



Annual Report 2021-22

(Covering period 1.8.21 – 31.7.22)

Priorities 2022-23

(Covering period 1.8.22– 31.7.23)

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Foreword

It is a pleasure to deliver the South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) annual report for 2021-22 which highlights the work, challenges, and priorities of the Committee over that academic year. It also confirms the CPC focus for the year 2022-23.

Reflecting on this reporting period, once again the CPC was faced with the continued challenges of the pandemic, and I have to take time to praise practitioners and their management, throughout the Services within South Ayrshire, who clearly rose to the challenges of COVID limitations ensuring that wherever possible the children and young people of South Ayrshire, continued to be kept safe and protected.

In addition (as detailed in Appendix A), the CPC also lost key personnel during this reporting period, including those performing the roles of Independent Chair, Chief Social Work Officer, Lead Officer for Child Protection, Director of Education and Senior Manager for Planning, Performance & Commissioning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their contribution and commitment to the CPC during their tenures and wish them every success in the future. I extend a warm welcome to those who succeeded in these essential roles.

As we head into a new year the focus of the CPC will incorporate the engagement with lived and care experienced children, and young people. The CPC will maintain links with and support the Pan-Ayrshire Child Protection Implementation Group (PACPIG) and the dedicated South Ayrshire operational sub-group following the publication of the Nation Child Protection Guidance 2021.

The CPC recognises that all services will continue to face unprecedented challenges. Compounding these challenges is the implementation and development of refreshed and renewed processes.

I could reference many points of assessments, developments and partnership working in this report, but I must emphasise the annual trends analysis report the CPC commissioned and received from Mark Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services. It provides the CPC with additional focus, assurances and governance that statutory, commissioned, and voluntary services are robust and in the right place to enhance our children & families experiences and lives.

I also recognise, that despite the continued demands and restrictions upon everyone, particularly our practitioners, team leader and managers, they clearly maintain



efficiency and commitment, sometimes behind the scenes, and often in difficult circumstances.

I hope, like me, you find that this report provides you with reassurance that the essential processes are in place to ensure that South Ayrshire resources are safeguarding and responding to issues that impact upon the wellbeing of children and young people.

As always, I am open to discuss improvement ideas or observations as necessary.

Jim Kerr

Independent Chair - Child Protection Committee (CPC)

South Ayrshire



South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

Background

The CPC is a locally based interagency partnership responsible for delivering continuous improvement in protecting children in South Ayrshire. Its work includes the design, development, publication implementation and evaluation of child protection policies and practice across the area.

It comprises of membership across a range of services, and agencies including amongst others, Children & Families Social Work, Health & Social Care Partnership, NHS, Education, Police, Alcohol & Drug Partnership, Childrens Reporter, and Champions Board.

The CPC considers and evaluates information from a variety of sources including the production of a quarterly report, the data from the Child Protection Register, Childrens Reporter, Initial & Significant Case Reviews, formal inspections of Childrens services, case file audits and national developments.

The CPC is committed to its responsibility to keep children in South Ayrshire safe from harm, whether abuse or neglect has or is likely to take place. It has an obligation to promote awareness of child protection to the South Ayrshire communities, and broadcast good practice within and across agencies, as well as leading on training and development.

The functions of the CPC are continuous improvement, strategic planning, public information, and communication. This work is reflected in local practice and aims to meet local and national needs in keeping children safe.

Vision, Mission, Values and Aims

The following vision, mission, values and aims guide the work of the CPC and have been designed to have a positive impact on the quality of child protection work, the outcomes delivered for children and their families and provide an effective framework for service delivery.

Vision Statement

The South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is committed to working together to protect South Ayrshire's children from abuse and neglect.

Mission Statement

It is everyone's job to make sure that children in South Ayrshire are safe from abuse and neglect. We will strive to ensure that the protection of children is a responsibility that is shared by all our staff and with the community.

Values

- Respect
- Equity
- Child-centred
- Collaboration

Aims of South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

The aims of the Child Protection Committee are:

- Children are protected by timely and effective action.
- Children are listened to and respected.
- Children understand what to do if they are concerned about their own or others safety and protection from abuse and neglect.
- Our staff are confident and competent in protecting children from abuse and neglect.
- Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness in keeping children safe from abuse and neglect.
- The public understand what to do if they are concerned about the safety and protection of children from abuse and neglect.
- Collaboratively we ensure continuous improvement by evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of our services.
- We provide an integrated approach to identifying, intervening, and providing ongoing support to protect children at risk of harm from abuse and neglect.

Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Local Governance Arrangements

Working collectively under the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership the CPC is one of several key foundations which have shared responsibility for public protection. The others include:

- South Ayrshire Adult Protection Committee (APC).
- South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP).
- South Ayrshire Violence against Women & Girls Partnership (VAWP).
- South of Scotland Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- South Ayrshire Suicide Prevention Oversight Group.

The South Ayrshire CPC also works in partnership with the other two Ayrshire CPCs' to encourage, where practicable, a comprehensive approach to policies, practice, and peer development. Recent examples of this include the aforementioned establishment of the PACPIG and ongoing work in relation to pan-Ayrshire Learning Review guidance.

Close dialogue also takes place on a national basis with CELCIS (Centre for excellence for children's care & protection) and active participation with CPC (Scotland).

Chief Officers Group

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 requires that each CPC be governed by a Public Protection Chief Officers Group. (COG). The COG comprises the Chief Executives of South Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the Ayrshire Commander for Police Scotland. The COG is responsible for the leadership, direction and scrutiny of South Ayrshire Child Protection Services and the CPC.

Supported by the CPC Chair and its members, the COG drives forward an extensive work plan and routinely evaluates CPC tasks to ensure there is a clear focus on continuous improvement and accountability. Members of the COG and the CPC support the GIRFEC approach seeking to ensure children, young people and their families get the help they need when they need it.

South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

The South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) which comprises community-based health and social care services for adults and children, is governed by the Integration Joint Board (IJB). The IJB Chief Officer is also the Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership. The Chief Social Work Officer provides

professional advice on all Social Work services and practice to the IJB, South Ayrshire Council, the COG, and the CPC. The IJB is supported by a Performance and Audit Committee and by a Health and Care Governance Committee and reports into the Community Planning Partnership Executive.

CPC Sub Committees

Currently there are three core integrated CPC subgroups, that meet four times a year.

These three groups serve both the CPC and Adult Protection Committee (APC). The sub-groups are:

- Communication and Engagement.
- Learning and Development.
- Policy, Practice, and Improvement.

The sub-groups have detailed Terms of Reference and have key roles to play in the continuous improvement of child protection policy, practice, and indeed the general continuous development of the CPC.

Each Chair is a member of the CPC and APC to encourage an integrated approach to both areas of Public Protection, including focus upon children transitioning to adult services.

The subgroups are tasked with, or unilaterally identify areas for improvement and emerging trends, which can influence the CPC business plan or further audit activity.

As part of this function, the CPC is responsible for identifying priority areas for the following year.

Response To COVID-19

The CPC met quarterly throughout this year, through the Microsoft Teams facility.

While this year saw the increased roll out of the mass vaccination programme which included plans to vaccinate thousands of children before the start of the new school term, the challenges of the pandemic remained the greatest risk around South Ayrshire HSCP services, and partners, delivering community and face-face engagement, continuing to protect and support the most vulnerable children and their families.

It was a significant benefit that the vaccination programme identified and prioritised our practitioners across Child Protection Services for availability of the vaccine and the vast majority of staff had both their COVID vaccines, boosters, and flu vaccinations during this year.

While we initially saw the lifting of many COVID restrictions, drop-in vaccination clinics opening for 16- & 17-year-olds, and children under 12 no longer legally required to wear face masks in public places, we began to experience an increase in childcare & educational absences, as COVID related illnesses and self-isolation guidance intensified. The omicron variant provided further challenges to our service plans, with new measures, household restrictions, and social distancing advice returning.

In context as we approached the new calendar of year of 2022 1:45 people in Scotland had COVID the highest number since records began, placing our Health Services under double the demand they experienced pre-pandemic.

Nonetheless it remained practitioners focus in keeping children safe that directed everyday practice. Even so, vigilance to the health & wellbeing of all remained the principal focus of practitioners.

