



# Keeping the Promise in South Ayrshire

## Supportive School Structure

20th June - 29th September 2023

Report by Sheena Christie

Research Assistant



**I support South Ayrshire's  
Parenting Promise**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Corra funding Application .....	3
2. National Context .....	5
3. Local Context .....	7
4. Phase 1 of the Research .....	10
5. Phase 2 of the Research .....	16
6. Workforce .....	23
7. Families .....	41
8. Children & Young People .....	51
9. Summary .....	62
10. What is going well? .....	65
11. What can we improve on? .....	69
12. Conclusion .....	72
13. Recommendations .....	74
14. Pen Portrait - Ben .....	76
15. Targeted Support .....	80
16. Appendix 1 South Ayrshire's 10 Promise Priority Areas .....	87
17. Appendix 2 Wallacetowns Parenting Promise .....	89
20. Appendix 5 Research Assistant flyer .....	96
21. Appendix 6 Carmel Jacobs – We matter in the classroom .....	97
22. Appendix 7 Keeping the Promise Accreditation .....	100
23. References .....	102
24. Literature review .....	108
25. Unintentional outcomes .....	113

# Background

South Ayrshires Promise improvement area 10 outlines that:

**Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.**

[See Appendix 1 p.79 South Ayrshire 10 Improvement Areas- The Promise](#)

In December 2022 South Ayrshire secured £229,937 to #keepthepromise across our school community. Our aim is to increase the participation of children young people and their families in education, leading to a co-produced curriculum offer. To do this we need to understand our school community in the round and ensure that we know and value those people and agencies who young people and their families hold as key supports in their lives.




## Our Challenge

Our data in South Ayrshire tells us that exclusion rates are high amongst our previously looked after young people and attendance rates for our young people looked after at home are low. Absences are also increasing in line with national trends. Some barriers include a variance of approaches within our schools which can result in a disconnection from other services, external agencies, and at times from each other. The impact of this can be an inconsistency in practice and lack of understanding of roles across the whole system. Young people can often become lost in the complexity of the system that surrounds them. There can be a lack of creativity around our curriculum offer which does not always place value, or actively listen to the views and experiences of young people. Young people are not always represented or consistency participating meaningfully in planning their education or properly supported around the trauma they have experienced.



# How will we respond to the Challenge?

We want to create a co-produced curriculum offer with children and young people with care experience. We know that we need to dig beneath our data and expand on what young people have told us by -

-  Hearing more from young people and their families
-  Speaking with the wider workforce across the school community
-  Mapping out the services groups and key people who exist across 4 of our cluster areas








To progress this activity, we have broken our work into distinct phases as outlined below.

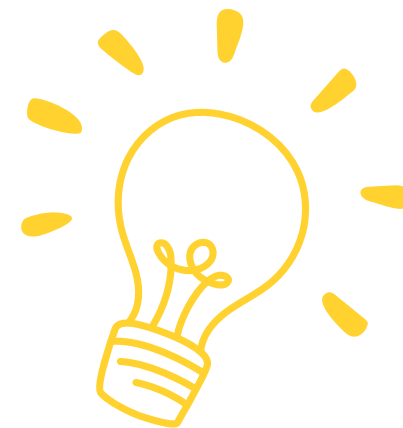
## Phase 1 & 2 Exploration: Research and Analysis

January – September 2023

1 year funding allocated spend **£54,277** in total

By the end of phase 1: we should

-  Know who our school community are in detail (mapping)
-  Hear the voices of our young people and their families (peer influenced research)
-  Understand the key differences between our four cluster groups (research)
-  Have a deeper understanding of our data (analysis of current monitoring and tracking)
-  Understand the linkages with Childrens service planning and whole family approaches
-  Be able to map out phases 3 & 4 including drafting job descriptions and influencing a recruitment and selection timetable
-  Know what structures we need to put in place to enable workforce to work more collaboratively across our school clusters



# National Context

[The Promise Scotland](#) is an organisation that was established to support change in the care system for children and young people in Scotland. It was created following the Independent Care Review, which highlighted that the current care system was not working. The organisation aims to ensure that care-experienced children and young people grow up loved, safe, and respected. The plan is in 3 key stages and by 2030, this Promise must be kept. Scotland supports people and organisations across Scotland to keep the promise. The Promise Oversight board makes checks to see this is happening and holds organisations accountable if they are not.<sup>1</sup>

In June 2023 The Promise oversight board published report 2.

Plan 21 - 24 was clear that education systems needed to be ambitious for care experienced young people and schools to be trauma informed, safe places where relationships can be fostered.

## Progress



The impact Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) has made and its support of all care experienced young people. Changes have been made to the care experienced student bursary to focus more on engagement, rather than being linked to a 100% attendance requirement. The needs based approach is welcome. Awareness of bursaries must be raised and students must be supported in the application process.



The virtual school model is expanding across Scotland. This involves a virtual school head teacher who is a senior member of education staff in a local authority, but not in a physical school building. Their responsibilities focus on improving the educational experiences and outcomes of care experienced children and young people. Many areas now have a designated care experience lead and collaboration takes place across the network to share good practice.



Tutoring programmes



Importance of fostering strong relationships for those in education settings.



Study sessions for care experienced students in higher education from the point of application



Peer support and a way to share views.



A 'named person' for each care experienced student.

<sup>1</sup> <https://thepromise.scot>

# Improvements to be made



Define what it means to be care experienced in legislation to ensure all those that can access support are able to.



Education improvement plans to specify how the schools intend to improve attainment levels for care experienced students and their commitment to the Promise



Care experienced children and young people's education plans should be aspirational and reviewed regularly.



Schools should endeavour not to move children unless absolutely necessary and if needed they are to have robust support systems in place.



Improve post school destinations with consistent financial and practical support, with focus on sustainable employment and education options.



Improve interagency working by making it known that its everyone's responsibility to keep the promise, not just social workers.



Data sharing and collaborative working to be improved and made more straightforward.



Ensure no formal and informal exclusions.



ALL schools to deliver commitment, not just scattered across the country.<sup>2</sup>

# Local Context

The Promise's Plan 21-24 focuses on 5 key priority areas which are reflected in South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise:



A good childhood



Building capacity



Whole family support



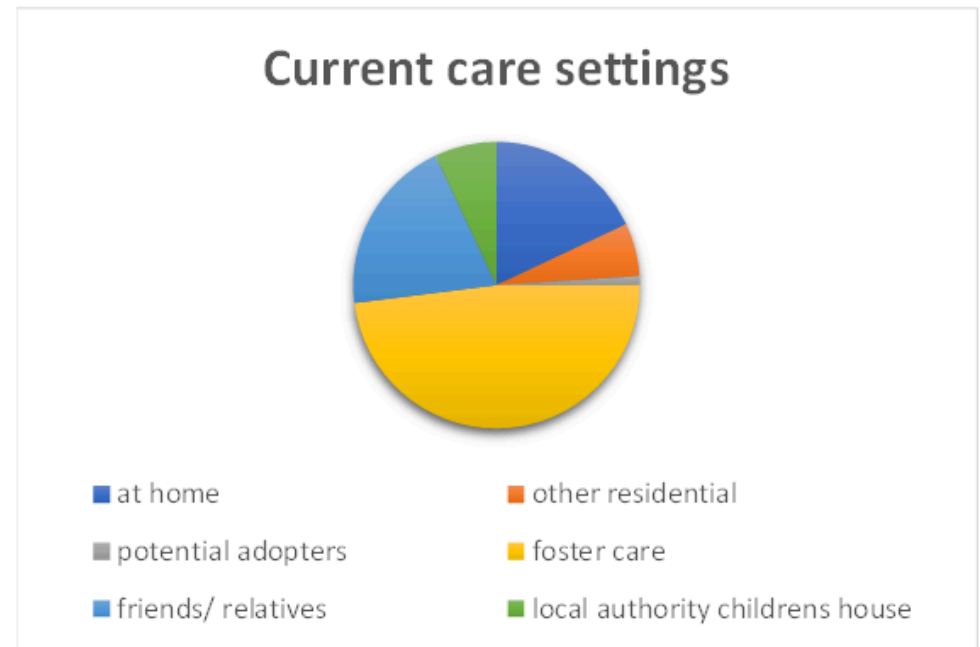
Planning<sup>3</sup>



Supporting the workforce

There are 497 care experienced pupils in South Ayrshire (early years, primary and secondary) and 187 currently experiencing care as of May 2023.<sup>4</sup> To understand our data this disparity in numbers shows the complexity of pupils presenting in our schools. South Ayrshire does not currently breakdown data into placement type or those previously looked after at home or away from home. There are 310 young people who are a mixture of previously looked after by South Ayrshire council or who are currently/ previously looked after by other Local Authorities.

**Chart 1:**  
Current care settings of pupils in South Ayrshire



<sup>3</sup> [https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/4045/South-Ayrshire-Parenting-Promise-2021-2030/pdf/2022\\_01\\_28\\_South\\_Ayrshires\\_Parenting\\_Promise\\_FINAL.pdf?m=637812254157270000](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/4045/South-Ayrshire-Parenting-Promise-2021-2030/pdf/2022_01_28_South_Ayrshires_Parenting_Promise_FINAL.pdf?m=637812254157270000)

<sup>4</sup> [South Ayrshire Children and Young Peoples Services Plan 2023-2026.pdf \(south-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/4045/South-Ayrshire-Children-and-Young-Peoples-Services-Plan-2023-2026.pdf)

[South Ayrshire Children and Young Peoples Services Plan 2023-2026](#) will make a significant contribution to improving wellbeing and outcomes for our children, young people, and families.

**The priority areas are :**



The Promise



Voice



Families



Healthy



Included



People

Underpinning this plan will be:

- Early and **preventative** support to improve wellbeing of children and young people.
- Whole family supports focusing on **family strengths**.
- Meaningfully **listening** to children and promoting their participation.
- The **importance** of relational, trauma sensitive practice and local services.

This will see a change in the way services work across South Ayrshire to support families. There will be a focus on early intervention for families to get the right support at the right time, building on their strengths.

Alongside local communities, South Ayrshire Council will design and develop the Family First “Team Around the Cluster” model to respond to local need in South Ayrshire. The aim is to enhance collaborative early support across our communities in South Ayrshire and in turn, improve outcomes for our children, young people, and families. This test of change, led by Education is based on the aims of Children’s Services Planning.





**Early Intervention & Primary Prevention:** Through locally based multiagency teams who understand local need, support is offered at the earliest opportunity and in many cases prevents need arising.



**Integration:** Support is coordinated from the point of view and experiences of children, young people, and their families. The model brings services together into teams to wrap around our local communities.



**Best Value:** Jointly assessing need ensures the best use of available resources.



**Wellbeing:** All services supporting families, such as those supporting parents, carry out their work in a manner which also safeguards, supports, and promotes child wellbeing.

The first two “Family First” localities were introduced in October 2023. It will bring key partners such as Education, Third Sector, School Nursing, Thriving Communities, Health, and Social Care together into teams within their community areas, alongside families to improve outcomes in three key areas:



School Attendance



Supporting pupils who are at risk of exclusion



Improving transitions<sup>5</sup>

There will be a rights based approach to planning services. The views and opinions of children and young people will inform future improvements, planning and developments in South Ayrshire.

# Activity undertaken by Research Assistant

## Phase 1: 20th April – 19th June 2023

The Research assistant took up post in April 2023 and over phase 1 of activity, has spoken to 61 workforce from services including Education, Social Work, Housing, Thriving Communities, Community Planning, Voluntary Sector, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Strathclyde police, North Lanarkshire Council – Youth family and community learning and Lornhill Academy – Clackmannanshire Council. There were also some informal discussions with families and young people. During this phase there was open dialogue to encourage people to speak and think broadly about education and our Care Experienced children and young people. This took place face to face, online meetings, and phone calls.

## Phase 1 - Themes emerging from initial conversations with Research Assistant & workforce

### Let's come together

Overall, it was felt there needs to be more of a collective culture approach from all services and a move away from decisions based on schools and services own needs, without always analysing how their role fits with others or referencing a South Ayrshire approach. Some schools and early years centers have created a narrative of how they are “doing” The Promise, such as the Wallacetown Promise – see Appendix 2 page 89.

The size of the school community is vast. There are eight secondary schools, 40 primary schools and two special schools in South Ayrshire. Teaching staff alone total to 1165 full time equivalent teachers employed in South Ayrshire Council.

Several practitioners commented that historically “Team around the school” meetings had taken place in some school clusters. They commented that they found these really useful for networking and information and felt at it would be worthwhile reinstating them.



Some schools senior staff members have engaged services that focus on perceived need at points rather than what young people and the data tell us. This can make it more difficult for new services to have the opportunity to support our young people.

## Let's be pro-active not reactive

Many practitioners also commented on the number of services involved with some families and young people. They felt that the support can be reactive, “with a cast of thousands”, rather than asking the family what they need at that time. It was felt that the approach should be pro-active, focusing on early intervention. Families and young people need to be asked what would help and in so have their strengths recognised. The support should gather around the families strengths, rather than being put fixing a problem. This aligns with the Signs of Safety Approach<sup>7</sup> adopted by South Ayrshire Childrens Health, Care, and Justice Services in 2022 and the recently introduced Family First model.

## Let's look at the continuing impact of COVID-19

We are still seeing the after effects of COVID-19, particularly around school attendance and mental health. In the [South Ayrshire Children and Young Peoples Services Plan 2023-2026](#) 21% of Secondary pupils feel that their school could do more to understand and support their mental health. This is despite the considerable energy that has gone into delivering a mental health strategy and commissioning resources for schools [South Ayrshire Community Mental Health Support \(southayrshirecmhw.co.uk\)](#).

## Let's make time to build relationships

It was felt that relationships are the key to success. Teachers, school assistants, voluntary sector, thriving communities , social work who are part of our school community must be given the time and space to develop supportive relationships with care experienced children and young people and each other.

<sup>7</sup> [What Is Signs of Safety? - Signs of Safety](#)

<sup>8</sup> [South\\_Ayrshire\\_Children\\_and\\_Young\\_Peoples\\_Services\\_Plan\\_2023-2026.pdf \(south-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](#)

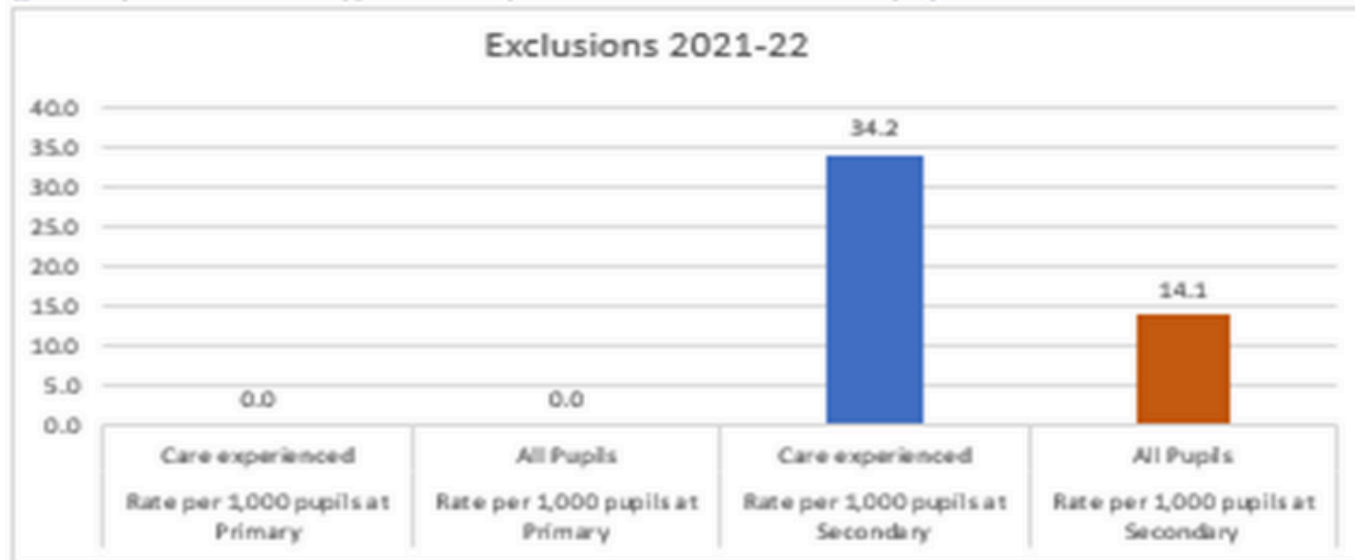


## Let's look at school exclusions for Care Experienced young people

Anecdotally practitioners felt that care experienced young people were excluded more often and for longer than their peers. In the graph below the data tells us that there are 34.2 care experienced young people per 1000 pupils in a secondary school excluded compared to 14.1 per 1000 of all secondary pupils.

There were no exclusions of care experience primary pupils in the session 2022-2023.<sup>10</sup>

### See Chart 2 Below



Source: SAC Educational Services: figures accurate as at end of term 2 2022-23 i.e., from start of term in August 2022 until break of school in December 2022.

\*non-zero figure – suppressed due to involving less than 5 pupils

### Chart 2:

**Rate per 1000 pupils of formal and informal exclusions of pupils (primary and secondary) care experienced children and all pupils**



## Let's normalise care experience

It was felt that there is still stigma around being care experienced or **“having social work”**.

