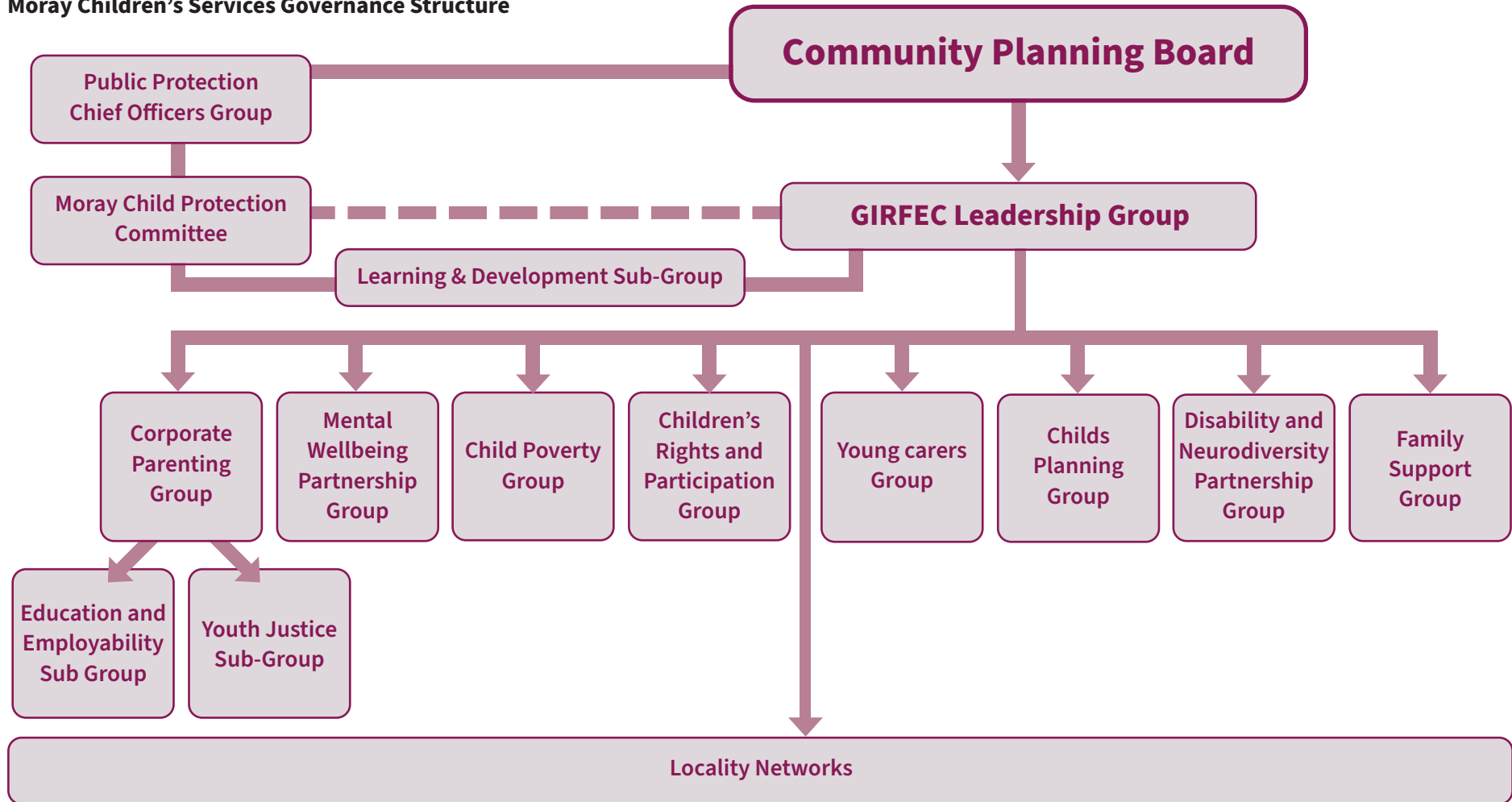
## Scottish Government Core Wellbeing Indicators:

- Mean score on Stirling wellbeing scale for P5-S1 children/Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Score for S2-S6 children (WEMWBS)
- Percentage of S2-S6 children with slightly raised, high or very high Strength and Difficulties score
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who agree that adults are good at taking what they say into account
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who eat both fruit and vegetables every day
- Percentage of children with a concern at their 27-30 month review (as a % of children reviewed)
- Percentage of P5-S5 children who say they always have an adult in their life who they can trust and talk to about any personal problems
- Relative child poverty rate after housing costs
- Percentage of settings providing funded Early Learning and Childcare achieving Care Inspectorate grades of good or better across all four quality themes
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who say they feel safe when out in their local area always or most of the time
- Percentage of S1-S3 children participating in positive leisure activities (participation in at least one from list)
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who agree that their local area is a good place to live
- Percentage of P5-S3 children who were bullied in last year
- Number of children subject to Interagency Referral Discussions
- Number of children in temporary accommodation at 31 March
- Percentage of P5-S6 children that had at least one hour of exercise the day before the survey
- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 children achieving expected CfE levels in literacy (reading, writing, listening and talking)
- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 children achieving expected CfE levels in numeracy
- Percentage of all school leavers in positive destinations at 9-month follow-up
- Proportions of all children under 16 who live in households that contain at least one person aged 16 to 64, where all individuals aged 16 and over are in employment
- Percentage of P7-S6 children who have access to the internet at home or on a phone or another device
- Percentage of P5-S4 children who agree that their friends treat them well

# Governance

Moray Community Planning Partnership has devolved responsibility to both produce and deliver this plan to the GIRFEC Leadership Group (GLG). GLG comprises of senior decision makers from the public and 3rd sector who have a remit to work together to improve the lives of children and young people across Moray. The group is chaired by the Chief Social Work officer and Head of Service.