In order to do this, the HSCP and multi-agency partners have used and integrated the advice and guidance issued by the Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate and Health Improvement Scotland amongst others and incorporated this in their practice guidance, which has been updated as necessary.

By August 2021 well-structured daily practice across Social Work, Education, Health, the Voluntary Sector, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration, Police and Housing Services was in position, to enable the continued delivery of services to our most vulnerable children and families.

This facilitated cross service sharing of information, testing of risk and focussed use of the available resources had been very beneficial and had facilitated partnership working across the services, professions and functions. System integration in its different guises was promoted.

During this latest period, the focus on appropriately risk assessed face to face contact had been maintained and this was felt to be particularly important to promote the business-as-usual commitment, maintaining visiting patterns, universal services and contact with families including the use of creative approaches.

The CPC took cognisance of the COVID- supplementary guidance in response to the surge of the Omicron variant of the virus. This guidance was disseminated to CPC South Ayrshire members and social work service leads.

On 26th January 2022, a meeting of representatives from agencies met to reflect on the impact of the guidance and the current pressures. Reflections from that meeting included the recognition the learning from the first “lockdown” in March 2020 had ensured a rapid response to the restrictions brought into force in December 2021. Indeed, significant changes to practice from the first phase of the pandemic were continuing to be followed such as approaches to working from home and supervision.

Colleagues felt that the collective commitment to maintain standards of practice in line with the national guidance had not been significantly impacted, although approaches to achieving such standards through changes to practice had been required. The supplementary guidance had been helpful, alongside COVID status and contact management, in facilitating the continuation of medical examinations.

It was also felt that there had been some impact on IRD timescales however the quality assurance processes in place provided a degree of a safety net in assessing impact of any delays.

Support for “shielding” individuals and families was specifically highlighted, with the need to provide focussed support dependant on identified need.

Peer support and staff well-being was recognised as a very real challenge, particularly the impact of home or remote working over a prolonged period.

Colleagues were concerned about the emerging and future challenges as yet unrealised of the impact of the pandemic on service users, colleagues, and communities. These included mental health challenges, and poverty. This exercise enabled organisations to consider what actions may be helpful should pandemic restrictions require to be reapplied in the future and inform the refresh of contingency plans.

In summary despite the continual challenges of the pandemic, it was of critical importance to ensure that the HSCP and multi-agency responsibilities continue to be met and that measures were in place to ensure the safe discharge of statutory duties underpinned by supporting employees and volunteers to carry out their tasks.

Child Protection Activity

National Child Protection (CP) Guidance

In September 2021, the CPC recognised the publication of the new National Child Protection Guidance.

CPC Scotland facilitated an introductory event on 18th August attended by the Scottish Government. This event offered advice and guidance to Local Authorities on how to implement the new guidance.

The CPC subsequently received representation from the Scottish Government to discuss implementation strategy and recognised priorities to ensure single agencies have updated their own guidance's and responsibilities, training needs and decision makers within the IRD process have the correct training, and everyone involved in Child Protection is supported – developing good practice and acknowledging the trauma they have to deal with, emphasising a child's views are taken into account in all decision-making that affects them, and supporting practice that recognises and builds on strengths as well as addressing risk, working in partnership with families and communities.

The CPC supported a pan-Ayrshire planned approach for roll out of the new National CP Guidance.

Signs of Safety

It was previously acknowledged by the HSCP and IJB that there had been significant challenges in how South Ayrshire had historically delivered supports and services to children and families. The Care Inspectorate report of 2016 highlighted that South Ayrshire had a disproportionate number of children in external care placements and that there was a lack of early intervention services.

The approved implementation of the Signs of Safety (SoS) Model in South Ayrshire continued and drew on solution focused therapy and the direct experience of effective practice by child protection social workers and the experiences of families within the child protection system.

A SoS Consultant and Trainer were recruited to implement a framework and although COVID caused setbacks an Implementation Board was reconvened, and planning was developed with involvement across the HSCP.

Practice cases allowed social workers to test out the process and create champions to assist with full implementation.

Baseline audits were commenced and the survey for children was undertaken by the Champions Board.

Staff surveys underpinned the implementation.

Process mapping for the Initial Response Team and Locality Teams was progressed and aligned to bespoke ICT systems.

A working group has been established to review templates starting with CP Investigations, Child's Assessment & Planning, and the initial referral form. This includes streamlining and ensuring language is appropriate to the SoS approach.

A communication strategy was commenced in conjunction with the CPC subgroup and HSCP Communication Officer.

CPC Business Plan

Over this reporting period, the CPC continued to govern the 2019 – 2022 Business plan. This is a live document, which provided an accurate reflection of progress made within the HSCP as well as identifying and directing future improvement.

Work progressed to incorporate the actions from across the service into one central repository, including the GIRFEC work plan, and schedule of audit activity.

PACE

The CPC continued to review South Ayrshire's participation in the PACE Programme (Permanence & Care Excellence with looked after children), recognising that the pandemic had impacted upon the progression of objectives and further scrutiny was required as the Signs of Safety roll out would require reassessment of objectives and links.

As a consequence, the CPC commissioned a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) refreshing the PACE aims and objectives in South Ayrshire. The refresh should ensure it reflects the implementation of Sign of Safety

Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs')

The CPC noted IRD's undertaken in South Ayrshire in comparison to North and East Ayrshire have continued to decrease and required further scrutiny.

It was recognised that although there have not been specific COVID related themes, as previously highlighted in this report, it has been noted that some IRDs are taking longer to complete due to their complexity.

Regular multi-agency audit activity continued around IRD's and CP referrals to ensure appropriate scrutiny and oversight and gives assurance in relation to the decisions and outcomes agreed at IRD.

Trends analysis

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, The CPC commissioned a further Child Protection Trend Activity Overview report. This report considered details of the quality assurance activity being undertaken and provided confidence that whilst our child protection numbers were low, decision-making was scrutinised and found to be robust at each stage of the Child Protection process.

The report also assessed over-all trend data and benchmarking, regarding Child Protection, Looked After Children and the overall strategic direction of the support and services for South Ayrshire's most vulnerable and at-risk children.

The CPC recognised that over half of the children referred was for neglect.

This was an emerging issue across Scotland and the CPC questioned if local services could do more to ensure children and families at risk of neglect are supported ensuring there is sufficient service provision to manage the risk to children and young people from neglect.

The CPC encouraged practice development discussions and the need to reference the neglect toolkit. More specialist training was required.

While it is clear that the number of South Ayrshire's children on the Register is low in comparison with neighbouring Ayrshire authorities, and in comparison, with similar Local Authorities, it is not significantly out of sync with the likes of Angus and Dumfries and Galloway as detailed below.

Also, in comparison with the other Scottish Local Authorities like East Renfrewshire, East Lothian and Dumfries and Galloway who have fully embraced and implemented the Signs of Safety, the ratio on children on the Child Protection Register in South Ayrshire appears consistent with the ratio in these Local Authority areas reflecting culture change which a strength-based approaches like Signs of Safety promotes.

Local Authority Benchmark comparators	Rate per 1,000 children
South Ayrshire	1.1
Angus	1.3
Dumfries and Galloway	1.5
Scottish Borders	1.8
Highland	2.5
Argyll and Bute	2.5
Comparator average	2.0
Scottish average	2.3

Local Comparators	Rate per 1,000 children
South Ayrshire	1.1
East Ayrshire	3.4
North Ayrshire	5.2

Signs of Safety Local Authorities	Rate per 1,000 children
South Ayrshire	1.1
East Renfrewshire	0.4
East Lothian	1.5
Dumfries & Galloway	1.5

Drawing Reference to Appendix 2 of this report the CPC recognised that in there has been a 35% increase in Child Protection alerts over the past year. This could reflect the ceasing of lockdown and children returning to School and being more “seen” in their communities.

The number of child protection registrations in South Ayrshire has remained consistently low over the past two years, however, this shows a significant reduction from when records began when 76 children were on the Register.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the number of children on the Child Protection Register cannot be understood as either a positive or negative thing, however scrutiny of the Register and numbers on it is essential for assurance of processes and systems.