Young people living in kinship care said they were also made to feel different by peers. One young person said that they were **“bullied and ridiculed for being care experienced. Folk spread it around and it [bullying] got worse”**.

Another young person said they were called **“a weirdo”** because they lived with their sister. The “othering” of young people by their peers and services compounds the stigma and shame linked to care.

[Each and Every Child](#) aims to tell a new story about care experience in Scotland to shift public attitudes and to improve life chances. They aim to create a fresh narrative using framing recommendations from the Framework Institutes research to care experience in Scotland. <sup>11</sup>

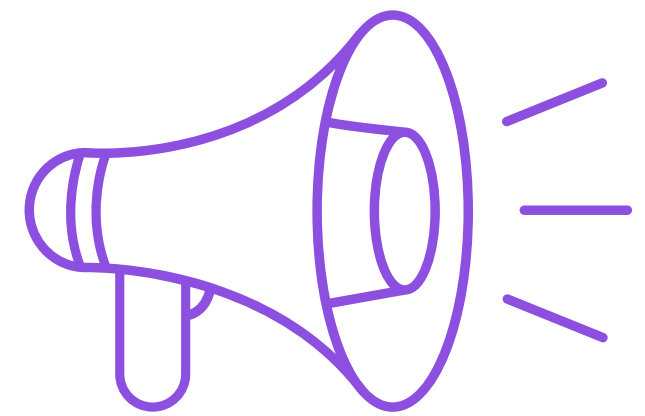


11 <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FRAJ8071-Robertson-Childrens-Care-in-Scotland-200424.pdf>



## Let's give families and young people a voice

In the initial scoping phase 3 families and 6 young people felt that they did not have a say in their education. However in phase 2 a larger sample of young people and families participated and the majority of families did feel that they were involved in their child's education (p.42). In phase 2 over half of the young people felt they were involved in their education (p.51).

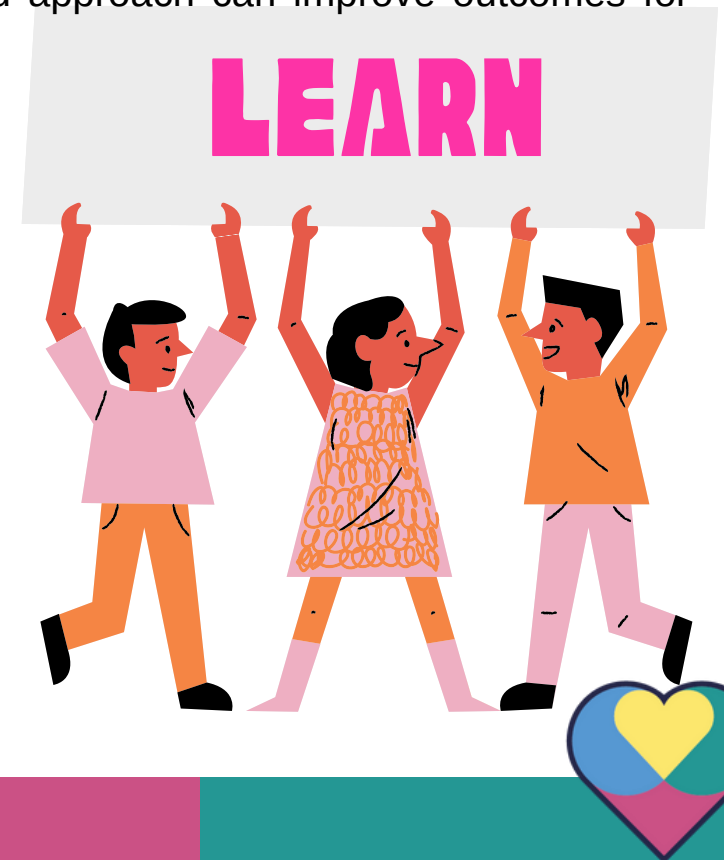


### “sometimes I wasn't asked I was told”.

Six young people told us that they stopped going to school because they felt excluded from decisions about their learning when talking about subject choices. All six young people reported that this disconnect was linked to their needs not being understood and listened to. A nurturing and trauma informed approach can improve outcomes for children and young people with adverse childhood experiences. <sup>12</sup>

## Let's look at other Education pathways

There was a general feeling that the traditional academic model of education does not suit all young people. There has been success with a more vocational, flexible model of learning for some care experienced young people. Practitioners have said that in the past LAGTA (Automotive training courses) <sup>13</sup> was successful and well received by young people. For example in one secondary school they have “Stayrway to Success” which provides accredited volunteering opportunities in a local church with a toddler group and a soup kitchen.



<sup>12</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/resources/inc83-nurture-adverse-childhood-experiences-and-trauma-informed-practice/>

<sup>13</sup> Lagta Group Training | STF

## Let's use care based language

In phase 1 and 2 of the research the term “LAC” was used by a range of members of the workforce from across the whole school community. We have heard from our Champions Board that LAC is a term which holds negative connotations for many of our care experienced young people in school and beyond.

By using care based language we can move the focus away from the system or process back to the child with an emphasis on the fact that each young person’s story is unique.

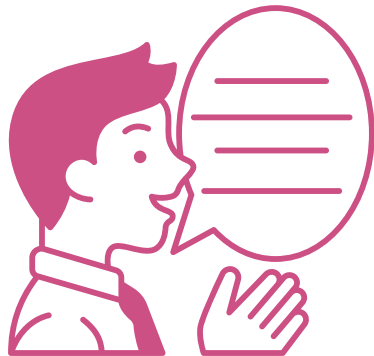
Care experienced children and young people in South Ayrshire have been involved in making language changes over the course of 2023 South Ayrshire Parenting Promise Resources . On 1st November 2023 South Ayrshire Council changed the name of “ LAC Reviews” to [name of young person's] meeting. This action is the catalyst for more language changes based on what young people and their families tell us. <sup>14</sup>



## Phase 2:

In Phase 2 of the research activity it was agreed that the researcher would build relationships with young people and families through

- Champions board drop-in at the Domain
- Champions board lunch group Ayr Academy
- Champions board lunch group Belmont Academy
- Summer Programme Activities – Champions board & Virtual Schools Welfare Officers
- Visits to Children's houses
- Meet with Girvan Social Work staff to interview and identify potential young people and families to participate in the research
- Reconnect with families previously supported by Research Assistant



The Research Assistant heard from

**122**  
voices

In addition to 56 surveys, 8 interviews and 2 focus groups with workforce and Corporate parents, alongside 13 surveys and 3 interviews with Families and the Research assistant also spoke to 40 young people with care experience.



## For the purpose of the report we will use the following definitions:

**Care experience:** The term care-experienced refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after. This care may have been provided in one of many different settings such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care, or through being looked after at home with a supervision requirement.<sup>15</sup>

**workforce:** people and services who make up our school communities.

**Family/families:** whoever a young person lives with.

## Process

Mixed methodology was used to gather data in Phase 2. The purpose of this was to give a better understanding and yield more complete evidence of the question being asked.<sup>16</sup>

## Method

The stakeholder survey link (workforce) was distributed by email to all agencies involved in phase 1 and additional agencies or colleagues identified by the Promise Supportive school structure insight group . Head Teachers and Principal Teachers were asked if they could distribute the survey to their school staff and peripatetic staff. All school staff have been given the opportunity to participate if they wish to, including catering, administration, janitorial staff and the school librarians (see Appendix 3 p.86 for full list). The invitation to participate in the survey included Thriving communities, Social Work, Health , Third sector organisations and the police.

Information and QR codes for the surveys were posted in the Health and Social Care Partnership newsletters. Flyers with information and QR code linked to the survey were available in school staff rooms. Information and the QR code were also shared through 2 school in service days .

<sup>15</sup> [Care-experienced \(sfc.ac.uk\)](https://www.sfc.ac.uk)

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338751170\\_Mixed\\_Methods\\_Research\\_An\\_Overview\\_for\\_Beginner\\_Researchers](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338751170_Mixed_Methods_Research_An_Overview_for_Beginner_Researchers)

Staff from a variety of services and cluster areas were approached by the Research assistant to ask if they would like to be interviewed as part of the research to gain more detailed information. Everyone approached agreed to participate.

In phase 1 of the research Girvan social work team was identified for interviews and links to young people. A number of staff have left to go onto different employment and this was not possible in phase 2. Survey links were distributed to staff prior to their leaving dates.

A full list of the questions asked are in Appendix 5 p.97.

In total **108** surveys were completed, with an additional **12** face to face interviews and **2** focus groups. This is broken down into key stakeholder groups below.

## Workforce

56 surveys  
8 interviews  
2 focus groups

## Families

13 surveys  
8 interviews

## Young People

39 surveys  
1 interview



## Workforce Questions :

1. Can you give any examples of good practice that supports young people with care experience across their school life? Why do you think it worked well?
2. Can you identify any barriers that you have faced working within schools? Can you think of any ways these barriers might be overcome?
3. If you could design the best model of practice to support young people with care experience across their school life, what would it look like?
4. Do you feel part of the school community?
5. Can you please explain in more detail your answer to Question 4?
6. Any other comments ?



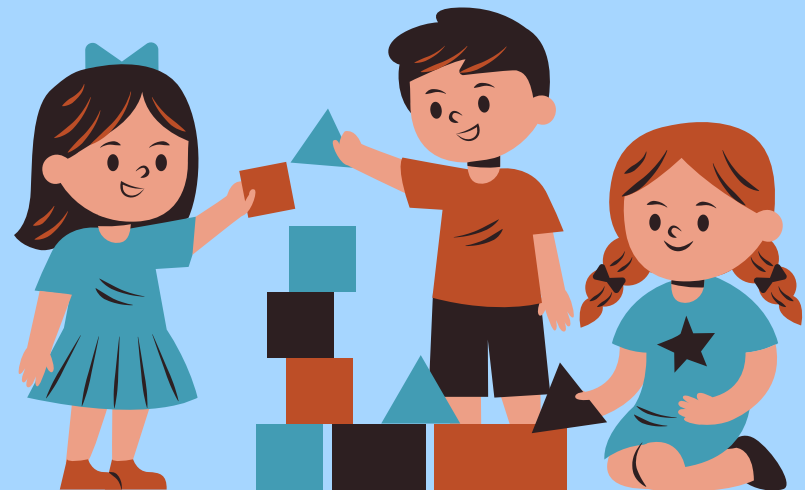
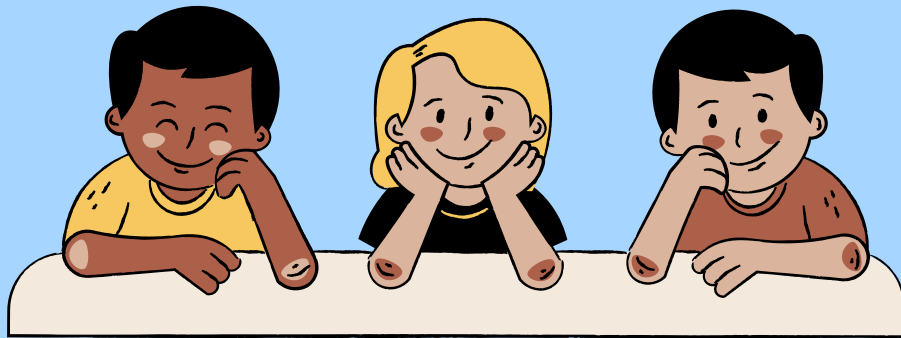
## Families Questions :



1. Do you feel part of your child's education?
2. Can you tell me the ways that you are part of your child's education - for example
  - have you taken part in school events around your child's education?
  - have you had one to one discussions with guidance staff?
  - are you in regular contact with a worker who supports your child at school?
3. How has the support .you received around your education made a difference?
4. Who provided the support and what was it they did well?
5. If you could design the best package to help your child get the best from school, what would it look like?

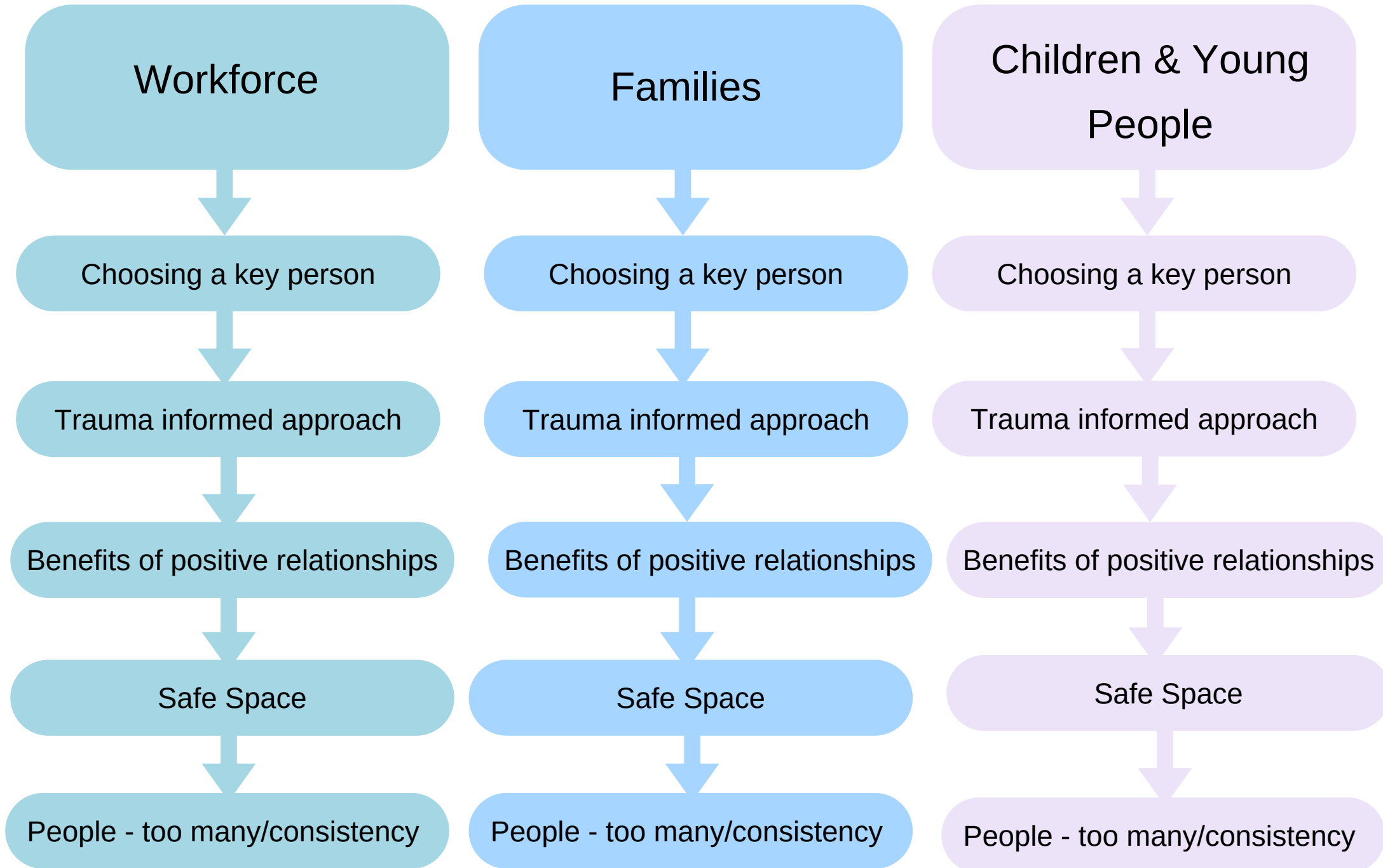
## Children & Young people's Questions:

1. Are you included in decisions about your learning?
  - How are you included in making decisions about your learning?
2. Can you tell me who has helped you the most with your learning?
3. What was it that they did that helped?
4. If you could design the support to help you the best from education, what would it look like?



# Interview & Survey Questions :

In summary the analysis of the questions asked in each group have common themes shared by all.



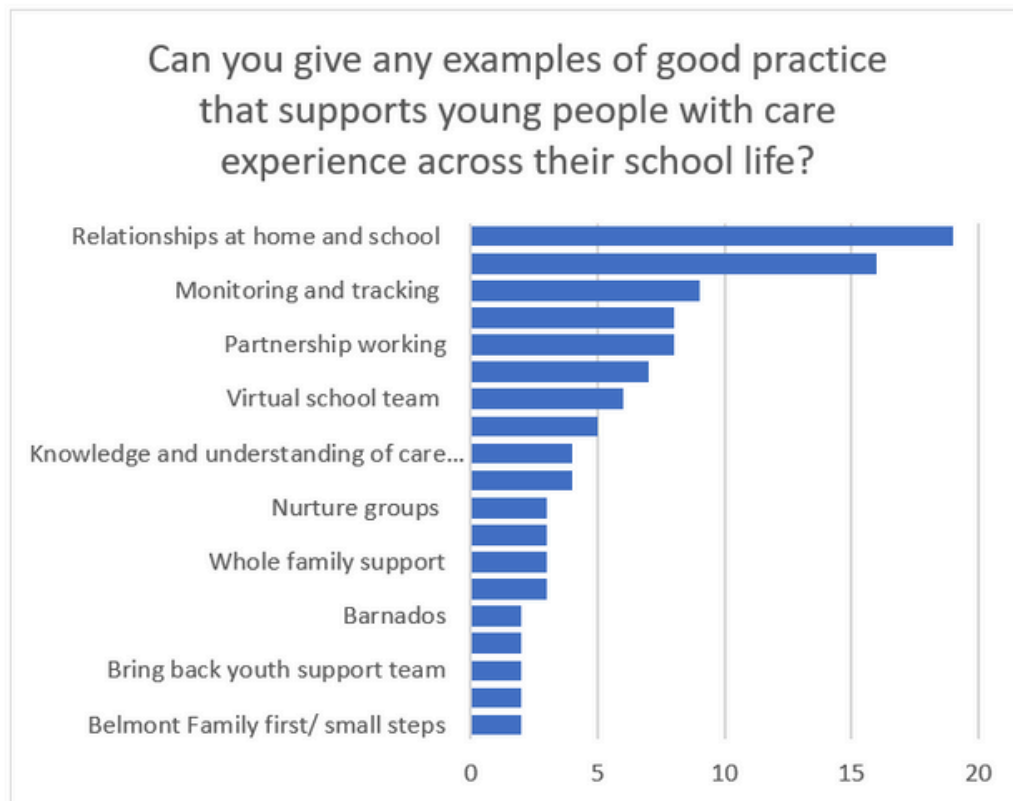
## Workforce -

### Workforce Question 1:

**Can you give any examples of good practice that supports young people with care experience across their school life? Why do you think it worked well?**

Aggregated responses are the compiled information from the Interview questions and the Microsoft Forms Surveys from the Workforce responses.