## Moray Children’s Services Governance Structure



Specific strategic groups across the Children's Services partnership have oversight responsibility for the delivery of each of the action plans. Given the interlinkage between the priorities and associated actions, the chairs of these groups will meet regularly throughout the life of this plan to coordinate improvement activity. Progress will be reported on a quarterly basis to GLG.

	Priority	Strategic Group with oversight responsibility
	<b>VOICE:</b> Hearing children and young people's voices	Children's Rights and Participation Group
	<b>FAMILY:</b> Tackling child poverty	Child Poverty Group
	Improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people	Mental Wellbeing Partnership Group
	Keeping children and young people safe	Moray Child Protection Committee
	Overcoming challenges experienced by children and young people with a disability or neurodiversity	Disability and Neurodiversity Partnership Group
	Strengthening support for families	Family Support Strategic Group
	<b>CARE:</b> Improving outcomes for our looked after and care experienced children and young people	Corporate Parenting Strategic Group
	<b>PEOPLE:</b> Supporting our workforce	Learning and Development Group
	<b>SCAFFOLDING:</b> Working in partnership	GIRFEC Leadership Group

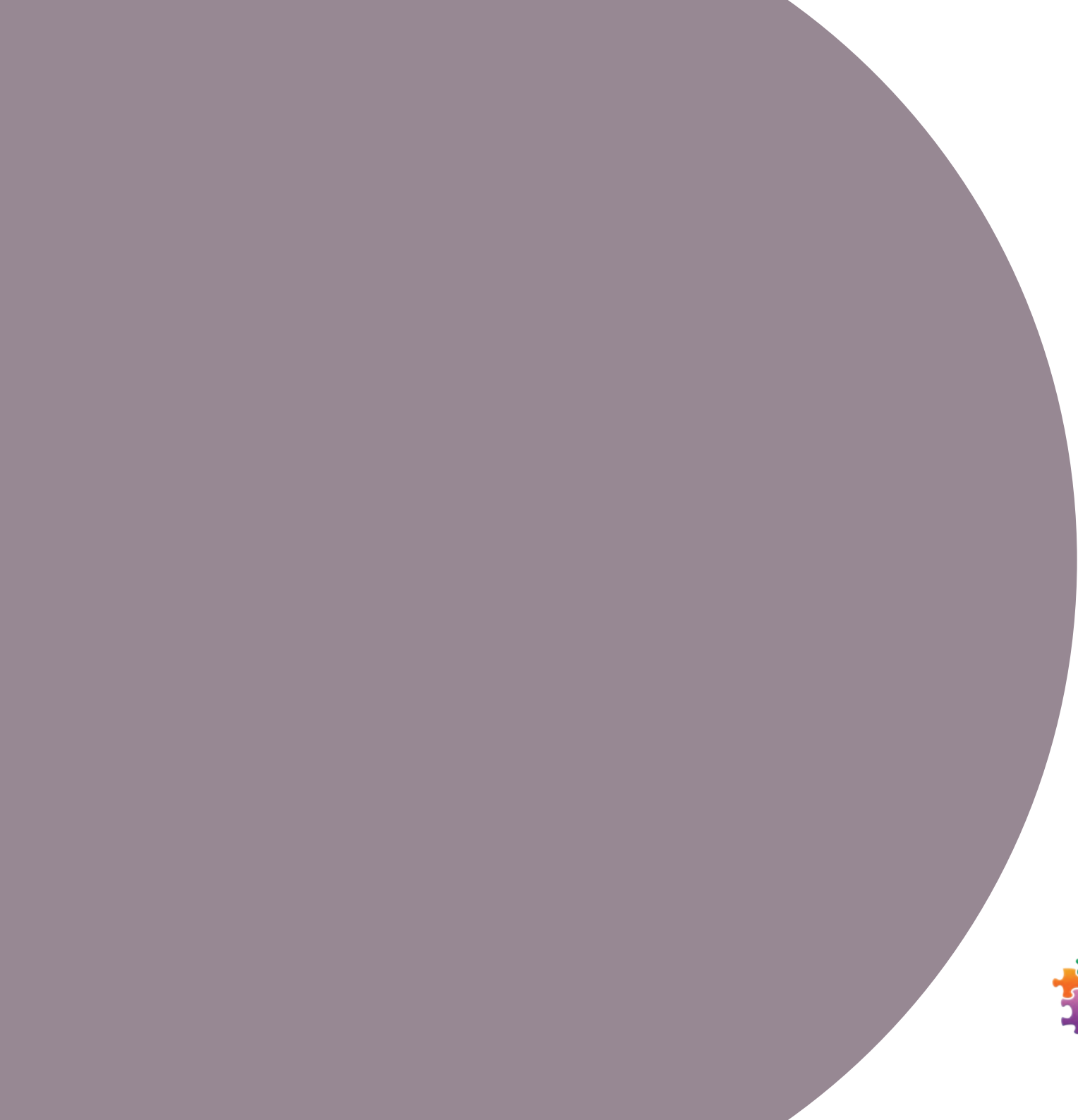


An annual report will be approved by the Community Planning Partnership and submitted to the Scottish Government in accordance with our statutory duties in relation to Children's Services planning, as outlined in section 3 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014).

This annual report will also meet our statutory reporting responsibilities in relation to UNCRC, Corporate Parenting and Child Poverty.

Our plan needs to remain agile and responsive to the changing needs of children and families. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be revised annually and will inform priorities and actions for the forthcoming year.





Moray Community  
Planning Partnership