In making sense of the numbers, the CPC requires to fully understand the overall changing landscape in South Ayrshire and assure itself that the right children requiring access to the correct support and protection are getting access to this when they need it.

The CPC also noted a targeted approach to raising awareness of how to raise a child protection concern as well as a focus on taking through to IRDs, for those children who merit it. This has all contributed to an increase in the rising number of Child Concern alerts.

The conversion rate of children being taken to Child Protection Case Conference and who then become registered remains high at 82%. The CPC recognise this reflects that the vast majority of children who were taken to Case Conference were the correct children requiring the need of care and protection that being registered brings, due to being at risk of significant harm.

This means a proportionate approach to children and families not requiring this level of support or response and are not being unnecessarily drawn into intrusive and statutory interventions where the rationale for a more proportionate and strengths-based approaches are clearly transparent.

The current data indicates a preventative approach is now evident in South Ayrshire practices through working with families and children in partnership with improved outcomes for children and families. The application of the findings of The Promise has also enabled this approach, with the views of children and families continually informing how we deliver care and supports.

The CPC also noted that over the last two years only 3 children have been subject to re-registration after a 12-month period, suggesting that families are receiving the correct support and interventions in the most part, enabling and empowering them to improve their family's wellbeing and safety without the need for further interventions.

There are currently only two children from two families who have been on the Child Protection Register for more than 12 months. This has been subject to peer review and the reasons for Registration deemed to be still applicable.

De-registrations are also likely to increase with the impact of Signs of Safety practice.

There is also a similar trend in the 78% reduction in the number of children referred to the Children's Reporter. It is however of note that the routes into these processes are not the same and do not necessarily reflect the same children and young people.

The above could indicate that the cultural change, which is evident within South Ayrshire through the adoption of the Signs of Safety approach and the implementation of The Promise, has had equal effect on how all children are supported and cared for so that only those children and families who require these important, but intrusive protective approaches are experiencing them.

Other children and families in South Ayrshire are, instead, worked with through strengths based, relation and collaborative care planning, as found in the Signs of Safety and the Promise.

The CPC began to recognise the impact of poverty and neglect across South Ayrshire and began to question the ability of families to self-sustain.

Introduction of Not at Home Policy

The CPC reviewed and endorsed the implementation action plan for the “Looked After Children Who Go Missing From Residential and Foster Care in Scotland” Protocol, which links to the “Framework for Missing Person’s in Scotland”.

This practice included changes to the way young people who are looked after away from home in residential and foster care are reported to the Police when “missing” from care. This approach decreased stigma and ultimately ensure a more child centred approach.

This led the CPC to seek application to participate in further project work with the Scottish Governments Missing Person framework implementation project.

Trauma Informed Contact and Care – TICC

Between 2017 and 2019 Ayrshire Police worked with partners across Ayrshire to improve understanding and response around the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s). A facet of this programme included the development of a short test of change using the principles of Operation Encompass.

This initiative is a unique Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which ensures a child’s school is notified prior to the start of a school day that there has been an incident of domestic abuse to which the child or young person has been exposed.

The test of change was evaluated and across the CPCs’ & HSCP it was agreed that the methodology and principles were sound.

Aa further test of change takes place commenced in September 2021

In South Ayrshire this was the Ayr Academy Cluster. The initiative was launched and branded as Trauma Informed Contact & Care (TICC). This initiative supported Ayrshire’s GIRFEC Team Around the Child processes. Joint training for schools

delivered by Police and Education leads took place with the appropriate staff in advance of the launch.

A communication strategy that includes briefings to elected members as well as information contained within the school handbook/website and letters to all parents and care givers in these schools were distributed.

This test of change was monitored and evaluated before being rolled out across all schools in Ayrshire.

The CPC recognised this is a positive development and demonstrates Ayrshire's Police Division and Education Department's commitment to ensure we support the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people towards improved outcomes.

The Willows Facility

Since 2018, work to improve services for victims of rape and sexual assault has been progressed by local and national groups including the Scottish Government taskforce. The vision, to be delivered by 2022, is for the provision of consistent, person-centred, trauma-informed healthcare and forensic medical services and access to recovery, for anyone who has experienced sexual assault.

The CPC welcomed the creation of *The Willows*, a new facility, located at the Biggart Hospital, in Ayr which is designed to accommodate forensic medical examinations (FME) for victims of rape or sexual assault. The Willows opened to police referrals for adults and young people in June 2021.

This created a local focused facility where our Health Partners engage with third sector, Police, and other services to develop robust pathways for immediate and longer-term support.

It is hoped this asset may lead to an increase in service activity which may also trigger other adult support and protection and gender-based violence procedures. Domestic Abuse in particular spans across Child Protection and the CPC recognises clear benefit to strengthening and expanding collaboration across services.

Functional Family Therapy and Intensive Family Support

The CPC recognised the investment in additional support for children to remain at home with specialist services which support families at a time of crisis.

The Intensive Family Support Service and the Functional Family Therapy (FFT) team are two examples of this. These services engage with families at a point of crisis when the likelihood of escalation through the care system is moderate to high.

Through direct evidence-based interventions which are family-centred and relational, the teams can support families to live together, through times of stress and dysfunction towards a more supportive and nurturing family experience. FFT is a family based intensive intervention programme that builds on the existing strengths within family relationships.

Out of the 26 families referred to the FFT team, 92% engaged and completed the programme. 97% of those who completed the programme remained at home, 95% of those still remain at home. 95% of young people have remained within their mainstream local school.

Police and Education Collaboration

In advance of the schools returning in mid-August, six Police officers are now involved in reviewing the resources, presentations and key messages that are delivered within South Ayrshire schools. This ensures a consistent approach that support national and local policing priorities as well as the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people.

These Education based Campus officers are involved in a number of diversionary activities with young people who have been identified as being vulnerable. Activities include the football programme Pitchin In, Bushcraft and Biking sessions. These activities are targeted interventions with young people who require support with transition back to school following COVID lockdown measures.

Most participants have been involved in anti-social or disruptive behaviour at school and are vulnerable to becoming involved in organised crime.

Work around Child Sexual Exploitation includes, every School campus officer, using questionnaires and focus groups to gather views and information, deploying the young Scot teams ensuring young people speak to young people.

We will participate in the Scottish Government Survey on sexual exploitation and as results become available will be fed back into CPC.

Communication and Engagement

We developed a communication plan that outlined a range of activities to support Communications activity for teams across the HSCP.

The purpose was to identify opportunities for communications activity to better engage with service users and the South Ayrshire community. The requirement for communications can be for a number of purposes including but not limited to:

- To advise of a change to a service.
- To encourage behaviour change.
- To promote and praise positive stories.
- To celebrate success, and good practice.
- To provide specific information.
- To promote an awareness day / event.

Through our sub-group work the CPC continued to participate in national events and local initiatives including International Youth Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, and Care Experienced Week. We were represented at Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) Community events, and the Wallacetown Community project.

CPC Chair, and Lead Officer attended all Child Services Teams meetings across the HSCP detailing the role of the CPC.

Staff Wellbeing Hubs continue to operate in three locations throughout South Ayrshire. These Hubs provide a safe, quiet, and safe space for workers who need some time out for self-care.

Regular bulletins '@keeping Connected' have continued to be issued by CPC Scotland and these are sent to CPC members in South Ayrshire on a regular basis to share knowledge and experiences during the pandemic.

National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Programme

The National Joint Investigative Interviewing Project was established to develop a new approach to the joint investigative interviewing of children in Scotland.

The aims of the new approach are to improve the quality of experience of child victims and witnesses, minimise re-traumatisation and improve the quality of evidence gathered during joint investigative interviews to prevent the need for these children to give evidence in person as part of the court processes.

The new approach is called the Scottish Child Interview Model and is aimed at providing a higher quality of forensic interview that ensures best evidence for courts and civil proceedings such as children's hearings. The ultimate outcome is to keep children safe and ensure that they have the right to justice. Care has been taken to ensure the new approach is trauma informed.

Interviewers are provided with knowledge and skills to consider the impact of children's experiences upon their ability to participate in the interview and to actively plan for how the needs of each individual child will be met throughout the interview process.

The CPC recognised that the new model for JII is a new model of practice, requiring system change. It is not solely the improved training of interviewers.