**Chart 3: Aggregated responses to workforce Question 1**



### The most common answers were :

- Relationship building - **32%**
- Regular check-ins / enhanced communication - **27%**
- Monitoring & tracking - **15%**
- Partnership working - **14%**
- Champions Board - **14%**
- Care Experienced leads - **12%**
- Virtual schools team - **10%**
- Person centred - **8%**

Other answers included knowledge and understanding of care experience (7%), whole family support (5%).

See full responses in Chart 3.

## Relationships:

When talking about relationship building the workforce who took part in the research felt that showing that you care, being consistent and compassionate were important qualities. It was also identified that having consistent staff with **“stickability”** improved outcomes.

Monitoring and tracking of care experienced children and young people were also identified to improve outcomes. One stakeholder commented that we have recently seen an improvement in our primary age care experienced children’s outcomes through **“robust and improved monitoring and tracking.”**

The virtual school team were identified as key links for education as well as their approachability and understanding.

## Voice and Participation:

South Ayrshire Champions Board were also identified as a good practice model and that participation and ownership is high because it is rights based. They are also a key driver in identifying themes impacting on our care experienced young people.

It was also identified that there are always higher levels of participation in open events in schools if food is offered.

## Care Experienced leads in schools:

It was felt that care experienced leads being introduced in South Ayrshire is good practice as they allow a spotlight to be shined on our care experienced young people and more or a focus than a guidance teacher is able to do, because of the volume of pupils a guidance teacher is responsible for . The Promise insight report 2 asks for a ‘named person’ for each care experienced student.” <sup>17</sup>

## Partnership working:

Partnership working with good communication was also felt to be critical in getting it right . One school told us **“our school community works well with our school in order to provide positive outcomes for all children and young people”**.

Another school told us

**“our school takes our values incredibly seriously so that staff and pupils alike feel part of our community. Our SLT [senior leadership team] strive to support us all to be the best we can be”**.





## Workforce - Question 2:

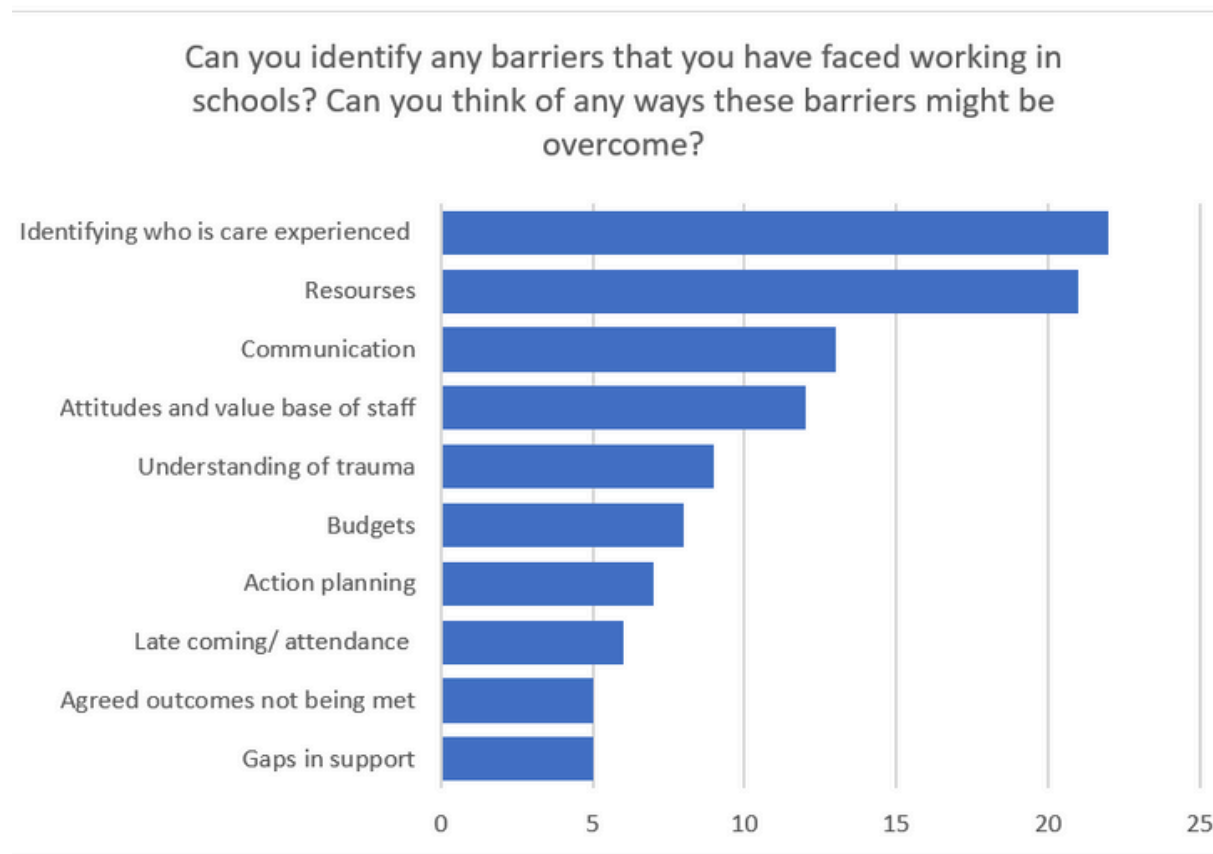
**Can you identify any barriers that you have faced working within schools?**

**Can you think of any ways these barriers might be overcome?**

**The most common answers respondents and interviewees were:**

- Identifying who is care experienced - **37%**
- Resources-**36%**
  - staffing- 8 answers
  - resources- 5 answers
  - timetable constraints- 4 answers
  - all schools being able to access same - 4 answers
- Communication - **22%**
- Attitudes and value base of staff - **20%**
  - stigma- 7 answers
  - value bases - 3 answers
  - not rights based -2 answers
- Understanding of trauma - **15%**
- Budgets - **14%**
- Action planning - **12%**
- Late coming & poor attendance - **10%**

Chart 4: Aggregated responses to workforce Question 2



Other answers included agreed outcomes not being met, gaps in support and the school environment (too big/loud) see Chart 4.

## Identifying Care Experience:

**37% of respondents felt that identifying who is care experienced is a barrier to working in schools to support our care experienced children and young people.**

An early years centre flagged that they regularly experience practitioners not passing on information about care experience, in a child's early years. If they have this information it allows SEEMiS to be accurately populated and allows potential areas of under development in the child's social, emotional and well-being to be targeted at an earlier stage.

“Previously looked after young people have historically performed less well in our schools. We often find that these can be our hardest to reach families and access to Family Workers, Home Link etc. helps. There can be a general reluctance for the families to engage with Social Work colleagues. Attendance is also generally poorer in previously looked after young people and there are little or no formal pathways to improve this.

“some staff are unaware of who was previously care experienced and what this term means - [there is a] need to ensure this is highlighted in all schools.”



## Resources:

Resources were also identified as a barrier by 36% of the workforce who took part in the research, the main one being staffing (timetable constraints and consistency) . 7% of the workforce felt they are not given the time or space to form positive relationships. 13% of the workforce also felt that they missed out on training opportunities because of staffing issues. There was some frustration that they were not able to provide the level of support required some care experienced young people to achieve their potential and have the **“teaching that they need and deserve”** to plug gaps in learning and improve outcomes.

It was felt that there needs to a greater understanding of trauma and its impact. The behaviours that we are seeing in our schools are often trauma responses and not poor behaviour choices. It was felt that our care experienced young people would benefit from a trauma informed therapeutic intervention, with time and space afterwards before returning straight to classes.

Attitudes and values of staff were identified as a barrier by 20% of the workforce , who participated in the research . It was felt that there needs to be a greater understanding if what it means to be care experienced and how that impacts on a young person’s life.

**Being care experienced is life long, it doesn’t end when a young person’s education finishes.**

## Budgets:

Eight of the workforce , who responded to the survey , identified budgets as a barrier for different reasons across South Ayrshire Schools. Two of the workforce told us their budget had reduced and they felt that this was a barrier and as a result they were trying to utilise more resources available to them in the community. Other reasons included budgets impacting on consistency of staffing.

The cost of school transport was also discussed. The cost of a minibus was too high and instead they are depending on school staff to transport pupils to learning opportunities off campus. This means that one member of staff can only take 3 pupils in their own car. If they had access to a minibus more pupils could participate in learning experiences within the wider community.



## Workforce - Question 3:

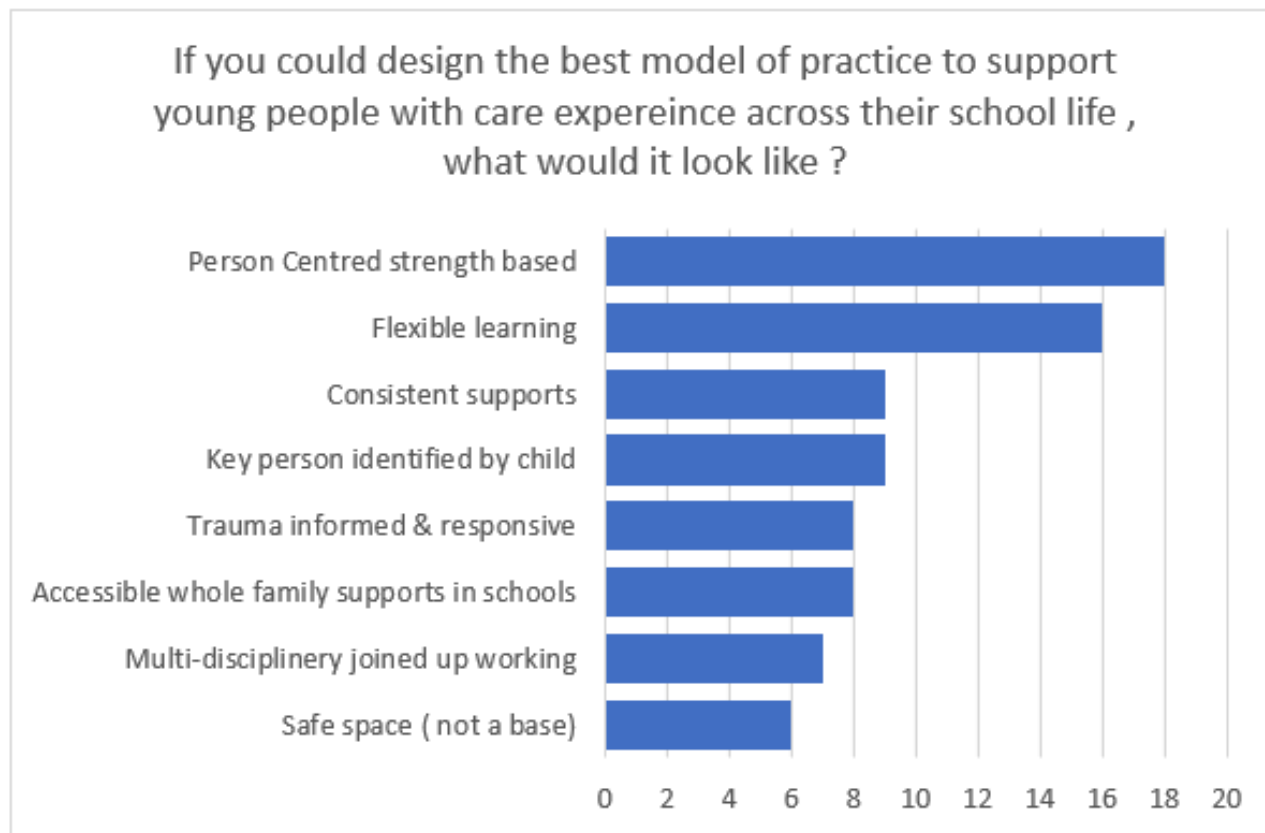
**If you could design the best model of practice to support young people with care experience across their school life, what would it look like?**

### The most common answers respondents and interviewees were:

- A Person centred ; strengths based model - **31%**
- Flexible learning - **27%**
- Consistent supports - **15%**
- Key person identified by child/ young person - **15%**
- Trauma informed & responsive - **14%**
- Accessible whole family supports in schools - **14%**.

Other answers included a safe space but not the school “base” – 10%. See Chart 5.

Chart 5: Aggregated responses to workforce Question 3



## Person centred - Strengths based model:

The most common response from the workforce, who were involved in the research, in identifying a best model of practice is a person centred, strengths based approach with pupil voice at the heart of the plan (31%).

The workforce told us:

“Their [Care Experienced pupils] voice in everything and more joined up working”

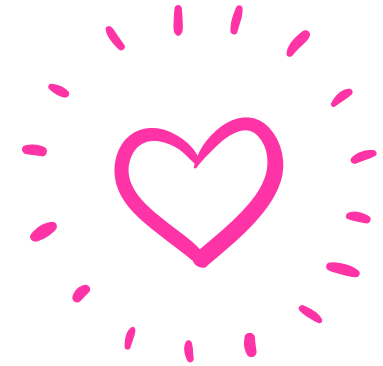
and a best practice model would be:

“An inclusive, holistic programme that was flexible regarding personal growth.”

“A system where the young person is automatically placed at the heart of planning and their views listened to and acted upon by all services.”

Another stakeholder told us

“I would have a smaller model similar to SASKA [South Ayrshire Skills Academy] but within the school they are connected to, this wouldn't be for every Care experienced young person all the time as not everyone wants to be treated differently or needs that level of support but I would have a safe space (not called a base due the stigma around current base set ups) for young people experiencing challenging times at home/personally so it could be used as and when required for 1:1, small group delivery and it would just be a calm environment for people to stop them feeling overwhelmed in a classroom environment . Also, staff resources would be an issue but don't feel it should be made up with full curriculum staff I feel it should be made up with people with understanding and a person centred approach, mental health supports etc but consistent people so if that's the Education Welfare Officer's or whoever can be linked to the schools consistently but aren't required to cover classes etc.”



## Flexible learning

A flexible learning approach was also identified by 27% of the workforce, who responded to the survey. Flexible learning was described by the workforce as learning that can be delivered across a variety of settings including the classroom, in the community or work based learning. Some of the workforce felt that an alternative learning environment would be beneficial, but it would still be inclusive and holistic. One respondent said:

**“if young people are shown kindness, patience in time they will learn while they feel safe and secure”.**













## Whole Family Support:

Eight members of the workforce felt by that Whole Family Support should be more accessible in schools.

The Promise states whatever issues families face, Scotland must ensure that intensive family support is available, proactive, and characterised by the 10 family support principles: <sup>19</sup>

The Ten principles of Intensive Family Support are :

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Community based         |  Holistic and Relational                        |
|  Responsive and timely   |  Therapeutic                                    |
|  Work with family assets |  Non-stigmatising                               |
|  Empowerment and Agency  |  Patient and Persistent                         |
|  Flexible                |  Underpinned by Children's rights <sup>20</sup> |

This support should be easily accessed in a timely manner. It was commented by one worker that the support should be available as long as the family needs the support.

Another member of the workforce, who participated in the research, told us for a model of best practice :

**“That support services were integrated in schools and that schools and services were better able to collaborate and holistically support young people.”**

<sup>19</sup> Holistic whole family support: routemap and national principles - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf#page=58>

# Keyperson

15% of the workforce also identified that children and young people should be able to choose their own “key person”. This would be a true rights-based approach with children and young people’s voice at the centre. If we are developing a model based on children’s rights and participation, where children and young people are at the heart of everything, and their voices heard (Article 12 UNCRC). There could be an opportunity for children and young people to choose their key person.

One stakeholder told us that they felt that there should be ;  
**“a link person for the children’s houses – we don’t have that”.**

They told us  
**“He [Virtual schools welfare officer] goes above and beyond ex residential worker, he knows, he’ll try a support as much as possible but he’s pulled all directions someone like him just for the houses to filter in and support to put a plan in place.”**

They also said  
**“They [services] also got worse over time merging , changing names you lose specific contact , we used to have specific contact ”.**

The worker did not feel that this had been impacted by COVID , but that it was that supports linked to the Children’s houses had reduced over time because in their opinion different services within South Ayrshire Council have been streamlined or staff have changed roles.

A member of staff from the children’s houses described [name of school] as **“they are great absolutely [supportive] and very for individuals [bespoke education programmes].”** They told the Research Assistant that [name of school] had worked really closely with them to make provision for a pupil with a bespoke package which supported them academically and emotionally. They attend 3 days of school and 2 days’ work placement each week . The young person also chose their keyperson within the school . They did not have a great relationship with their guidance teacher and she instead chose to have the Principal Teacher of Pupil Support for any issues at school or support with their learning. The young person is returning after the Summer holidays to start 5th year in August 2023.



## Trauma informed & Responsive :

When asked about a best model of practice 14% of the workforce , who responded to the survey, told us that there should be a trauma informed approach with our care experienced pupils. Being “trauma-informed” means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by adversity and trauma , and adjusting ways of working to respond in ways that support recovery and does no harm. This would be part of “the scaffolding “ of support referred to in The Promise Scotland.

We were told that:

**“moving towards a person centred, trauma informed, trauma responsive model would allow for building on existing skills and what brings them [care experienced pupils] joy”**

and **“access to nurture, counselling sessions to help them engage with and hopefully develop strategies to support them to deal with their trauma”.**

A nurturing space, which provides consistent care and encouragement can support children in managing their emotions and regulating their behaviour, which will allow our Care Experienced children and young people to be in a place where they can learn.

A different stakeholder told:

**“educate practitioners more about trauma informed practice and nurture principles- all behaviour is communication.”**

A trauma informed approach would aim to be “curious and not furious” about the causes of behaviour. This would reflect that the behaviour is a need , and that the child or young person’s behaviours may not be personal to them <sup>23</sup>

# Trauma informed & Responsive :

## Safe space

A safe space – “ a consistent nurturing environment that is non-stigmatising“ was described as a model of best practice. A member of the workforce said that it should not be the school “base” . It was felt that our care experienced young people could benefit from a safe space to go when they are feeling overwhelmed and need to self-regulate.

Safe spaces denote a range of different environments, from a calming space that helps a young person to regulate to a vibrant groupwork space that creates a sense of purpose and belonging. Both are recognised as equally important by respondents from the workforce (16%) and young people (21%).

The workforce, who responded to the survey, told us that the Champions for Change groups provide a safe environment for Care experienced young people in some schools.

**“I know the champions board in [South Ayrshire Secondary School] are a tremendous point of connection..... to support children better through their school experience”**

**“Champs Board groups within certain schools, has helped bring young people together and feel supported by peers with potentially similar circumstances.”**

**“Young people [are] offered a space to gather have some food and talk about the issues they want to address if they want to at all. It's not a programme or intervention that young people have to fit in instead young people shape the group this creates a strong sense of ownership and high participation levels”**

**“[South Ayrshire School] Champions Board worked really well as it allowed pupils to find a community of peers who may have had similar experiences to themselves.”**

## Workforce - Question 4:

### Do you feel part of the school community?

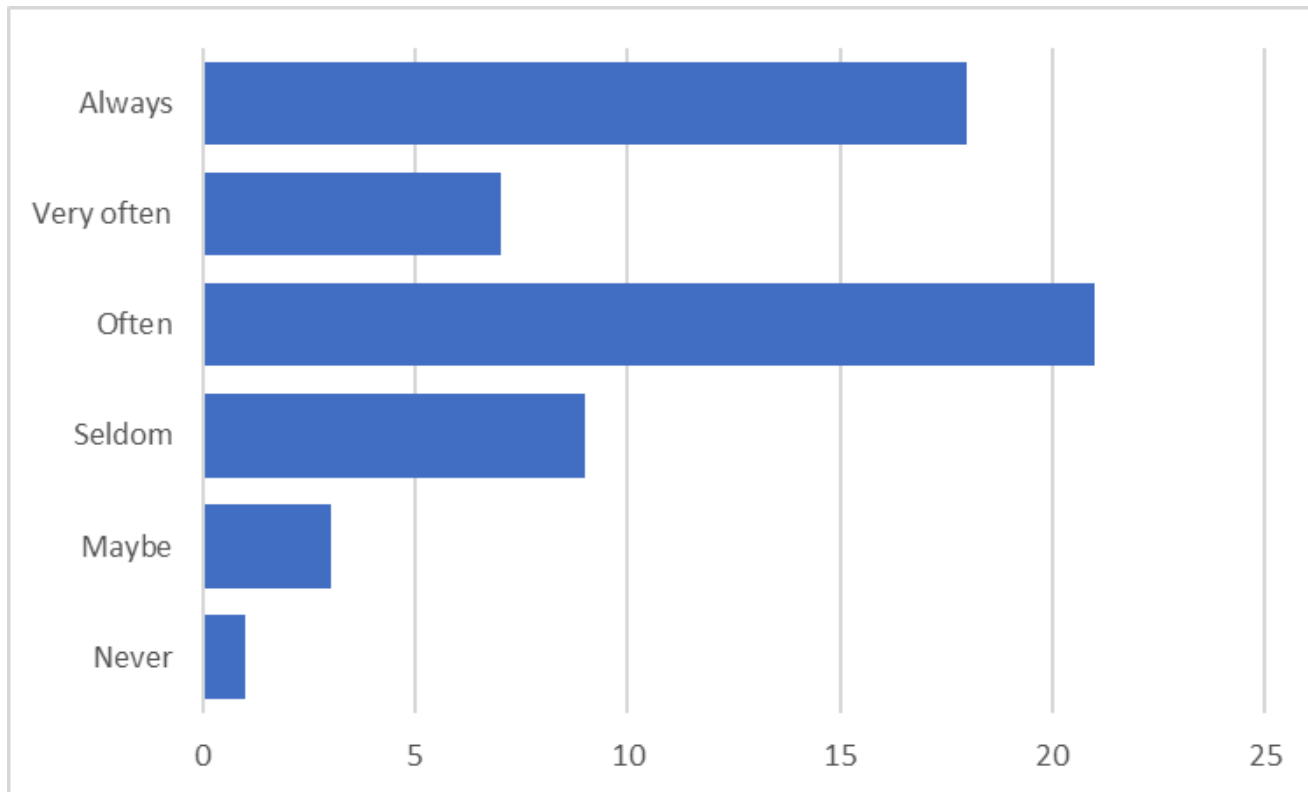


Chart 6: Aggregated responses to workforce Question 4

**78% of the workforce who responded to the survey feel part of the school community always, often, or very often.**

**17% of the workforce feel part of the school community never or seldom.**

### The most common answers respondents and interviewees were:

**36%** of the workforce often feel part of the school community.

**30%** of the workforce always feel part of the school community.

**15%** of the workforce seldom feel part of the school community.

**12%** of the workforce very often feel part of the school community.

**5%** of the workforce maybe feel part of the school community.

**2%** of the workforce never feel part of the school community.

## Workforce - Question 5:

Can you please explain in more detail your answer to Question 4?

### Very Often

There were 12% of workforce who felt that they very often felt part of the school community included these comments.

“Our school community works well with our school in order to provide positive outcomes for all children and young people.”

“Most of the schools who requested service ensured positive communication and engagement which supported and included young person and their carers. No duplication of service within school and young person felt included and part of school environment. This then resulted in positive outcomes for their attendance, attainment, and overall well-being.”

“Working at a residential outdoor education centre means we are fortunate to work with many schools, classes, and teachers from through-out the authority.”

### Often

The workforce were asked whether they feel that they are part of the school community. The most common response was that the workforce often feel part of the school community, cited by 36% of participants . Their comments included

“Thriving Communities feel part of the school community, in some schools the planning, monitoring and evaluating is embedded better than others”

and “partners are involved sometimes”.

“I feel we have a good relationship with our connected school and community - we look forward to working together over this next session”

## Always

When asked about whether they feel part of the school community 30 % of workforce say that they always do. Reasons given for that included: **“there is a strong sense of community in their school”** and

**“a feeling of belonging and being appreciated and this is what we want young people to feel”**.

It is also noted that they know their families really well. Other workforce have commented that **“it is easier in smaller schools”** and a member of peripatetic staff commented that

**“Our school takes our values incredibly seriously so that staff and pupils alike feel part of our community. Our senior leadership team strive to support us all to be the best that we can be “.**

**“It varies from school to school and [engagement] at certain times like partnership meetings”**  
it was also commented by one participant that, **“the number of education staff is vast and there is little room for building relationships.”**

**“We have a positive relationship amongst staff and help each other out”**.

## Seldom

There were 15% of the workforce , who completed the survey, who felt that they seldom feel like they are part of the school community.

Comments included that they feel that they

**“Are looked down upon by education staff.”**



Other comments included:

“despite having supported delivery of a weekly drop in in 2 schools for a few years now I feel completely alienated from decision making and therefore unable to support young people’s participation in decision making in schools. We’re simply left to get on with it with changes happening on a weekly basis that impact the group that I nor my staff generally don't know about - this mirrors the done to feeling that young people experience it’s incredibly disempowering”

“[the school] treats care experienced young people differently - stigma and this includes their workers”

## Maybe

There were 5% of workforce who said that they maybe feel part of the school community. One Stakeholder commented that,

“There had been a change in leadership - there seems to be less involvement with school before summer holidays. Would need to see what it is like after the holidays.”

Another participant said:

“As a <sup>24</sup>peripatetic member of staff who is in a variety of schools within a week, it can be difficult to keep up with all that is going on in school.”

## Never

One stakeholder told us they never feel part of the school community and they said,

“engagement varies across schools”.

## When the workforce were asked if they had any other comments Here's what they told us:

Positive relationships and approachability.  
Being aware of people skills and personalities and putting people in correct positions.

Formal qualifications are not as important as gaining skills for life

Change is good

There needs to be an awareness of skills and personalities for employment

I would love to see this offer expanded to young carers who have been asking for an alternative curriculum.

It is the responsibility of everyone for care experienced young people – it shouldn't defer to the virtual head.

Within South Ayrshire Council decisions are taken that negatively impact on service delivery for our most vulnerable children and families . All decisions must include stakeholder and staff to close the gaps and ensure continuity of essential support.

## When the workforce were asked if they had any other comments Here's what they told us:

**I think it's difficult to solve everything but a step in the right direction would be everyone working in the schools having a full understanding of background circumstances and having empathetic working methods to help everyone to their fullest ability and not restricted around time and availability due to staff resources as they have the ability to stop a young person leaving school in a negative way which can impact so much for their futures.**

**Bring back the old Care & learning team**

**We need to increase the knowledge and understanding of care experience in our schools**

**I hear many people within education defer anything to do with care experience to the virtual schools head teacher which I cannot understand how can one person no matter how supportive and dynamic ever be the solution? this has to be the responsibility of everyone to have clear ownership across schools and to think about how young people are supported beyond the school day**



# Interview & Survey Questions

## Families:

Families returned 13 surveys and 3 agreed to be interviewed. Families were asked if they would like to participate in the research using a variety of sources either by interview or completing the Forms survey (Families forms survey).

The research assistant linked in with the Virtual schools welfare officers for their Summer Programme and met some families and carers who volunteered to participate.

Two families previously supported by the research assistant in a different role completed surveys.

The care experienced lead in one Academy emailed the research assistant flyer (appendix 6 p.102) to all care experienced families. One family responded and asked to be involved. Through this parent the flyer was sent out to a local parents support group attended by a number of foster carers.

Aberlour were approached at a local and national level to ask if the Research assistant could attend one of their support group meetings in South Ayrshire to discuss the research and to ask if anyone would like to be involved.

The research assistant also contacted the local branch of fosterplus to ask if the research assistants flyer could be displayed in their office or included in their newsletter.

A colleague, who has adopted two children, and facilitates a local support group for parents of adopted children extended an invitation for them to become involved in the research. No families wished to participate.

A trauma informed approach was adopted when interviewing families.<sup>25</sup> During this the Research Assistant was mindful that there is a prevalence of adverse childhood experiences/trauma among all people. Behaviour and symptoms are the result of traumatic experiences. Everyone was treated with respect and kindness and were empowered with the choice, of whether to participate. The goal of trauma informed practice is not to re-traumatise someone.



## Families Questions:

The questions asked were :

1. Do you feel part of your child's education?
2. Can you tell me the ways that you are part of your child's education -for example
  - have you taken part in school events around your child's education?
  - have you had one to one discussions with guidance staff?
  - are you in regular contact with a worker who supports your child at school?
3. How has the support .you received around your education made a difference?
4. Who provided the support and what was it they did well?
5. If you could design the best package to help your child get the best from school, what would it look like?

### **Here is what families have told us:**

Aggregated responses are the compiled information from the Interview questions and the Microsoft Forms Surveys from the families responses.

## Families - Question 1:

### Do you feel part of your child's education?

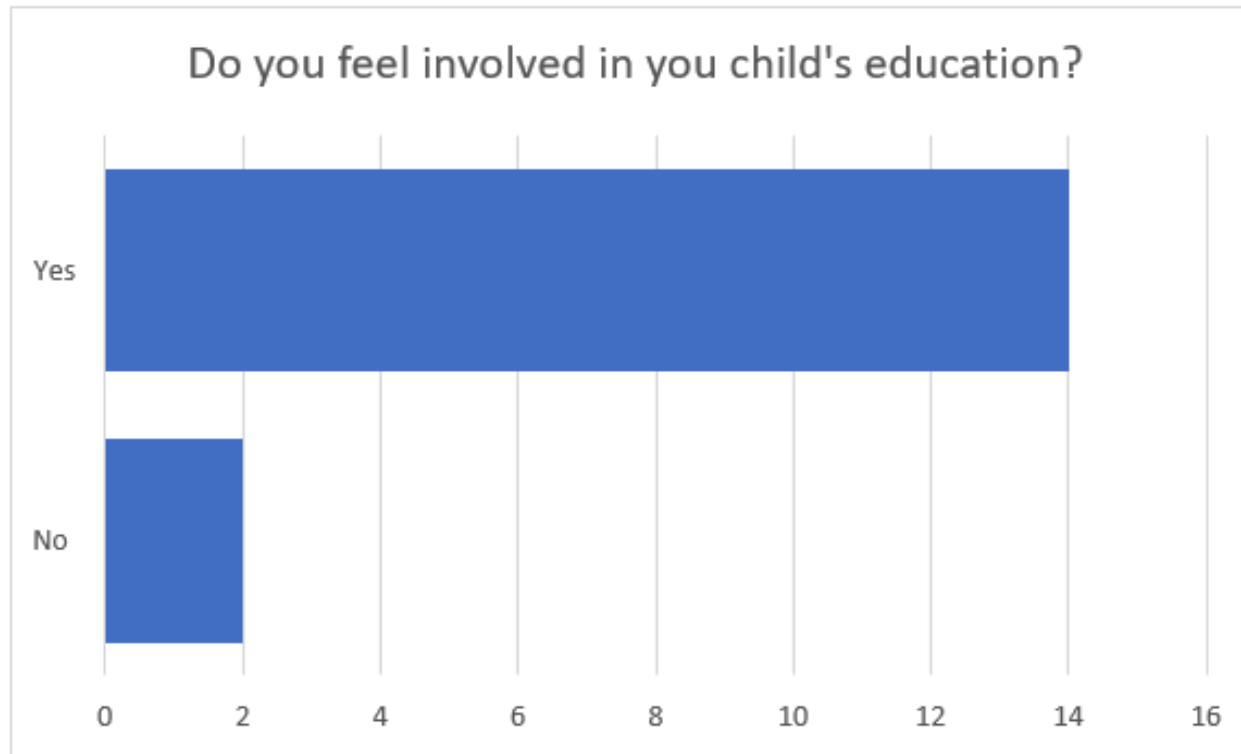


Chart 7: Aggregated responses to families Question 1

**The majority of families felt that they were involved in their child's education.**

As we spoke to more families we got greater insight into what this meant for families