The introduction of the model mitigates the risk in a robust, evidence-based method, while recognising that Child protection and interviewing of children is an area that always carries a degree of risk: reputational, professional and to the children. It is believed by using a theoretical, evidence based, solution focussed approach which supports defensible decision making, these risks can be mitigated.

An Ayrshire wide JII Strategic Oversight Group was formed to progress the Scottish Child Interview Model. Monthly meetings commenced and these are being supported by the CPC, all appropriate partners, and the National Implementation Team. The project was on track, with recruitment activity undertaken, ahead of Interview Training in May 2022, prior to Go Live in July 2022.

Learning and Development

A key function of the South Ayrshire CPC is to prepare and deliver an extensive programme of multi-agency child protection learning and development opportunities. This is the remit of the Learning and Development sub-group.

The CPC supported continued development of a broader training programme. There are some significant challenges around capacity since the closure of a major training facility.

Staff Wellbeing

To support the progression and implementation of a proposed Staff Supervision and Support Program the CPC supported an engagement exercise, exploring Social Work Staff's experiences of supervision and their views on future options for supervision and support.

Additional opportunities to strengthen support to managers and staff were considered. The findings of this will help to consolidate and inform the final shape and content of the programme.

The work on this project generated interest from the University of the West of Scotland, Social Work Education Partnership and Professional Social Work Advisor for Scottish Government. There was an opportunity to attract some additional funding and develop a more robust approach that would have offered some research activity to be included with the view to sharing the findings nationally. Unfortunately, with recent movement in vacancies in these areas and the ongoing crisis of social work student statutory placements, it is unlikely that this would come to fruition in the near future taking this outside the Partnership's timeline. Following the scoping exercise, it is proposed to implement a new model of support and provide professional supervision to staff.

Social Work Services Audit Schedule

Work commenced to establish a three-year audit schedule for Social Work Services in South Ayrshire, which had been delayed due to the pandemic. The CPC endorsed a redesigned policy and delivery framework. This included Child Protection Cases, Looked After Cases, Children in Need Cases and Chronologies.

This programme set out to assure the CPC that the governance structures and standards are being maintained, ensuring there was evidence of critical reflection, and decision making.

NHS Child Protection Health Team (CPHT)

CPC recognised that practitioners have been facing unprecedented challenges to support and safeguard vulnerable children and families and there has been an increase in the complexity of safeguarding concerns noted. New and longer lasting disadvantage is occurring as a consequence of the pandemic and the impacts are likely to be felt in the short and longer term.

There have been many positive changes and improvements during 2020/21, particularly as the Team adapted to the impact of COVID-19. It was recognised the importance of sharing key information to support all staff in their child protection role and the CPHT and we have worked hard to review, improve, and further develop how we connect with all staff across NHS Ayrshire and Arran (NHSAA) and partner agencies.

The forthcoming year offers an opportunity to evaluate the changes we have made and strengthen Child Protection systems and processes both within NHSAA and in collaboration with our multi-agency partners.

The CPHT will continue to support NHSAA staff to deliver their child protection roles and responsibilities by supporting them to remain empowered, competent, confident, and professionally curious through reflective practice, advice and learning.

The CPC welcomed and endorsed the new Strategic Framework for Child Protection Learning & Development (2021-2023). The CPHT are tasked with ensuring that all health staff, including those who work with adults with caring responsibilities for children, understand their role and responsibilities to ensure children and young people are protected.

The CPHT acknowledge procedures and guidance cannot in themselves protect children, however a confident, competent, and skilled workforce can. This workforce will work in collaboration with partner agencies and the public to ensure the best outcomes for all children in Ayrshire, especially those most vulnerable.

This Strategic Framework sets out the plan to provide and deliver a high standard of learning and development opportunities ensuring a competent and confident health workforce who know what to do and when to do it in relation to protecting children and young people, either directly through involvement in assessment and planning or indirectly through referral to relevant services.

It will ensure all health staff have the combination of skills, knowledge, attitude, and values necessary for safe and effective child protection practice, no matter where in the workforce the staff member belongs.

Scottish Childrens Reporter Administration (SCRA) Training

The CPC recognised and endorsed the opportunity for services to commit to multi-agency training delivered by SCRA. Given all agencies are under a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and where compulsory measures are the route for doing this, it follows that agency staff must have a proficient knowledge and understanding of the children's hearings system recognising that this system is the vehicle for agencies implementing their duties of care where compulsion might be required.

SCRA training incorporated an understanding of the role of the children's hearings system including the roles of professionals, Childrens Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) Guidance on referrals to the Reporter, Court skills as witnesses, non-disclosure training and writing evidence-based reports.

Review of Permanence Services

The CPC participated in the reviewing of Permanence Services across the HSCP.

Achieving legal permanence for children and young people has been on the improvement agenda for a number of years. There are four routes to legal permanence: a return to Parental Care, Kinship Care, Permanence Orders and Adoption.

To achieve this timeously for, and in respect of our children and young people and to ensure the locality workforce have a clearer understanding regarding processes and procedures, several improvement activities took place. These included Permanence Training being revised and recommenced in January 2022, Kinship Guidance and associated paperwork has been updated, and Quarterly Permanence Planning meetings for all locality teams, taking place.

Training delivered 2021- 22

During this year our Learning & Development Team commenced a staged process of rebuilding Training post COVID where we began to open up our Training with an initial focus on the mandatory elements for key roles.

The Learning & Development Team were reviewed, reconstructed, and began to redesign and develop public protection and developmental training under a flexible delivery program. Practicable, online, and attendance at their new training facility

remained (wherever possible) available to all services that support children, young people, and families. With the development of the team and the transition to the new base at 8 Wellington Square, Ayr, unfortunately some course details and attendee numbers were lost. However, from October 2022 with the successful move from the Book and Go system to COAST along with dedicated Business Support, detailed records of courses and participants will be available for subsequent annual reports.

The following table offers a representation of courses provided for Children's Health Care and Justice Services during this period.

Some of the training delivered from 1st Aug 2021 – 31st July 2022

Course	Number of attendees	No of Courses
Child Protection Training Level 2	-	4
Child Protection Training Level 3	-	2
Child Sexual Exploitation	30	1
Impact of Poverty	15	1
Mental Health & impact on the Child	15	1
Chronology / Case Recording	110	10
Permanence Training	-	2
Introduction to Leadership & Management	50	4
Leadership & Management Training	30	2
Medication Training	18	2
MAPPA Foundation	14	1
Epilepsy Awareness	7	1
Elementary Food Hygiene	7	1

Policy, Practice, and Improvement

The Policy Practice & Improvement subgroup focused on the review of Child Protection policies.

The priorities during this review period were to deliver on relevant actions, including revision of relevant policies, driving further improvement in the use and analysis of performance information, providing internal governance to strategy development, ensuring alignment across strategies and service plans. Development of HSCP Strategic Performance Framework.

The subgroup is to deliver and expand the multi-agency audit work undertaken within South Ayrshire. The CPC recognised that the HSCP has a commitment to begin reporting on the outcome of audits in early 2022.

The purpose of the audit activity is to assure the CPC and its governance structures, that professional standards are being maintained, ensuring children & families are in receipt of ethical services. The essential questions will ask:

- Is there evidence of critical reflection.
- Is there evidence of analysis to support conclusions.
- Is there evidence of decision-making.

Public Protection Learning Review

The CPC was actively involved, with the Independent Chair Leading this piece of work. The aim of this approach was to consider available data, stakeholder engagement and self-evaluation activity across the core areas to inform the current delivery and effectiveness of public protection in South Ayrshire.

A literature summary search has been undertaken exploring:

- Effective Public Protection.
- Best Practice in Public Protection.
- What evidence is there to support getting it right in public protection?
- Public protection frameworks and models.

The focus across South Ayrshire Services would assess:

- Public Protection: Exploration of our understanding and common ground.
- Exploring how public protection should look in South Ayrshire.

Moving toward the engagement of our workforce, it was accepted that this overarching model would not best serve the HSCP at this time and the review was put into abeyance.