## Families - Question 2:

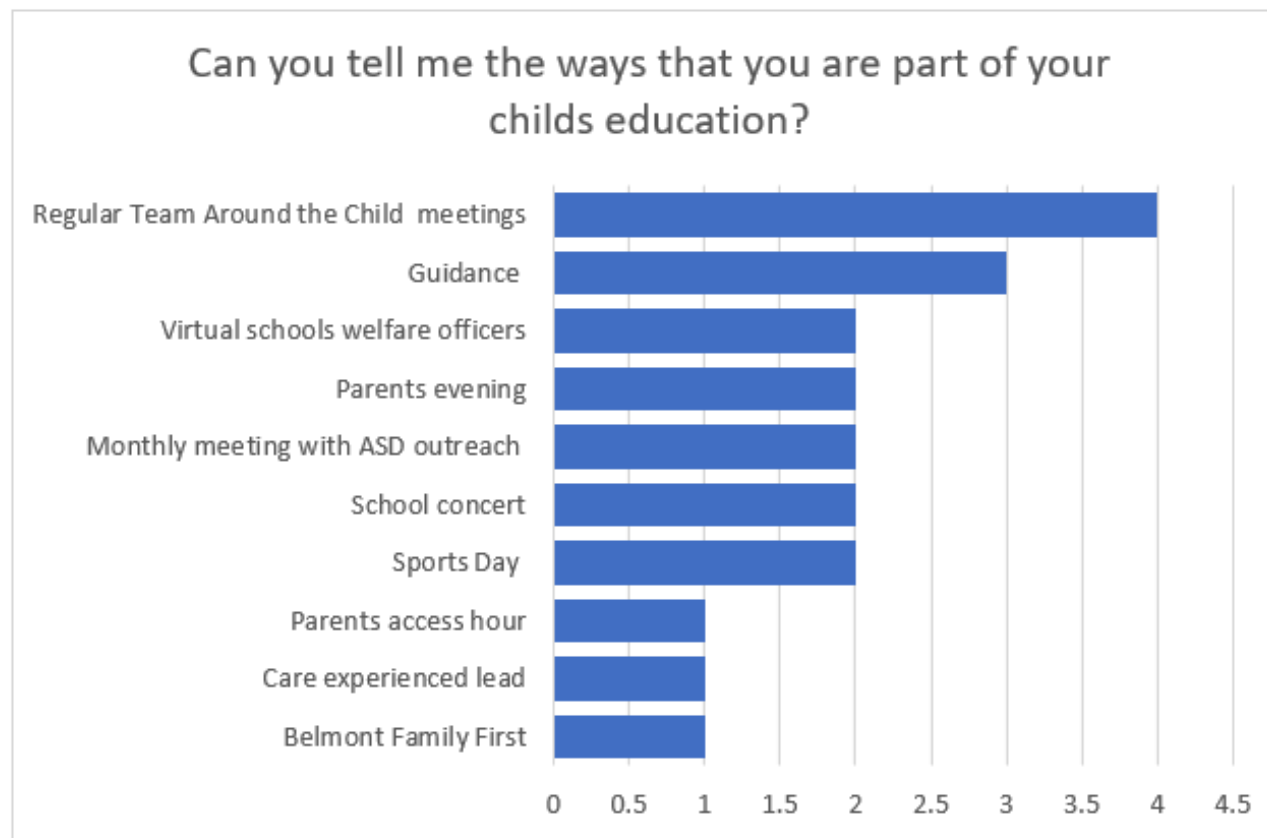
**Can you tell me the ways that you are part of your child's education -for example**

- **have you taken part in school events around your child's education?**
- **have you had one to one discussions with guidance staff?**
- **are you in regular contact with a worker who supports your child at school?**

There were a variety of ways in which families felt involved including:

- Regular Team around the child meetings.
- Contact with Guidance teachers
- The Virtual Schools Welfare Officers
- Parents evenings
- A monthly meeting with the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Outreach Team
- School concerts
- Sports day
- Parents access hour
- The school Care Experienced Lead
- Belmont Family First

**Chart 8: Aggregated responses to families - Question 2**



**Families commented that phone calls for positive things were really appreciated, not just for negative things. They felt that the Virtual schools welfare officers really helped with supporting them to school meetings and reminding them that meetings were on.**



## Families - Question 3:

### How has the support you received around your child's education made a difference?

Families reported that the type of support that has made the most difference in order of most identified were:

- Emotional support
- Ensuring agreed school supports are in place
- Assisting to sort out problems
- My child leaves the house with them

Families told us the emotional support they received that made a difference because, “she [Virtual schools welfare officer] listened to me” .

Another parent told us “She [Care experienced lead] listens to me and understands what we are going through. She is straight to the point like me”.

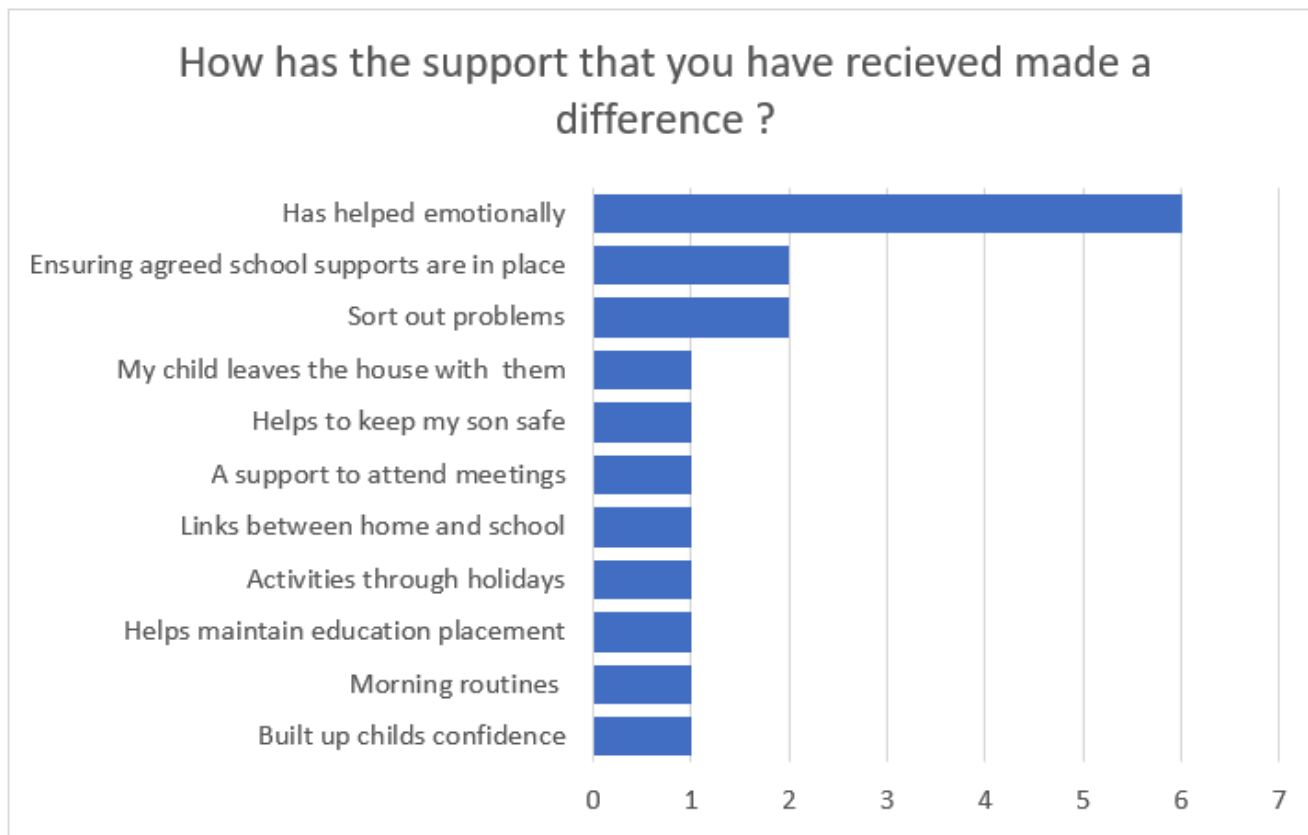
We were also told “they [Virtual schools welfare officers} helped me to meetings . I suffer from anxiety and depression. A lot of new faces makes it really hard for me”. “Yes [Virtual Schools Welfare Officer] helps with 1 to 1 emotional support and time out the house through the holidays”.

“[virtual schools welfare officer] helped me and my child cope better. If I'm having a bad day I know I can phone her.”

Four families also said that the support they received has helped to sort problems out, **“someone for them to talk to and sort out any problems in school . Built up their confidence”**. We were also told **“It has helped both myself and the school understand the reasons why my daughter is struggling at school”**.

One family told us **“This [support] has helped my daughter stay in education and enjoy school”**.

We were told by one family that the support was **“Not great, constantly having to chase agreements & supports up.”**



**Chart 9: Aggregated responses to families Question 3**

## Families - Question 4:

### Who Provided the Support and what was it they did well ?

Families identified the person who helps them the most, in ascending order :



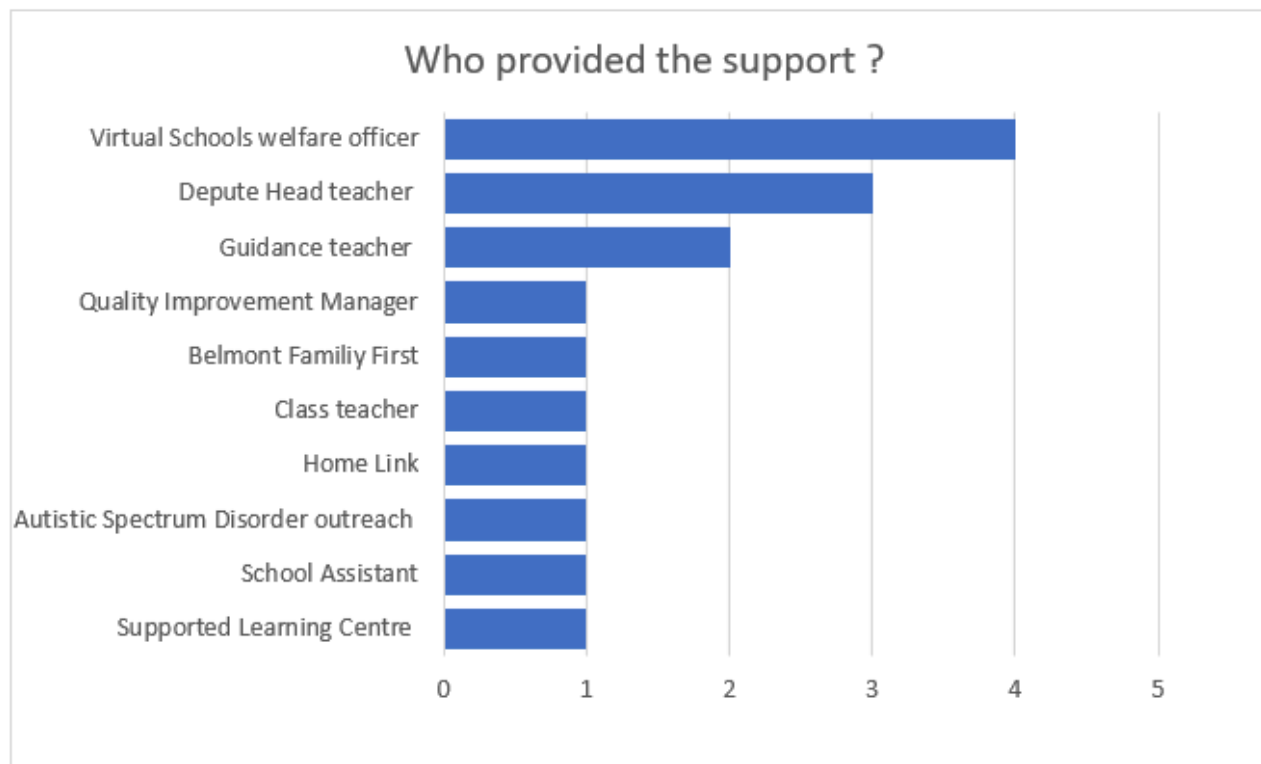
**Virtual schools welfare officer**



**Depute head teacher**



**Guidance teacher**



**Chart 10: Aggregated responses to families Question 4**



Three families described the Virtual schools Welfare Officers as **“consistent”** and offering practical support

**“They helped with homework – afterschool homework club.”**

**“He [virtual schools welfare officer] helped with routines”.**

One parent responded saying they didn’t feel that any of the support helped because he felt

**“communication was poor and I felt in limbo”.**

They went on to say, **“consistent staff that actually care”** and **“better communication”** would be an improvement.



# Families responded to Question 5 If you could design the best support package to help your child, get the best from school, what would it look like with the following answers :

Son to be safe

Pet therapy

1 to 1 support extended to interval and lunch times

Education needs to be met

Not forced into groups in subjects / classes

Virtual schools welfare officers

Check-ins

Staff who care

Not at set times each week

Consistent staff

Me and my son involved

Flexible

Nurturing space accessible at all times

Good routines

Not too many people involved

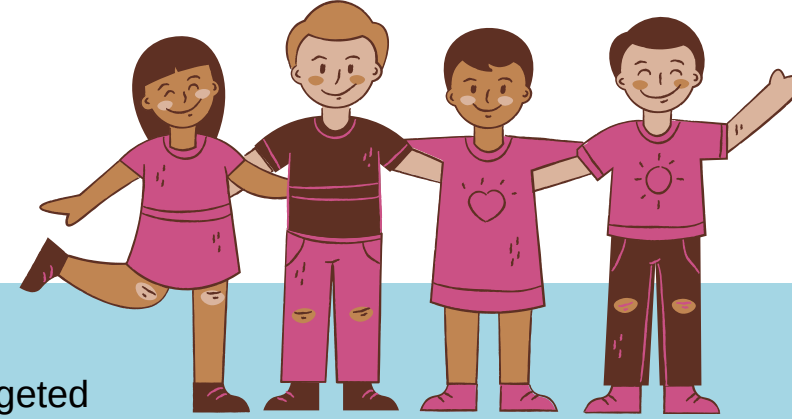
Depute involved ( 2 responses)

Good communication

Help with homework

# Interviews & Surveys

## Children & Young People



39 children and young people who completed the survey online (Children & Young People forms) and one face to face interview took place. The research assistant targeted care experienced young people through the Champions Board social media platforms, QR codes were distributed at the Champions board school lunch-time drop-ins, the Champions board drop-in at the Domain and at Summer programme events with the Virtual schools welfare officers and the Champions board.

Young people who participated chose to have a scribe to help them complete the survey.

A trauma informed approach was adopted when interviewing young people.<sup>26</sup> During this the Research Assistant was mindful that there is a prevalence of adverse childhood experiences/ trauma among all people. Behaviour and symptoms are the result of traumatic experiences. Everyone was treated with respect and kindness and were empowered with the choice, of whether to participate. The goal of trauma informed practice is not to re-traumatise someone.<sup>27</sup>

### Questions that were asked:

- 1. Are you included in decisions about your learning?**
  - How are you included in making decisions about your learning?**
- 2. Can you tell me who has helped you the most with your learning?**
- 3. What was it that they did that helped ?**
- 4. If you could design the support to help you the best from education, what would it look like**

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trauma-informed-practice-toolkit-scotland/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2018/august/trauma-informed-approaches-with-young-people-frontline-briefing-2018/>

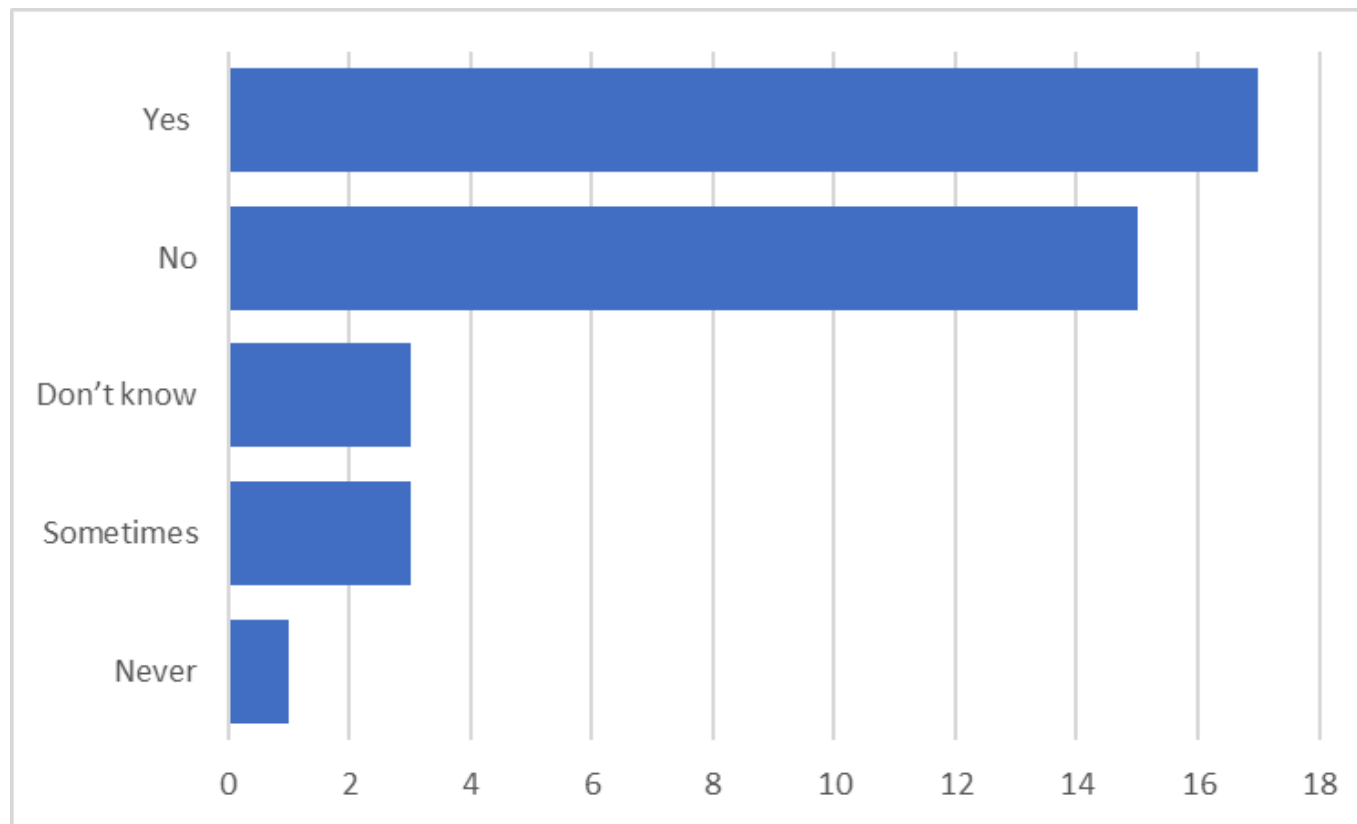
## Children & Young People Question 1:

Aggregated responses are the compiled information from the Interview questions and the Microsoft Forms Surveys from the children and young people responses.

### **Are you included in decisions about your learning?**

- **How are you included in making decisions about your learning?**

Are you included in decisions about your learning?



**Chart 11: Aggregated responses to Children & Young people Question 1**

## Here is what young people told us:

I am involved  
in my time  
table

I have regular check-  
ins with my guidance  
teacher

Meetings are  
pointless and  
boring

There are too  
many people  
involved

I go to my team  
around the child  
meetings

I get asked

What I ask for  
doesn't always  
happen

I don't go to my team  
around the child meetings  
(4 responses)

Sometimes I  
wasn't asked, I  
was told

My school  
assistant  
helped

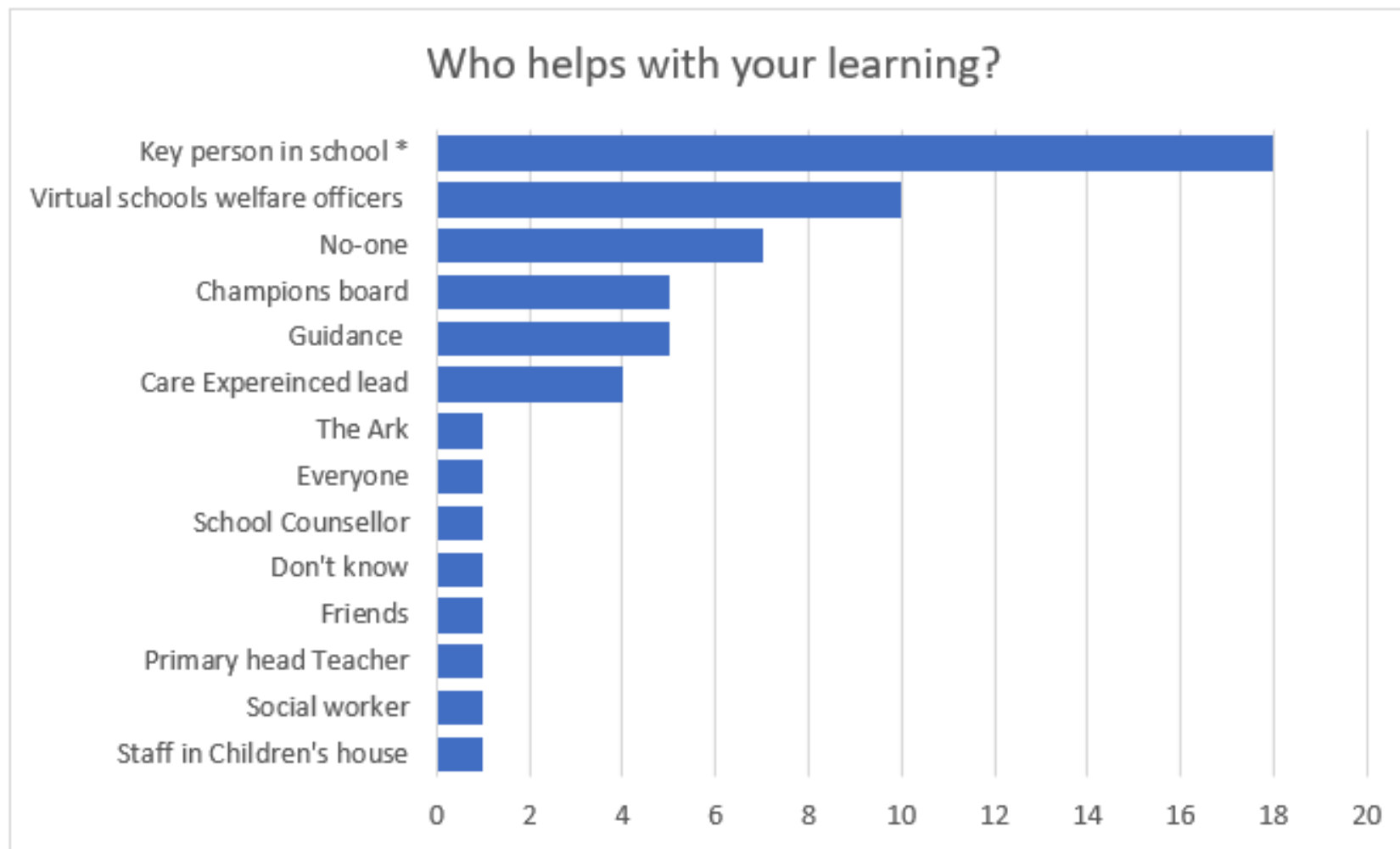
No-one understood me – I  
had undiagnosed mental  
health issues

I had a s\*\*\* time at  
school- teachers were  
a\*\*\*\*\* to me

## Children & Young People Question 2:

### Can you tell me who has helped the most with your learning?

Some children & young people chose to give more than one answer.



\* Key person in school - Depute head teacher, teacher, or school assistant.

**Chart 12: Aggregated responses to children & young people survey Question 2**

# Children & Young People Question 3:

## What was it that they did that helped?

The most common answers from children and young people were :



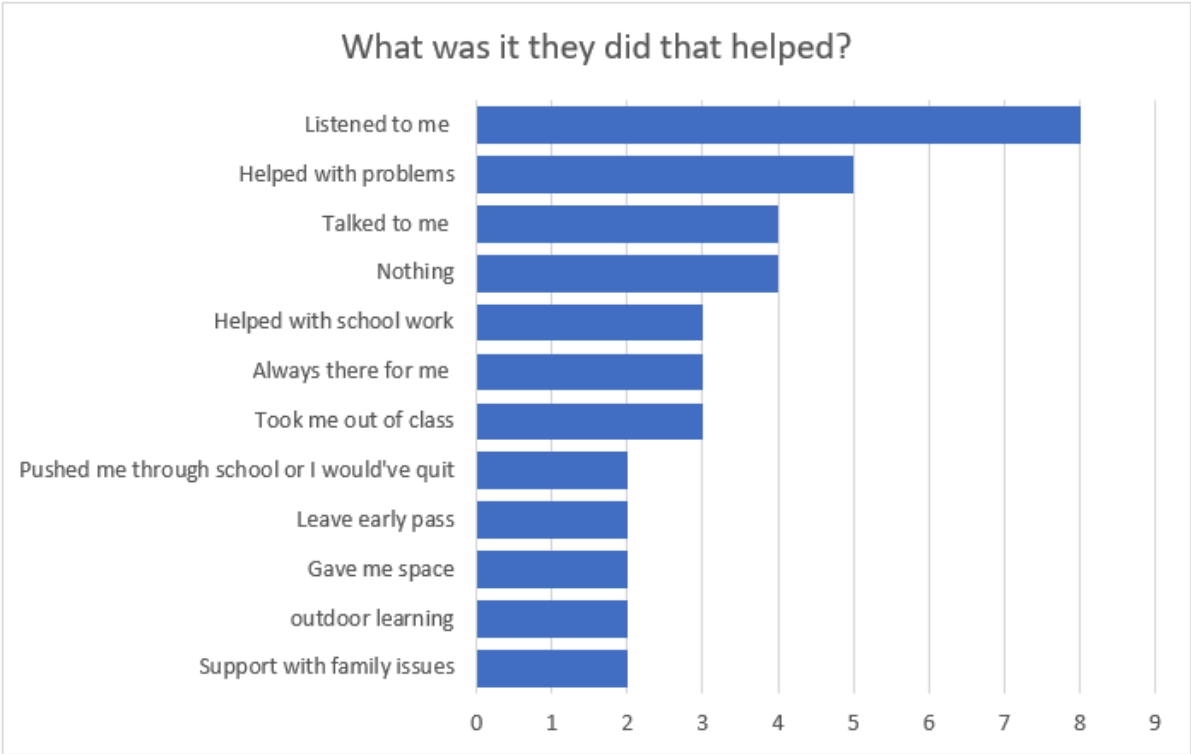
**Listened to me**



**Helped with problems**



**Talked to me**



**Chart 13: Aggregated responses to children and young people survey Question 3**

# Here is what children and young people told us - What did those who support you, do to help you in school?

**Respected me**

**We go a walk  
(3 responses)**

**Leave early  
pass**

**Nothing  
(4 responses)**

**Helped with  
school work**

**Listen to me  
(8 responses)**

**Talked to me  
(4 responses)**

**They were kind to  
me**

**Took me on  
activities**

**Organised a laptop for  
my exams**

**Took me out of class  
(3 responses)**

**Helped with problems  
(5 responses)**

**Meet me once  
per week**

**Got me a school  
assistant**



**Got me sensory toys**

**Pushed me through school or I would have quit  
(2 responses)**

**Outdoor learning**

**Always there for me  
(3 responses)**

**Calmed me down**

**No-one understood me – I had undiagnosed mental health issues**

**Met with me regularly**

**Support with family issues  
(2 responses)**

**Gave me space  
(2 responses)**

**Flexible approach**

**Go fishing**

## Children & Young People Question 4:

**If you could design the support to help you get the best from education, what would it look like?**

The most common answers from children and young people were :



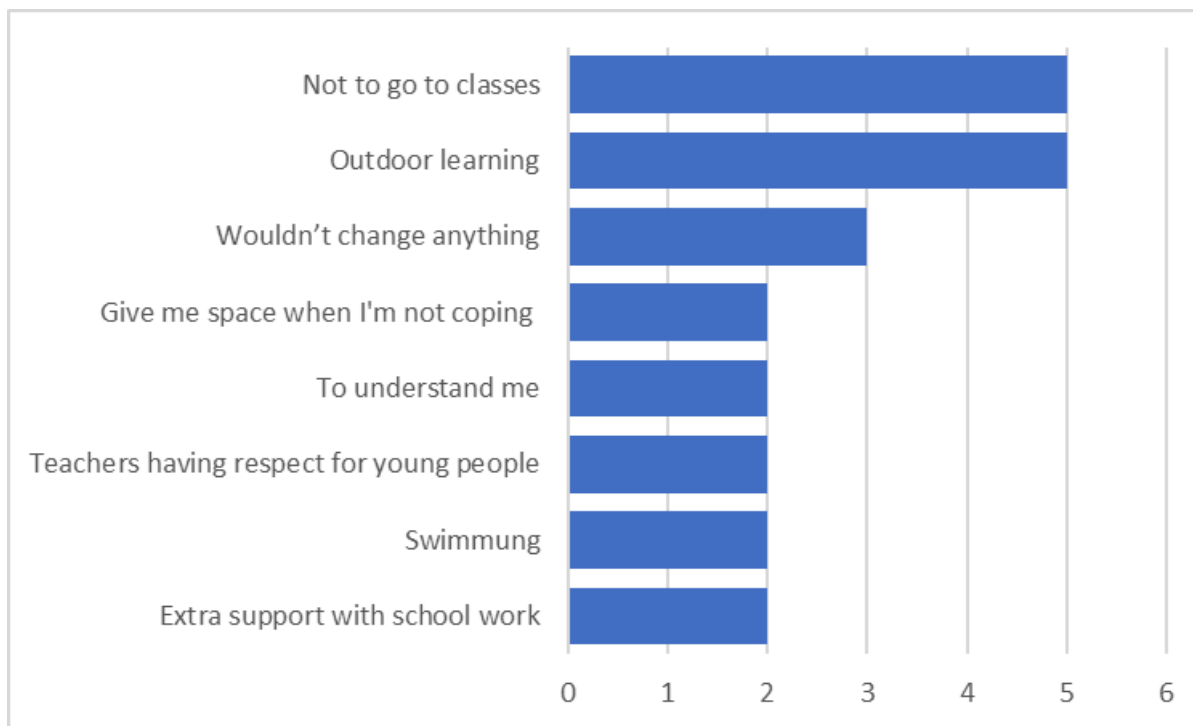
**Not to go to classes**



**Outdoor learning**



**Wouldn't change anything**



**Chart 14: Aggregated responses to children and young people survey Question 4**

## Children & Young People Question 4 (continued)

Here is what children and young people told us -

Robot that has all the answers

Better mental health support

Not to be forced to do stuff

Someone who cares - no one cares

Sensory equipment

Listen to me

More arts and crafts

Allow me to leave class if I have a pass

Better internet

Extra support with school work

To understand (2 responses)

More pets

Wouldn't change a thing (3 responses)

## Children & Young People Question 4 (continued)

Here is what children and young people told us -

**Work with animals**

**Not to go to classes  
(5 responses)**

**Swimming  
(2 responses)**

**Fire all teachers**

**Hands on  
experiences**

**Having a key person**

**Teachers to follow  
my plan**

**Space when I'm not  
coping**

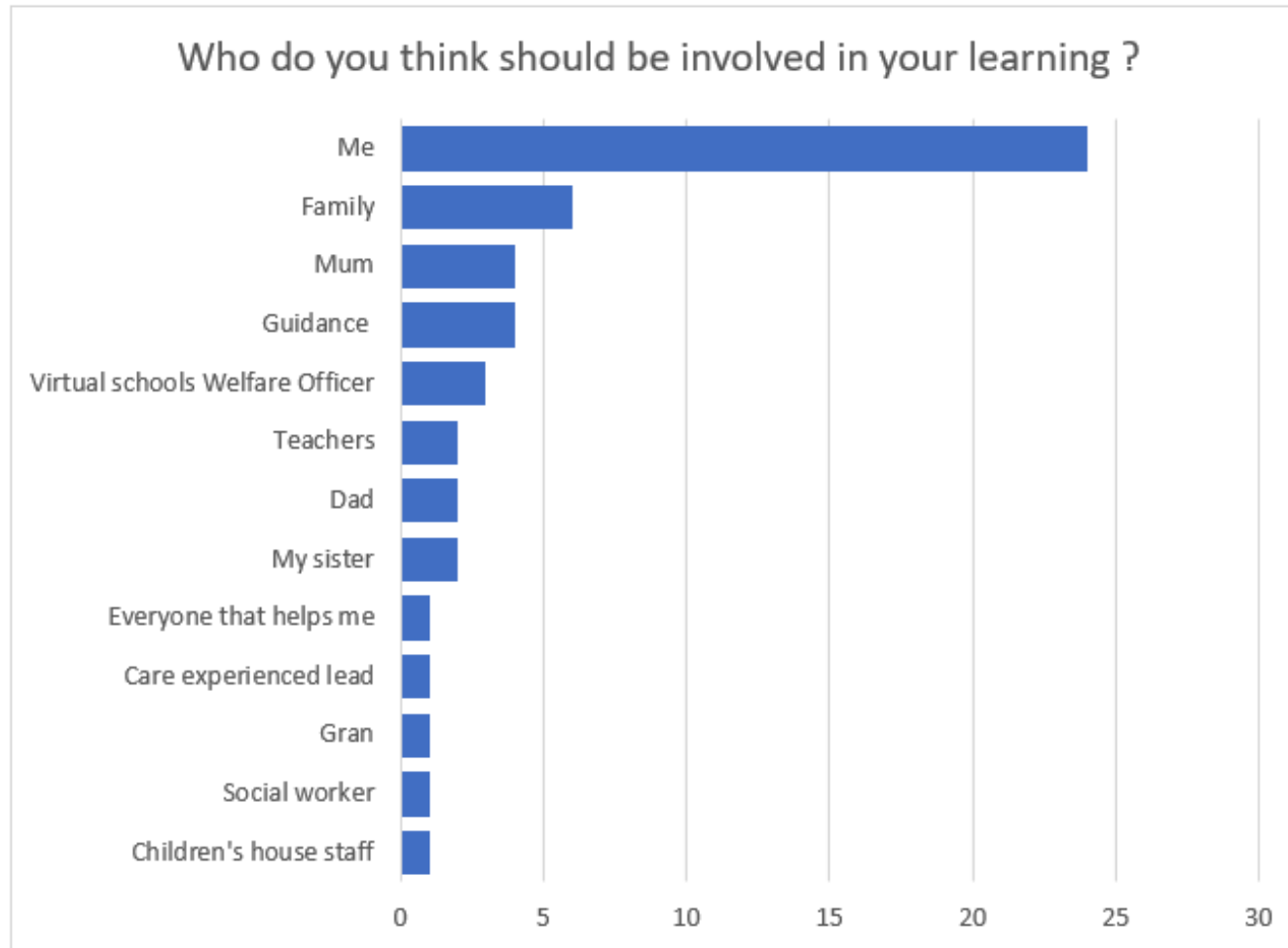
**Get paid for going  
into school**

**More work  
placements**

**Outdoor learning  
(5 responses)**

## Children & Young People Question 5:

**Who do you think should be involved in your learning?**



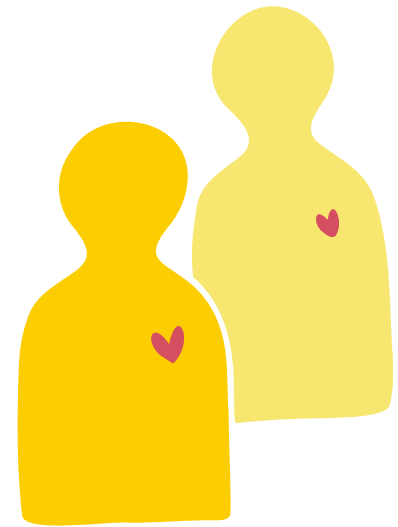
**Chart 15: Aggregated responses to children and young people survey Question 5**

# Summary

**There were a number of cross cutting themes across the three groups of workforce, families and children and young people.**

## Relationships

All three groups identified relationships as important. Healthy relationships between students, their peers and teachers are the key to belonging. When pupils feel that they are part of a community at school, they are more likely to participate in school activities, identify with school values and invest in their work.<sup>87</sup>



Positive relationships in the classroom/school that are built on trust, kindness, safety, and security are an important tool for change, linked not only to better child wellbeing but also to better educational performance.