Protecting School Pupils from Bullying

As the COVID vaccination program progressed, recognising pupils return to schooling, and the creation of Police campus officers who supported staff delivering lessons on anti-bullying including internet safety and online bullying, the CPC requested performance monitoring analysis on the subject to ensure South Ayrshire had robust and sustainable anti-bullying arrangements and supports in place for our children and young people.

As a consequence, the CPC received assurances that current management guidance on Anti Bullying is both current and relevant and aligns with the national Respect Me policy.

It covers all protected characteristics and all forms of bullying including online.

All schools in South Ayrshire are requested to record any reported incident on the Anti Bullying and Equalities module. The Quality Improvement Manager monitors and analyses figures on a termly basis looking for concerns or patterns. Schools are then supported and challenged as required.

Anti-bullying education is also part of the Health & Wellbeing curriculum from early to fourth level within the Curriculum for Excellence. It is also still covered within Personal and Social Education (PSE) in the senior phase in secondary schools.

This topic is covered in a progressive way as the children and young people grow and mature. Our Schools have a wide range of resources. The Respect Me web site is excellent and well used as is the Scottish Governments Relationships, Sexual Health, and Parenthood (RSHP) resource.

CPC recognised a number of South Ayrshire secondary schools have bullying ambassadors who do specific training and then support younger children.

All South Ayrshire schools are signed up to the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Accreditation (RSSA) programme with a high number being gold award winners. Anti-bullying is an integral part of this programme.

Production of the Carers Guidance Handbook

South Ayrshire Children's Houses focus on providing excellent care using the National Framework of "Getting It Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) to structure our service delivery. The Service also uses the Nurture Principles to underpin practice and adheres to the Health and Social Care Standards, the SSSC Code of Practice and the South Ayrshire Way.

The Service also uses Person Centred Planning Approaches to engage young people and help them plan their future. Person Centred Keeping Safe Plans are also used to help young people manage risks and stay safe.

In 2021 we also plan to embed "The Promise" in our support of Children and Young people.

In respect of these developments the CPC instigated a review of Guidance to ensure that it is relevant and up to date.

As a consequence, the Carer's Guidance for our Children's Houses at Cunningham Place and Sundrum View was produced which provides essential information to residential carers and contributes to ensuring the safe care of children and young people residing in our Children's Houses.

AYRshare

AYRshare is an electronic information sharing system which was designed in Ayrshire and launched in 2013. The system was designed as a secure way of sharing information to support GIRFEC practice and the Team Around the Child approach, across and throughout the three Ayrshire local authorities.

Governance of the system is supported by a local South Ayrshire user group and an Ayrshire wide Performance and Management group, which reports to the Pan Ayrshire Infant, Children and Young people's programme board.

As of September 2021, there were over 18,000 folders generated and 221,714 chronology items shared within Ayrshire.

An Ayrshire wide Performance and Management group has been established and standards for practice developed. This includes the use of AYRshare for all children who are on the child protection register and also children subject to statutory measures.

Standards for use of the system to support GIRFEC practice have been developed. This includes the creation of folders and use of the system to support information sharing for children on the child protection register, subject to measures of compulsory supervision or where a child's plan is required to support early intervention activities.

Agreement has been reached to include access to the system by identified third sector agencies, as well as adult services within NHS Ayrshire and Arran and South Ayrshire Council who are part of the Team Around the Child, and work is ongoing in this area.

A further benefit of the system is the ability to create an integrated chronology of significant events.

During November and December 2021, an Ayrshire wide audit was instigated to identify the use of AYRshare to support child protection practice and includes review of all children on the South Ayrshire Child Protection Register. A standardised audit tool was adopted to identify key areas of recording practice, with a focus on the use of the integrated chronology of significant events.

The audit findings took into consideration challenges reported in accessing electronic systems during the Covid pandemic, particularly where staff were working from home.

Overall, a number of improvements were identified to ensure consistency of recording practice across Social Work, Education and Health services regarding application of the system to support child protection process and practice. This included Improvement activity to address identified areas of practice such as the recording of information within host systems as well as the AYRshare system.

Single agency support for practitioners includes training and the development of service guidance within NHS Ayrshire and Arran, and a programme of review and scrutiny of all children on the Child Protection register by the Children and Families Social work management team.

Planning arrangements are also underway to relaunch the AYRshare system within the Health and Social Care Partnership.

It is hoped that in time this multi-agency, Ayrshire wide infrastructure will act as an exemplar template for cross services and authority cases.

Significant Case Reviews

Taking cognisance of the findings from the recently published Care Inspectorate Triennial Review of Initial and Significant Case Reviews (March 2018-2021) The CPC continued to progress the compilation, publication, and associated improvement action plan in respect of Child H, led by our Independent Chair, Professor Paul Martin. The CPC appointed Dr Zoe Dunhill to Chair an SCR into the circumstances around the death of Child P. This SCR was subsequently delivered to the CPC in early 2022 and published in May 2022.

An improvement action plan predominately focussing upon Health practices continues.

This incorporated Specific Medical Staff participating in a Child Protection Training programme which incorporated the structures and processes for Child Protection.

All Trainee doctors specialising in Paediatrics were invited to Child Protection Peer Reviews to discuss complex cases, as well as practitioner-based training to paediatric trainees, Child Protection Recognition and Response (CPRR) course for all medical staff were facilitated.

The CPC also monitored the progression of Child F, although this remained a single agency (Health) Review under their Significant Adverse Event Review process. This remains ongoing as we head into 2023.

CPC Priorities for 2022-2023

As we head into a new year the focus of the CPC will incorporate the engagement with lived and care experienced children, and young people. However, this will not be tokenistic, and we will create the space for the voices to tell their stories at the CPC.

The CPC want to close the gap between senior decision-making processes and the reality of people's lives.

In the year ahead (2022-23) the CPC recognises that all services will continue to face unprecedented challenges that include ongoing COVID risks, War in Europe and an economic downturn will intensify demand on our collective services, heighten individual and family vulnerabilities, while many people are forced to adapt their lifestyles to cope with loss of employment, increased cost of living, and reduction in financial income. Societal neglect across Child services will be a significant risk.

The CPC will introduce a designed focus on Poverty and oversee the local processes extended to children arriving from Ukraine.

Underpinning these challenges is the implementation and development of refreshed and renewed processes that include major applications incorporating Child Protection National Guidance, Scottish Child Interview Model, Learning Reviews, and refreshed national minimum data set.

The CPC recognise these practice developments, further challenges and demands that are ahead. With that in mind the CPC will look to broaden its membership to include, amongst others, representation from housing, the South Ayrshire third sector interface VASA, (Voluntary Action South Ayrshire) and the Trauma Informed Practice Officer.

The CPC Subgroups are viewed as the engine room of Committee business and with all the aforementioned in mind we ask the question, "are our current structures robust

and responsive to meet the varying and emerging business demands and challenges”? The CPC will review and focus upon the governance, functions, terms of reference (TOR), and outcomes of these three sub-groups.

In conjunction with the Adult Protection Committee, we will seek participation in the extended project to support professionals with the implementation of The National Missing Persons Framework.

This is in conjunction with the charity Missing People who are working in partnership with the Scottish Government.

Missing People has been funded by the Scottish Government to offer a programme of consultancy, training and best practice sharing in selected local areas in Scotland to build on the excellent work already being delivered to support missing persons and their families, in line with The National Missing Persons Framework.

The tailored programme will support Police, NHS, Education, and the HSCP staff who are directly or indirectly involved in supporting missing children and/or adults and their families.

Appendix 1 - Child Protection Committee Members 2021-2022

Member	Designation
Professor Paul Martin	Independent Chair (August 2021 – March 2022)
Jim Kerr	Independent Chair (April – July 2022)
Scott Hunter	Chief Social Work Officer, (August 2021 – February 2022)
Gary Hoey	Chief Social Work Officer, (March – July 2022)
Meg Williams	Lead Officer, CPC (August 2021 – February 2022)
Beth MacLean	Lead Officer, CPC (February – July 2022)
Jacqui Ferguson	CPC Minute Taker
Douglas Hutchison	Education Director
Lyndsay McRoberts	Education Director
Scott Mulholland	ASN, Educational Services
Gillian Carroll	Child Protection Officer, Education
Jim Hendrie	Child Protection Officer, Education
Kate MacDonald	Quality Improvement Manager, Education
Mark Inglis	Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services
Jackie Hamilton	Senior Manager, Children's and Justice Localities Services
Liz Paterson	Service Manager, Children's Services
Marina McLaughlin	Nurse Consultant Child Protection, NHS Ayrshire, and Arran
Alexa Foster	Clinical Midwifery Manager for Integrated Care
Jayne Miller	Senior Manager, Children's Health
Rosemary Robertson	Associate Nurse Director
Anne Murphy	Child Protection Advisor, NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Heather Irving	Link Inspector, Care Inspectorate
Alison Cook / Morrison	Link Inspector, Care Inspectorate

Alan Mulrooney	Locality Reporter Manager, SCRA
Sarah Foran	Locality Reporter Manager, SCRA
Dawn Parker	Corporate Parenting Lead Officer (Champions Board)
Olivia Khan	Participation Assistant, Champions Board
Ellison Lang	Public Protection Policy and Implementation Officer
Faye Murfet	ADP Lead Officer
Linda Warwick	Community Engagement Co-ordinator
Mark Conway	Community Engagement Co-ordinator
Sheila Tyeson	Senior Manager. Planning, Performance and Commissioning.
John Wood	Senior Manager - Planning, Performance and Commissioning.
Mark Taylor	Adult Support and Protection Lead Officer
Catriona Caves	Head of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Karen Briggs	Service Lead – Legal and Licensing
Christine McMenamain	Co-ordinator, Legal and Licensing
Sara Burdon	Co-ordinator – Public Affairs, People Directorate
Tom Penman	Team Leader Practice Development
Ellie Bate	Practice Development Officer
Kenny Armstrong	Detective Superintendent, Police Scotland
Fraser Normansell	Detective Chief Inspector Police Scotland
Robbie Scott	Detective Inspector, Police Scotland

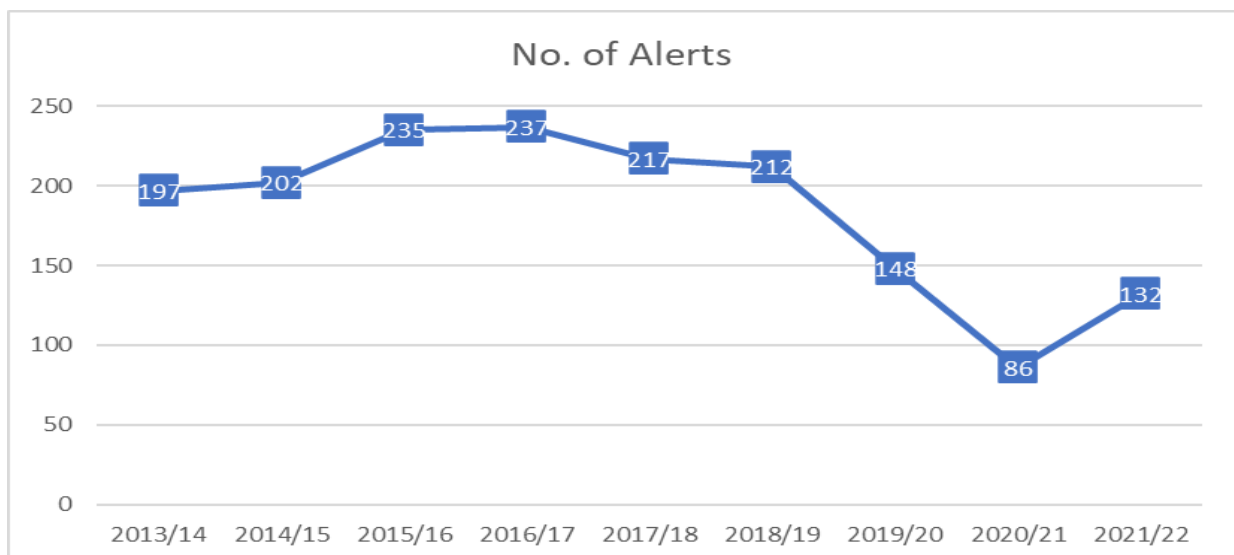
Appendix 2 - Child Protection Committee Performance 2021-22

The CPC continues to monitor performance information through the Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees. Upon the commencement and during the COVID-19 pandemic, a weekly child protection dataset has been submitted to Scottish Government.

Child Protection Alerts

A child protection 'alert' is raised when the decision is made to investigate under the auspice of child protection. It ensures core agencies (Health, Education and Police) and out of hours social work services are aware a child is subject to active investigation in relation to a child protection concern and can respond accordingly.

Figure 1: Annual Child Protection Alerts (New) 2013/14-2021/22

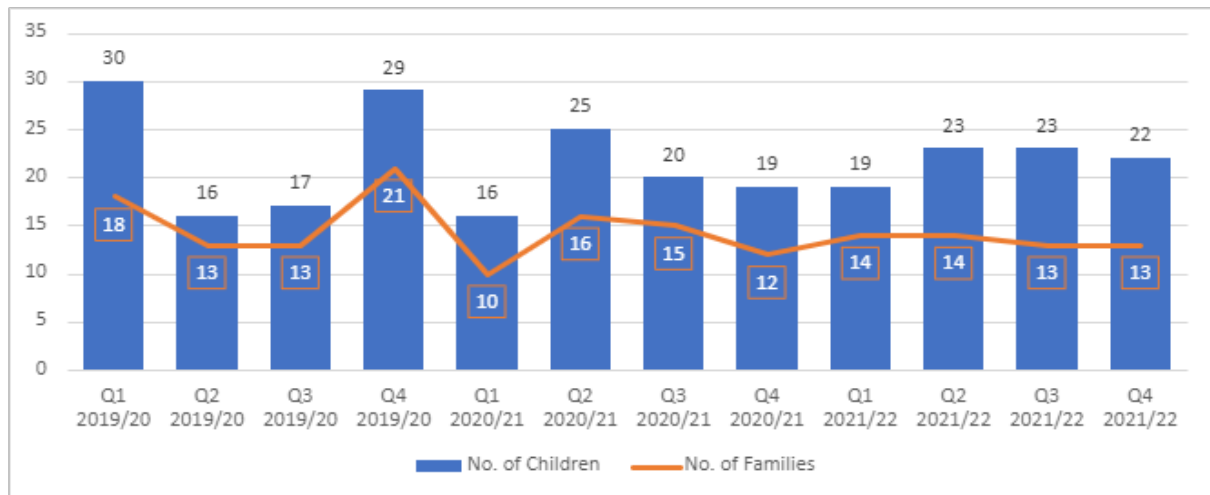


Annual Child Protection Alerts were showing a downward trend until 2020/21 however the increased from 86 in 2020/21 to 132 in 2021/22.

Child Protection Register

On 31st July 2022, in South Ayrshire, there were a total of 22 children from 13 family groups on the Child Protection Register. This is a slight increase from July 2021 when 19 children were on the Child Protection Register from 12 family groups.

Figure 2: Quarterly number of children on the child protection register.