## Choice & Voice

The workforce, children, and young people identified that care experienced pupils choosing their key person would be a good model of practice. The Promise Scotland foundation of “Voice” says that children must be listened to. That means they should be meaningfully and appropriately involved when decisions are made about their care. And it means everyone involved in their care should listen properly to them and respond to what they want and need. Scotland’s culture of decision making must be compassionate and caring. It must be focused on children, and those they trust.<sup>29</sup>



The opportunity for care experienced pupils to choose their key person was identified as a good model of practice, 15% of the workforce who responded described this as a young person choosing their key person. While young people didn’t use the same language as the workforce the importance of trusting relationships and choice in who they could go to as ‘their person’ was woven through many conversations that took place when young people were supported to complete questionnaires. 22% of young people told us about the benefits of having that trusted adult in their life.

## Trauma Informed

Each group highlighted the importance of trauma informed practice. One parent commented that they felt there was, **“definitely a trauma informed approach – in the school? Yes an approach but do you think they are trauma informed? cause I don’t think they are I think some schools are better than others”** .

We know that the prevalence of adverse and traumatic early experiences in children and young people and the associated risk to physical and mental wellbeing, and educational and social outcomes.<sup>30</sup> We need to consistently understand how early experiences impact on children and young people’s behaviour and the importance of relationships in shaping later outcomes.



29 <https://thepromise.scot/what-is-the-promise/foundations#:~:text=Voice,what%20they%20want%20and%20need.>

30 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>



# People

The three groups identified consistency in the people supporting them, their scaffolding, to be an important factor in improving outcomes for children, young people, and families.

It was also felt that there can be too many people involved with some families “a **cast of thousands**” - stakeholder. Care experienced young people in South Ayrshire have made a soundbite video about this for a recent Twilight training session for Teaching staff (November 2023) - Twilight session - too many professionals. .<sup>30</sup>



# Safe Space

The workforce, families, and young people have told us that a safe space within the school , that is not the school base , would be in a model of best practice. There are many benefits to creating “safe spaces” which include developing relationships and building on social networks.<sup>31</sup>

Many Care Experienced people do not know that they are Care Experienced, particularly those who live with family. By learning about care experience, they are able to own and embrace a care identity and access supports available to them. Providing safe spaces for Care Experienced people to come together within their communities, strengthens this sense of belonging and care identity.<sup>32</sup>

A flexible learning approach with learning opportunities outside of the classroom can also create a safe space for young people to participate in the curriculum.



30 Twilight Sessions - 3 (canva.com)

31 The importance of safe space and student voice in schools that serve minoritized learners (researchgate.net)

32 Communities That Care (education.gov.scot)



## What is going well?

### The Promise



the promise  
scotland

The Promise is welcome and conditions are ripe for an infrastructure change. The workforce have told us that:

“Change is good”

“we are getting better at stuff through the Promise”

“creating the Promise because it raised that awareness and the support was there and it focused schools to hone the support for these [Care Experienced] children .”

“I like the Promise and the teams built around that like the champs board and how education have supported it has been good for young folk because it’s been , to me there’s no the same kind of stigma where actually young people have the confidence to stand up and say this is my life experience.”

“this formality of the system that the Promise has told us it is really difficult to be a child in. How do we make it more nurturing , loving, kind, compassionate, sometimes fun , sometimes funny , sometimes emotional all that’s part of the human experience so localities, humanise, and think about our language that’s the way to move forward.”

“The Promise is great for advocating for young people with care experienced children and young people”



The cluster model of collaborative working that is being introduced across South Ayrshire in parallel to this research has brought about much optimism around the benefits of working together. Stakeholders have told us:

“we can’t keep doing what we are doing, the endless meetings, to move kids up the trajectory and there is nothing there at the top there is no other resources anywhere else. The more we can get down into schools to manage this better hopefully we will see how we go.”

“if you think you’ve got working team , multidisciplinary working teams within clusters the work is always going to be , it will have a more positive outcome, when you get to know other workers, other fellow professionals”

“If you have the multidisciplinary teams in clusters that would actually be in each other’s company and working and would benefit the children and young people you are trying to support.”



## Practice

There are pockets of lovely practice across South Ayrshire which show a depth of emotional understanding and aspirations for children and young people.

Examples discussed by families and young people include relationship based practice by the Virtual Schools Welfare officers and The Champions for Change. The virtual schools welfare officers have been described by families as “**approachable**” and “**understanding**”.

Children and young people have spoken about the qualities that make a good teacher in a recent Twilight session for South Ayrshire teachers (November 2023).<sup>33</sup>

The Care Experienced Lead at [name of school] is monitoring and tracking Care experienced pupils as well as 5 wellbeing check-ins per year.

The Care Experienced Lead in [name of school] co-facilitates the Champions for Change lunch-time drop-in on a Tuesday. They also participated in the Champions for Change Summer programme activities.

One school spoke of accredited community volunteering opportunities that they offer.

A Primary Head Teacher told us about inter-generational learning opportunities in the community and in local Care homes that pupils participate in.

Two other schools spoke of an informal cuppa and a chat drop-in that they offer families.

[33 Twilight Sessions - 1 \(canva.com\)](#)



## Dynamic leadership

There is evidence of dynamic leadership across South Ayrshire Education and Health and Social Care Partnership. This is reflected in the South Ayrshire Childrens Services Plan 2023-2026 and the South Ayrshire Parenting Promise and is a strong force for change.



# What can we improve on?

## Key person

Both the workforce and children and young people identified that being able to choose their key person is a best model of practice . We are developing a model based on children's rights and participation, where children and young people are at the heart of everything and their voices heard.

We know that strong relationships with teachers and school staff can dramatically enhance a pupil's level of motivation and therefore promote learning. Children and young people who have access to strong relationships are more academically engaged, have stronger social skills, and experience more positive behaviour.<sup>34</sup>

By empowering our Care Experienced children and young people by giving them some ownership over their key person, this in turn could positively impact on their school experience.



<sup>34</sup> [The Importance of Strong Relationships Between Teachers & Students - The Education Trust \(edtrust.org\)](https://www.edtrust.org/)



## Identifying who is Care Experienced

**There were 37% of the workforce , who responded to the survey, felt understanding care experience is a barrier to supporting our care experienced pupils. We need to look at the definitions of settings of care and the impact of legal orders and the nuances around tracking them.**

A whole school approach ensures that our care experienced children and young people are nurtured and supported in their schools by educating the entire school communities about what care experience is and creating an ethos and culture of empathy and understanding towards their care experienced pupils.

Who cares - “Communities that Care” has had a positive impact on the Renfrewshire schools that participated in the pilot programme. As a whole school approach the school staff now have a deeper understanding of what Care Experienced pupils could be communicating with their behaviour and how to respond to this communication empathically. This empathy and understanding among education staff are essential to ensuring that barriers to Care Experienced pupils achieving their academic potential are removed wherever possible and to improving overall school experiences.

School staff results showed that 95% of 1,382 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that attending the training had enhanced their understanding of what life is like for young people in care; 88% of respondents strongly agreed that attending the session would help them to include and support Care Experienced young people more effectively and 71% of respondents strongly agreed that attending the session improved their understanding of their role as a Corporate Parent.<sup>35</sup>

Pupils were asked questions on their knowledge and understanding and attitudes in relation to Care experience. The knowledge and understanding scores increased by 70% after the programme had been delivered to pupils. In terms of attitudes towards Care Experience pupil scores increased by 31% ,when evaluated at the end of the programme.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/resources-learning/communities-that-care/#:~:text=Our%20Communities%20that%20Care%20programme,of%20belonging%20within%20their%20communities.>

<sup>36</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/media/futrbfii/communities-that-care-impact-report-dec20.pdf>

# Language

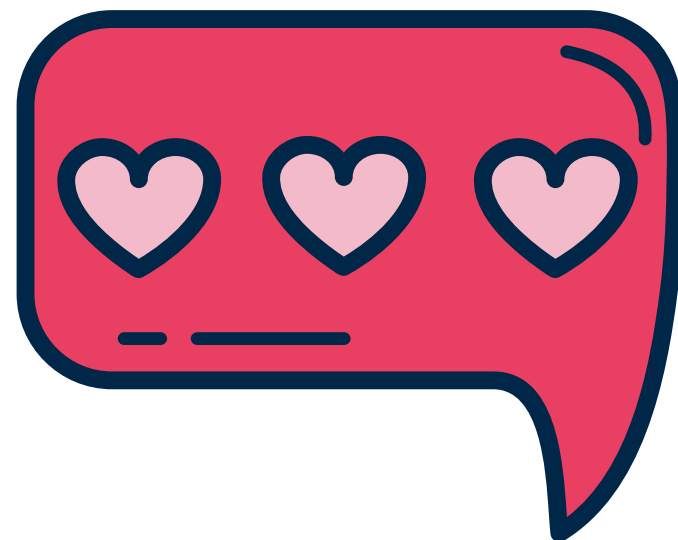
It became evident through the course of the research that more can be done to embed care based language across South Ayrshire, in both our written and spoken work. We know from the promise that ‘language creates realities’ and those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their stories and lives’. If we create a fresh, inspiring narrative then we move closer to shifting public attitudes and improving the life chances of our children, young people, and their families.

The word “LAC” (looked after child) was used by a variety of the workforce during the research. South Ayrshire Champions board, with lived experience, have supported care experienced young people to make a video around language. [Dear Corporate Parent - Letter 2 - YouTube](#). The South Ayrshire Parenting Promise also has resources around care based language [South Ayrshire Parenting Promise resources - language](#) that care experienced young people have developed.

As of 1st November 2023 South Ayrshire Council changed the language of what used to be referred to as “Looked After Children Reviews / LAC Reviews”. We have listened to our care experienced young people and implemented changes they have asked for.

## Care Experienced leads

Interviews with the workforce in phase 1 and 2 of the Research have identified variations in how the role is being carried out in South Ayrshire Schools. Some **Care Experience Leads** have different levels of contact with pupils, while others do not meet with pupils. One Care experienced lead has one designated day per week for this role. Our Care Experienced pupils have a right to a consistent approach across our South Ayrshire schools.



37 [Dear Corporate Parent - Letter 2 - YouTube](#)

38 <https://hsdp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ParentingPromiseResources>

39 [7\\_minute\\_briefing\\_-\\_Care\\_based\\_language.pdf \(south-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](#)

## Conclusion

Our Challenge in South Ayrshire was posed by the increasing number of exclusions for care experienced pupils, low attendance amongst pupils looked after at home, siloed approaches to developing targeted responses and a lack of understanding of roles across the wider school community. Within this complex system it is all too easy to lose sight of what matters to young people and their families.

Through this research we have been able to understand who our school community is and the targeted supports on offer within each school (see Targeted Support Table p75) including the variances in approach to budgets and spending between each school and differing perceptions values and attitudes within our school community.

For meaningful progress to be made we must focus on and embrace community. There appears to be a disconnect between the views of adults in the workforce and young people around a collective approach. Many young people requested opportunities to have safe spaces for pupils with care experience to gather. Strong evidence exists from young people both nationally and locally that the opportunity to meet in groups has created a sense belonging and identity that is both empowering and broadens opportunities connections and friendships for young people.

**Before I came here, I never had any friends now I have loads and I feel great!**

(Young person aged 13 speaking about being part of school-based champions board)

**Nobody else gets what I've been going through unless they've been through it themselves – how would you if you haven't been in care, what folk don't understand is that it takes a weight off your shoulders to hear that other people have had the same experience as you**

(Young person aged 15 talking about the benefits of taking part in lived experience led groups)





## Conclusion continued

Adults in the workforce expressed a fear of othering<sup>40</sup> young people with care experience or encouraging negative peer relationships through groups. There was a reluctance to explore the possibilities of creating groupwork spaces for young people with care experience and a hesitancy to move from the traditional model of adult initiated and controlled activity to a rights-based, experience led approach.

Throughout this research we heard comments from adults including care experience leads such as:

**Our young people don't want to gather in groups**

**We don't believe in setting up groups for young people in this school**

**Gathering young people with care experience can be disruptive and impact on the school day**

**I'm not keen to have a Champion's Board or similar as I don't think it suits our context.**

While this research was taking place South Ayrshire produced a new children's service plan from which a strategic decision was made to develop cluster models which showcase collaborative early support across communities which are aligned to the whole family approach. This offers an opportunity for each cluster to develop a unique place-based approach which places children and young people and their families much closer to the heart of planning in line with Communities-that-care whole school approach.

<sup>40</sup> Othering refers to the act of treating someone as though they are not part of a group and are different in some way. It involves viewing and treating a person or group of people as distinct from oneself and from most others. This process often results in marking individuals or groups as inferior or outsiders compared to the dominant social group.



# Recommendations

In response to what we have heard through the research the following six recommendations have been developed :

1

**Routinely identify all South Ayrshire Care Experienced pupils who are Looked after “Home”, “Away” or “Previously” and through care placement type across all clusters.**

2

**Develop a clear alignment to the existing pathways that support young people’s voice within and beyond education and lived experience groups such as pupil voice, South Ayrshire Champions Board and South Ayrshires Youth Council.**

3

**Develop lived experience led opportunities and groups where all pupils with care experience can use their lived experience to raise awareness and influence school policy and practice.**

3

**Explore ‘Communities That Care’ and similar whole system approaches to further increase both empathy and understanding towards care experienced pupils across South Ayrshire.**

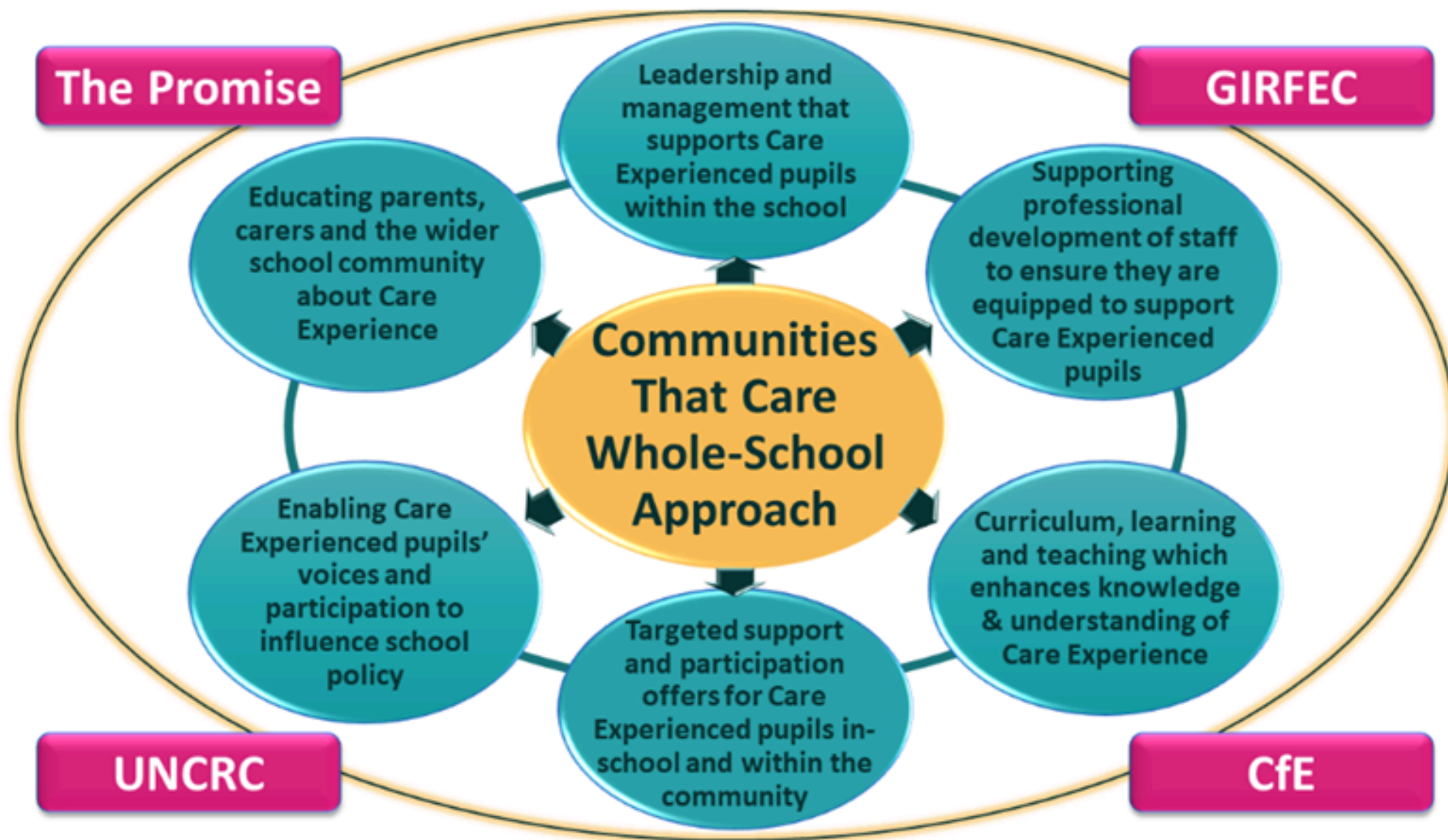
5

**Ensure consistent direction and support for care experience leads across all secondary schools including opportunities to share practice, reflect and learn through joint training.**

6

**Explore the development of a resource/ team linked to South Ayrshires cluster and Family First approach that supports young people and their families to co-produce their curriculum. This should involve creative approaches that provide alternatives to traditional class-based learning and include outdoor learning.**





Who Cares 2023



## Pen Portrait:

# BEN

**Ben wishes to own the narrative of his own story.**

**Ben is 19 years old and currently lives in Girvan with his partner, in their own tenancy.**

**He describes himself as unique, hard working and funny.**

**When was a young child he lived in East Ayrshire, where he was Looked After and he had social work involvement. Ben was in the care of his Dad at that time along with his brothers. Mum and Dad had separated and there was very little contact with Mum.**

**When the family moved to South Ayrshire there was no social work involvement and there never has been any formal involvement from a South Ayrshire Social Worker.**

**Ben attended several primary schools in South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire. His longest spell at the same primary school was at in Kilmarnock. Ben attended [school name] for more than 2 years. Ben was extremely unhappy there and he describes the school as being full of bullies.**

**Ben attended [school name] for his secondary education. He found it difficult to make friends. He felt responsible for his younger brothers and he looked after them especially his middle brother. Ben saw relationships as a threat.**

## Pen Portrait:

# BEN

While at [school name] he began to trust [teacher] and he would use her room and her as a support when things were getting difficult in wider school.