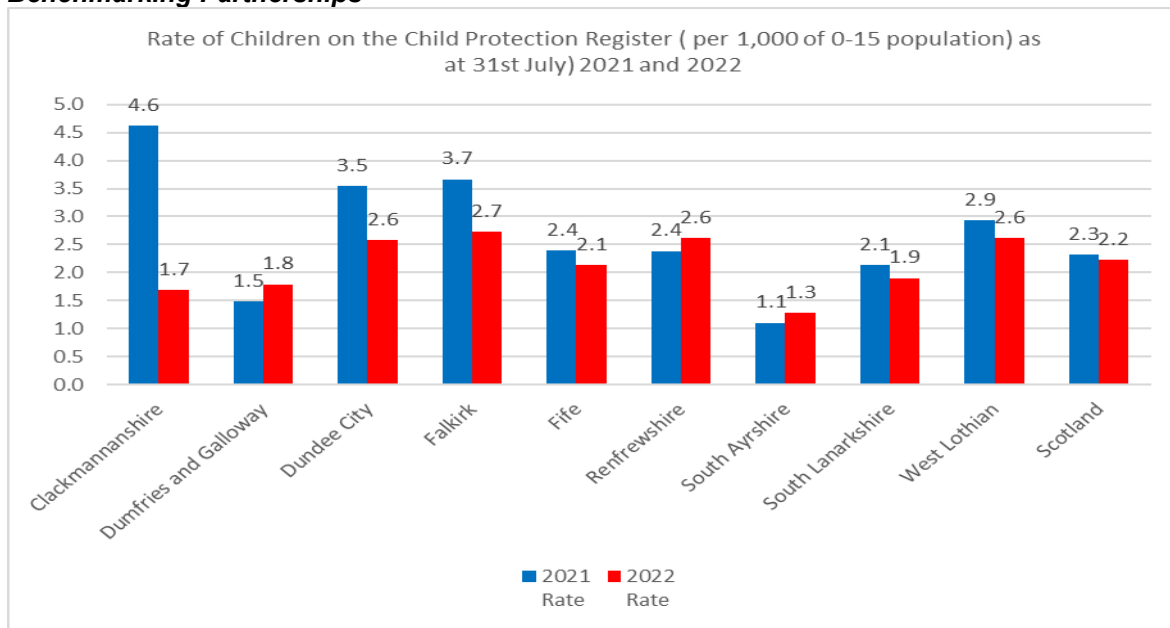
Children are placed on the Child Protection Register when there are significant concerns for their safety. Children on the register will be the subject of close monitoring and support with a multi-agency plan to effect changes to reduce risk. If the risks to a child cannot be managed with their remaining at home, alternative care arrangements are considered. Once it is assessed that the level of risk has reduced sufficiently, the child’s name will be removed from the Register.

The chart below shows the South Ayrshire rate of children on the Child Protection Register as at the 31 July for both 2021 and 2022 compared to the family group partnerships for benchmarking.

South Ayrshire had the lowest rate of children on the Child Protection Register for both 2021 and 2022 at 1.1 and 1.3 respectively.

The national average has remained fairly level at 2.3 in 2021 and 2.2 in 2022. Falkirk had the highest rate out of all of the family groups in 2022 at 2.7.

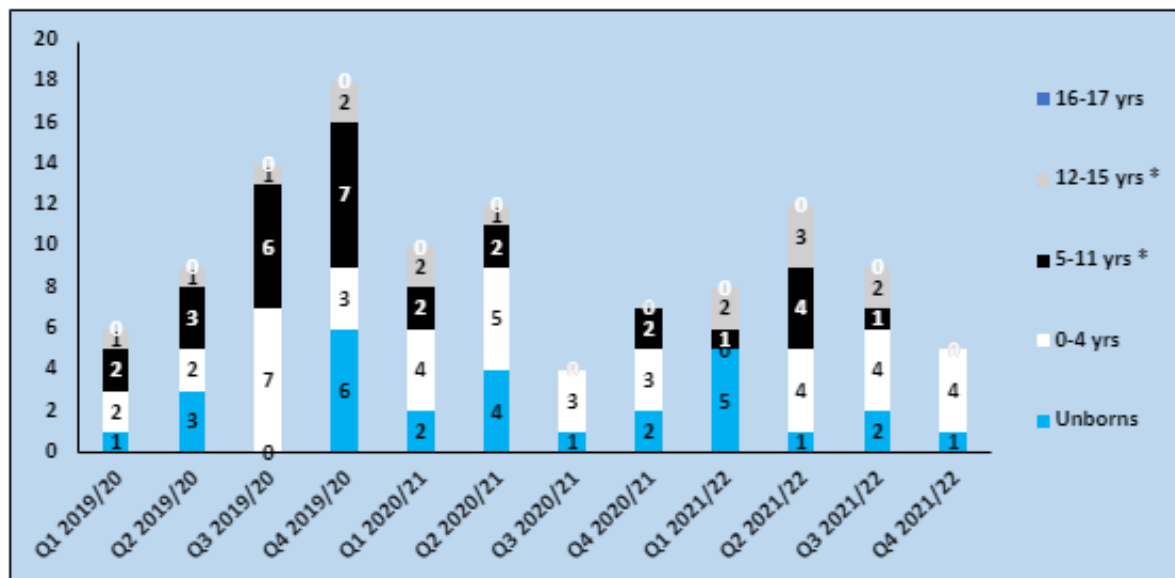
Figure 3: Rate of Children on the Child Protection Register for South Ayrshire Family Benchmarking Partnerships



Age of Children and Young People at Registration

The graph below shows the age profile of children placed on the Child Protection Register each quarter from August 2019 to July 2022.

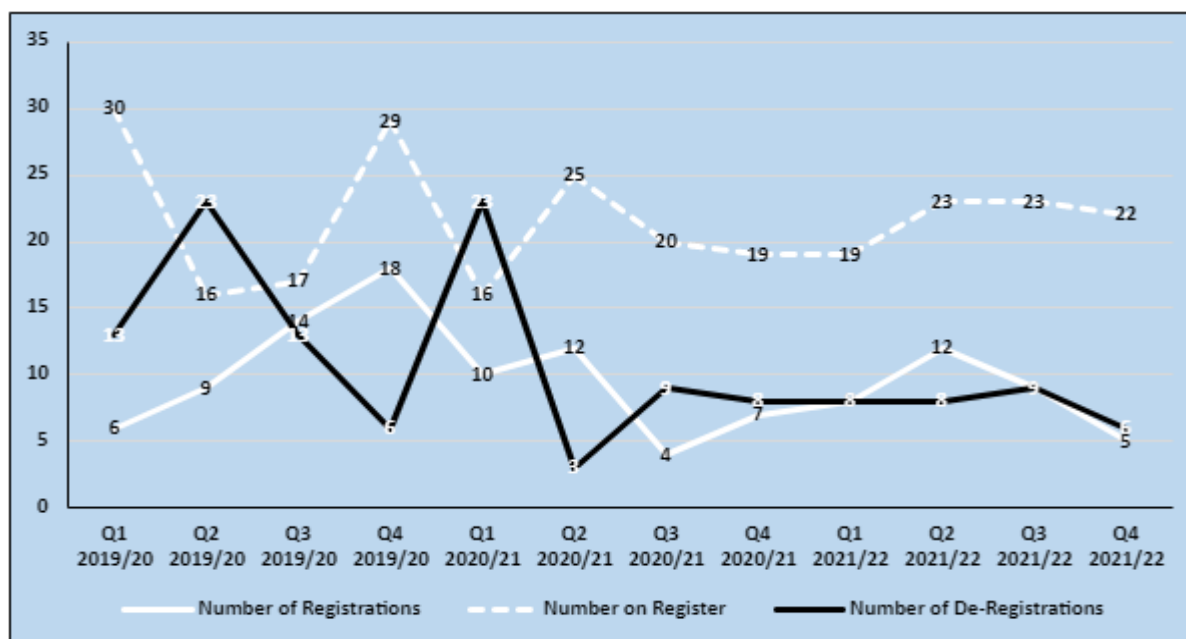
Figure 4: Age profile of children at point of registration Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2021/22



As of 31 July 2022, the age range with the highest number of children placed on the child protection register was 0-4 years with one unborn child also being placed.

Registration activity

Figure 5: No. of New Registrations, De-registrations and number on the Register Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2021/22



The number of children on the register fluctuated during 2019/20 however has then remained fairly level over the past 6 quarters with an average of 21 children on the register with a peak of 23 in Q2 and Q3 of 2021/22. The number of new registrations peaked at 18 in Q4 of 2019/20 and again more recently at 12 during Q1 2021/22 however latterly has shown a decrease towards the end of 2021/22 at 5 new registrations.

The number of De registrations also fluctuated during 2019/20 and 2020/21 however remained fairly level during 2021/22.

Vulnerability Factors and Impacts on/abuse of the Child.

As of 31 July 2022, the main Vulnerability Factor was Domestic Abuse followed by Child Affected by Parent/Carer Mental Health. The highest impact on / abuse of the children was Emotional Abuse followed by Neglect.

Table 1: Factors recorded at point of registration (%) 2021/22

VULNERABILITY FACTORS	Aug-Oct Q1 2021/22	Nov-Jan Q2 2021/22	Feb-Apr Q3 2021/22	May-Jul Q4 2021/22
Services finding it hard to engage	38	75	44	20
Child affected by Parent/Carer Learning Difficulty or Learning Disability	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Child affected by Parent/Carer Mental Ill-Health	75	25	11	60

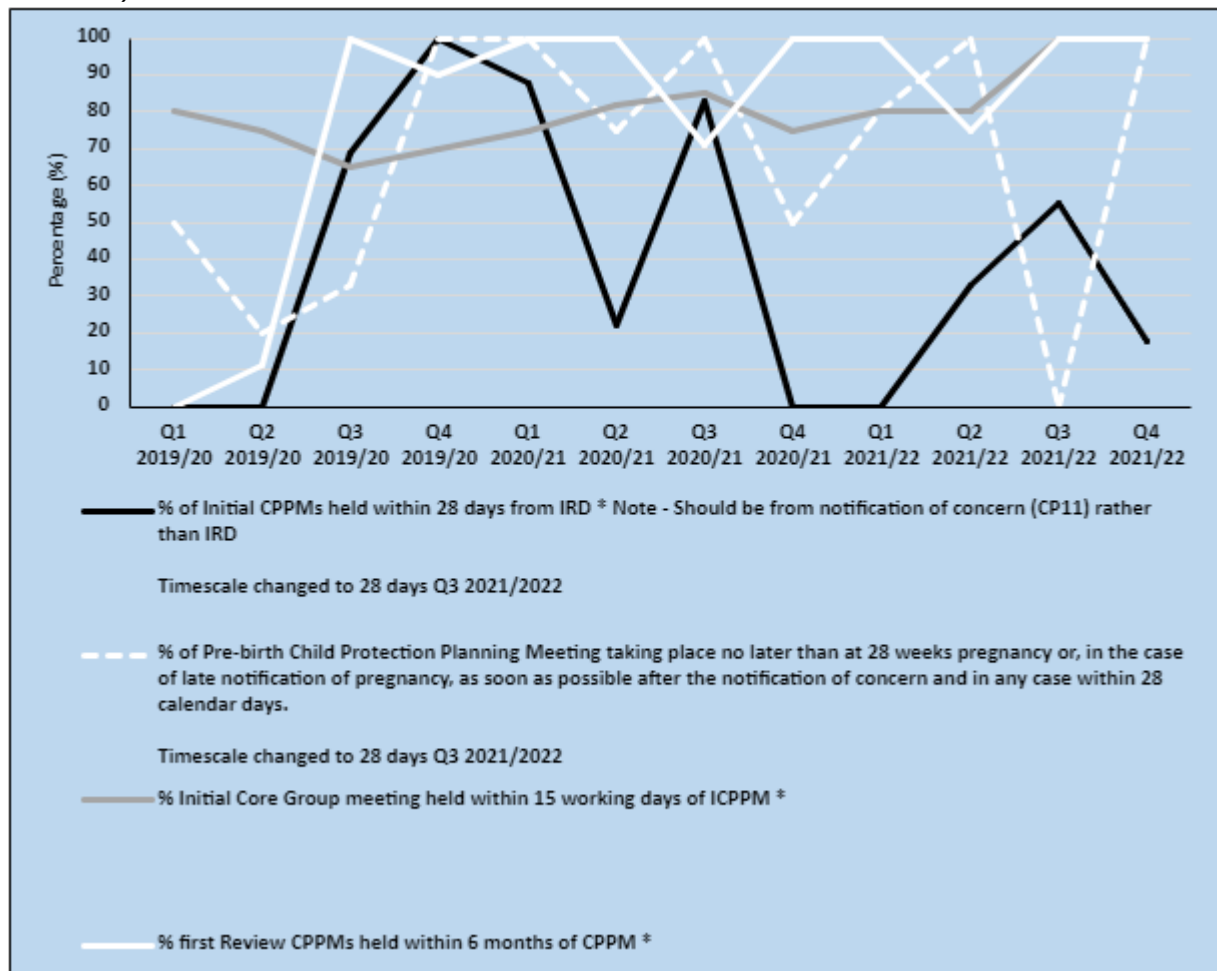
Child experiencing Mental Health Problems	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Domestic Abuse	38	83	22	80
Parental Alcohol Use	50	17	44	20
Parental Drug Use	25	25	11	40
Child Placing Themselves at Risk	13	0	0	0
Child displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Online Safety	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW

Table 2: Impacts recorded at point of registration (%) 2021/22

IMPACTS ON / ABUSE OF THE CHILD	Aug-Oct Q1 2021/22	Nov-Jan Q2 2021/22	Feb-Apr Q3 2021/22	May-Jul Q4 2021/22
Physical Abuse	0	42	33	0
Emotional Abuse	13	67	67	40
Sexual Abuse	0	33	0	0
Criminal Exploitation	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Child Trafficking	0	0	0	0
Neglect	50	17	0	20
Female Genital Mutilation	0	0	0	0
Honour-based abuse and Forced Marriage	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Child Sexual Exploitation	0	0	0	0
Internet-enabled Sexual Offending	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Underage Sex	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW
Other Concern(s)	13	17	11	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS	8	12	9	5

Child Protection Process Timescales

Figure 6: Timescales in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Percentage within Timescale) Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2021/22

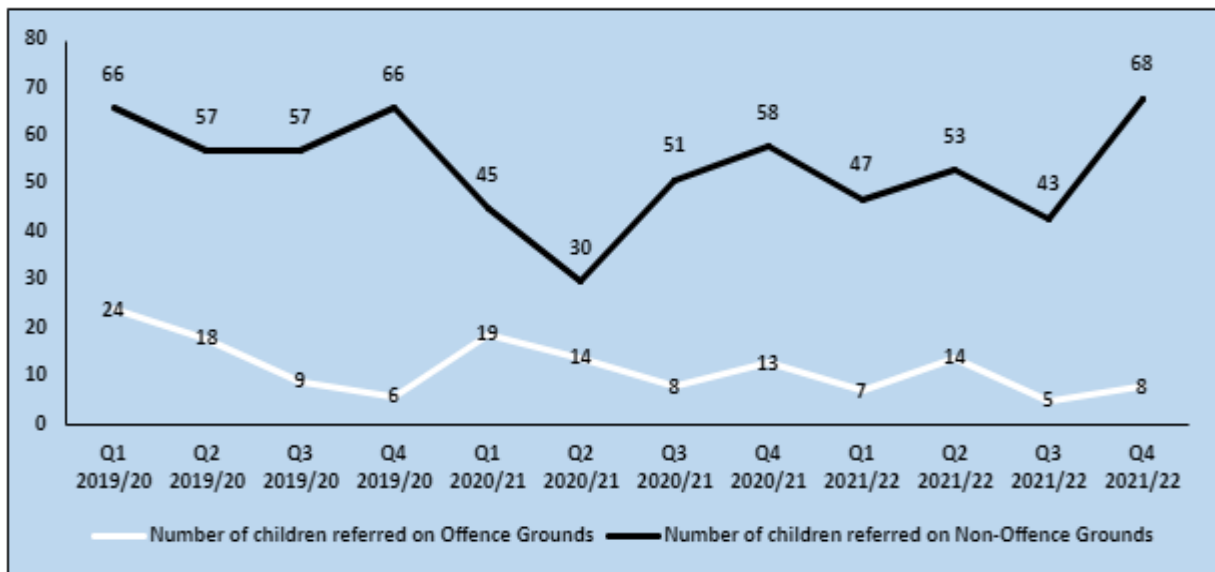


As of July 2022, 18% of Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPMs) were held within 28 days from IRD.

100% of Pre-Birth CPPMs took place no later than 28 weeks pregnancy, 100% of Initial Core Group Meetings were held within 15 working days of ICPPM and 100% of first review CPPM's were held within 6 months of CPPM.

Children Referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)

Figure 7: Number of children referred to the Children's Reporter on Offence and Non-Offence Grounds Q1 2019/20 to Q4 2021/22



The number of Children referred to SCRA on Offence Grounds in Q4 2021/22 was 68 which was the highest number over the past 3 years of reporting. The number of children referred on Non-Offence Grounds has seen a general decrease from 2019/20 although the figure has fluctuated with a high of 24 in Q1 2019/20 and a low of 5 in 2021/22.