Ben describes his time at [school name] as being challenging. He says that he was deeply unhappy, apart from the one day per week where he spent the full lunch break in a group ,with other care experienced young people, The Champs group. Ben felt happy in the group and he felt a sense of belonging.

Bens attendance at school was sporadic.

Despite the strong relationship with [teacher name] Ben stopped attending school when he was 15. When his relationship with his dad broke down and he moved to live with his mum in a different part of South Ayrshire.

Things did not last long despite loving his mum Ben found himself with nowhere to stay.

For a period he sofa surfed with his girlfriend's house in North Ayrshire and he was declared homeless in North Ayrshire.

Ben lived in a hostel with his girlfriend in North Ayrshire during lockdown. South Ayrshire champs board provided them with food parcels and emotional support.

## Pen Portrait:

# BEN

**Ben was given a house with his girlfriend, who was pregnant at this time, they went on to have a baby girl.**

**Ben got some supports in place in North Ayrshire but still linked in with South Ayrshire Champs board who he trusted, and he came to the groups when they restarted, with his girlfriend and baby.**

**Ben had episodes of poor mental health, self-harm, and hopelessness. He also lost male friends to suicide. He is currently being assessed for bipolar disorder.**

**Ben's relationships with his brothers became strained because contact was not regular. His contact with Dad was sporadic as well.**

**Ben wanted to be in the South Ayrshire area to be closer to his networks that surrounded him.**

**Ben separated from his girlfriend, and he came back to South Ayrshire. He went back to stay with his Mum and then started sofa surfing again when this broke down.**

**Ben was then in a hostel in South Ayrshire, and then temporary furnished accommodation. It was at this point he met his current partner.**

## Pen Portrait:

# BEN

There have been attempts by Thriving Communities, Employability and Skills to link Ben in with different services, but this has proved challenging as he has moved between different local authorities and different localities across South Ayrshire.

Despite not having contact with his daughter Ben was connected with the family team rather than the Care experienced Employability and skills team.

Ben has had employment for short periods of time but while living in homeless accommodation Ben had no fixed address and he was ashamed and deeply impacted by the stigma surrounding homelessness. He was also prohibited by the fear of having to pay a high rent in temporary furnished accommodation.

Ben hopes for the future that he can provide for his children and live a happy, healthy life.



## Targeted Support:

As an added request from the last insight group meeting the Research Assistant was asked to map things schools are using in the curriculum for Care Experienced Young People. The table below (Table 1) outlines examples of what schools have told us.

\* indicates a cost to the school

**Table 1: Examples of targeted support in South Ayrshire Council Schools**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>SERVICE</b>
Carrick Academy	Girvan Youth Trust* Street league Thriving communities Pet therapy ( on hold) School Counsellor* Penumbra Pet days – young people bring pets in Parents cuppa and chat Maybole regeneration project Carrick Centre SDS advisor supporting knitting groupz





SCHOOL	SERVICE
Wallacetown Nursery	<p>Speech and language  Baby massage  Cooking with your child  PEEP  Bookbug  STEM parent and child  Spotty Zebra's drop-ins  Working for Wallacetown  Barnardo's  Autism Outreach  Thriving communities  Educational psychologist  Autism outreach  OT  Nurture strategies e.g. colour monster restorative practices and Dr Chris Moore  A-Z nurture</p>
Marr College	<p>Marie Forester * previously too expensive now (look outside the class)  Thriving communities  Penumbra  Barnados  Aberlour  Barista+Travel and tourism award  Nico coffee train staff to deliver barista training  College previously supported nails and beauty etc stopped this year  First aid  Level 6 leadership no exam  Level 6 financial services no exam  Level 5 health sector – supported by NHS services- no exam</p>

Braehead Primary School	<p>Thriving communities  Inter-generational work – community groups and Care homes.  Ayr Racecourse  Asda  Tesco  Active schools  Ayr united  Whitletts Vics  Women’s aid  Lochside community Centre  Heart start</p>
Girvan Primary School	<p>The Iris Ayr*  Sports Development Assistant*  Education Welfare Officer *</p>
Forehill Primary School	<p>The Little Art School</p>
Invergarven - Specialist provision	<p>Girvan Youth Trust After school club sessions P5-S4* (pay for materials used.  RDA  Horse riding lessons , lessons each week for targeted pupils.*  Yoga each week from Pauline Brennan @ Yogable – weekly sessions January -  March 2024 this sessions.*  Carrick Rugby sessions supplemented for al pupils P2-S4.*  Girvan Youth Trust After school club P5-S4 ( Pay for the materials).*</p>

Dalmilling Primary School	Education Welfare officer* Barnados – 1 day per week* Additional Depute Head Teacher previous session *
Monkton Primary School	Community council events & allotment
Kindcaidston Primary School	5 minute literacy/numeracy box* one off payment Seasons for Growth Accelerated reader* annual subscription Over the rainbow counselling * PEF funded Little Stars Art School Talk boost Paths
Ayr Academy	S4 skills academy – Ayr college Look outside the Classroom* grant funded Active schools Volunteering opportunities at Dalmilling church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teddy bear tots</li> <li>• Soup kitchen</li> </ul> Campus police officer Dolphin house The Ark Room 60- previously Traverse Theatre Penumbra School counsellor Barnados

<p>Ayr Academy continued</p>	<p>Champions for Change  Young Carers  Yoga*  In house staff skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhd support group</li> <li>• CBT re school attendance</li> </ul> <p>ASD outreach – 2 social groups per week  Welfare Officers x 3 in school*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support skills academy</li> <li>• Seasons for growth</li> </ul> <p>Youth Worker*- finished last term , no new funding  Thriving Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domain</li> </ul>
<p>St John's Primary School</p>	<p>Speech &amp; language  Barnados'</p>
<p>Grammar Primary School</p>	<p>Barnados  Aberlour</p>
<p>Dundonald Primary School</p>	<p>Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HT&amp; DHT doing home visits</li> </ul> <p>Thriving communities  Barnados  Active schools  Dundonald church  Castle &amp; Visitor centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth group</li> </ul> <p>Parents drop-in  The exchange- counselling * paid by SAC</p>

Barr Primary School	No current Care Experienced pupils
Holmston Primary School	<p>No current Care Experienced pupils</p> <p>In the past Holmston have used</p> <p>Nurture groups</p> <p>Seasons for Growth</p> <p>Aberlour</p> <p>Barnados</p>
Kincase Primary School	<p>Rainbow Room ( Nurture)- No direct cost but staffing is managed very carefully to accommodate this.</p> <p>Active Schools co-ordinator- Literacy support using Football themed books and a game of football to increase engagement in literacy.</p>
Maidens/Fisherton Primary School	<p>Support with personal care within school (school assistant) – daily before lunch and when required</p> <p>Encourage development of gross motor skills through regular outdoor learning experiences</p> <p>Emotion Coaching strategies to support in managing emotions.</p> <p>Use of a personal communication folder to support in communicating feelings, wants and needs including a 'Now, Next' board.</p> <p>Regular check-ins with – visual to use to show how they are feeling.</p> <p>Adults will model appropriate sentences when pupil is struggling.</p> <p>Small group teaching inputs so the pupil feels confident in contributing within class.</p> <p>Additional support for learning teacher small, targeted group inputs once per week.</p> <p>School Assistant 1:1 or 1:2 at least 3 times per week</p> <p>Flashcards to support the learning of common/tricky words</p>

Maidens/Fisherton Primary School	<p>Boxall profile completion with Nurture input or sessions to support areas highlighted from the Boxall.</p> <p>We ensure that our Care experienced pupils attend at least one after school activity per term and we pay the transport costs if parents are unable to transport.</p>
Sacred Heart Primary School	No current Care Experienced pupils
Annbank Primary School	<p>Offered a place at our Breakfast Club * PEF funded</p> <p>Allocated School Assistant Support to support learning and behaviour if needed* - this comes from our School Assistant allocation/ PEF funded School Assistants.</p> <p>Weekly slots in our Nurture Base with our Nurture Teacher - if needed</p> <p>Offered an IT device (Laptops) to support Home Learning - this was funded by South Ayrshire Council.</p>



## Appendix 1:

### South Ayrshire Promise 10 Improvement Areas

**1**

**South Ayrshire's workforce and commissioned services will have a comprehensive understanding of the promise including how to embed the promise values in their approach**

**2**

**Services and provision will be designed on the basis of need and with clear data, rather than on an acceptance of how the system has always operated.**

**3**

**Decisions made across South Ayrshire are underpinned by Children's rights and there will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children's rights and reflects equal protection legislation.**

**4**

**Trauma informed and nurture approaches are standard and widespread practice across South Ayrshire**

**5**

**South Ayrshire recognises that 'language creates realities' those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their own lives**



## Appendix 1:

**6**

**10 principles of intensive family support are embedded into the practice (planning, commissioning and delivery) across all of South Ayrshire's directorates and commissioned services**

**7**

**There must be significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for South Ayrshires children, families and communities.**

**8**

**South Ayrshire must support the workforce to contribute to a broader understanding of risk. South Ayrshire must understand, through its people and structures, the risk of children not having loving supportive relationships and regular childhood and teenage experiences.**

**9**

**A framework of support will be in place to ensure people involved in the care of care experienced children and young people feel valued, encouraged and have supportive relationships for reflection with high quality supervision and environmental conditions.**

**10**

**Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.**





## **Our responsibility to our children who are looked after or care experienced**

### **Principles:**

#### **Health and Social Care Standards**

- 1.6** - I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential
- 1.9** - I am recognised as an expert in my own experiences, needs and wishes.
- 1.14** - My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment.
- 1.27** - I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.
- 1.29** - I am supported to be emotionally resilient, have a strong sense of my own identity and wellbeing, and address any experiences of trauma or neglect.
- 3.1** - I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people's attention.
- 3.4** - I am confident that the right people are fully informed about my past, including my health and care experience, and any impact this has on me.
- 3.8** - I can build a trusting relationship with the person supporting and caring for me in a way that we both feel comfortable with.
- 3.10** - As a child or young person I feel valued, loved, and secure.



### Wellbeing Indicator (SHANARRI)

**Nurtured** – I am supported and nurtured to grow and develop in all aspects of my development.

**Achieving** – I am able to work towards fulfilling my potential and encouraged by practitioners who have high expectations and ambitions for me.

**Respected** – My personal experiences are acknowledged and my responses to these considered when my care is planned and provided.

**Included** – Barriers to my participation are identified and addressed to ensure I am included in a wide range of experiences on offer to me.

### UNCRC

**Article 2** - The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities, or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

**Article 3** - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

**Article 28** - Every child has the right to an education.

**Article 29** - Education must develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

**Article 39** - Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect, and social life.



## SSSC Codes of Practice

- 1.1 - Treat each person as an individual
- 2.4 - Be reliable and dependable

## Aim of Procedure

As a Corporate Parent, South Ayrshire Council is committed to keep the promise to achieve the best for children and young people who are care experienced. Wallacetown Early Years Centre, as part of South Ayrshire Council's Education Services has a duty to ensure that care experienced children receive additional care, nurture, and attention to achieve the best in life.

## Terms

- Care experienced' refers to anyone who is currently in care, or anyone who is from a looked-after background or who has been in care at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after by a local authority.
- Corporate parents are 'agencies and organisations of the state' who have statutory duties to collaborate with each other in upholding the rights and securing the wellbeing of 'looked after children'.
- Corporate parenting is, 'An organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguarding the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and education development is promoted' (Scottish Government, 2015).
- A care leaver is a young person who ceased to be looked after on, or at any time after, their sixteenth birthday.



### The Five Foundations which underpin the promise are:

- Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focused on children and those they trust
- Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties that get in the way.
- The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.
- 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 must be ready and responsive when it is required.





### Procedures:

- All staff undertaking training in attachment, nurture, and trauma awareness.
- Staff are supported to provide nurturing interactions for all children in their care
- All staff have a working knowledge of GIRFEC and their responsibilities in prioritising children's wellbeing
- All children and families are welcomed into the centre and staff will focus on developing positive relationships with all who access the centre
- The centre will continue to develop its use of nurture principles to ensure that all children receive a high level of nurturing care and support in their lives
- The UNCRC is a fundamental part of the work at Wallacetown EYC. We will work to ensure all children understand their rights and that the adults around them uphold these rights.
- Children who are on the edge of care, are in care, or are care experienced will have experienced disrupted relationships and change for a wide variety of reasons which may not always be known by staff. Children in situations such as these will require additional nurture, care, and support. Staff are required to have an awareness of the impact of these areas on children and ensure they reflect on their approaches to ensure they are able to meet children's relationship needs.
- Where a child becomes care experienced during their time at Wallacetown the child's key worker will meet with the new carer to discuss care plan targets and any supports required.
- All carers including kinship and foster carers are encouraged to attend family groups at the centre (e.g. PEEP, cooking, Bookbug) to ensure they are part of the centre community.



### Edge of Care:

- Relationships are key to ensure the best for all children. Staff will work to ensure that they have a strong positive relationship with all children and families
- The centre has well developed connections with multi-agency teams to access support for families at the earliest possible opportunity
- Pupil support procedures are in place to ensure that any potential risks to a child or family's safety or wellbeing are identified quickly.
- Staff will update the pupil support co-ordinator in the first instance, or centre manager in a timeous manner of any wellbeing concerns they have for a child
- Ayrshare and pastoral notes are used to record any significant information regarding a child's wellbeing
- Child protection procedures are in place (see policy)
- The centre will develop a poverty proofing policy to ensure that the financial impact of the school day is minimised for families to reduce any potential stresses on family life





# Appendix 3

## Research Flyer

**Hi I'm Sheena -**  
**Research Assistant**



**We are keen to hear the views  
of care experienced parents  
and their children**

**What we would like to do  
is to find out about  
your experiences at  
schools in South Ayrshire**

**If you would be interested in finding out more  
or would like to take part contact: Sheena Christie  
[sheena.christie2@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:sheena.christie2@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07972658476**





## Appendix 4

# Carmel Jacobs – We Care in the classroom Edinburgh Council

### **Supporting Care Experienced children and young people in the classroom:**

*In February 2020 The Promise was published. Scotland has made a Promise to better the life experiences and outcomes of Care Experienced (Care Ex.) people. The Promise wants schools to have high ambition for Care Ex. children and young people, and to ensure they have all they need to thrive.*

*The We Matter Team in Edinburgh want to help teachers in schools to understand and meet the needs of their Care Ex. pupils. This project offers interested class teachers the opportunity to access bespoke CPD focused on the impact of Care in the classroom, and tailored coaching to reflect on practice when supporting Care Ex. pupils.*

**Who is this for:** Each participating school will identify up to three class teachers who want to volunteer to take part in this project.

**What will this involve:** Participating teachers will attend a 2-hour introductory training session which can be arranged online or in person. A facilitator for this project will then visit in school, observe in class, and facilitate a coaching session. This session will aim to highlight positive practice and identify additional strategies/approaches to support Care Ex. pupils. An action plan will be developed detailing new strategies to implement in class. Strategies must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, measurable, and time-bound). Implementation and evaluation plans will be included in the action plan. Participants will trial their action plan for 6 weeks. They will have a phone consultation with the We Matter Team mid-way. They will meet with the We Matter Team after 6 weeks to evaluate impact and plan next steps.

**What next:** Participating teachers will be supported to evaluate impact as part of a small test of change. They will identify what works and how it works. The evaluation of strategies will be used to develop a resource, outlining classroom strategies for Care Exp. pupils. Participants will share their learning and the resource with the wider school team.

## Appendix 5

### Carmel Jacobs – We Care in the classroom Edinburgh Council

#### Example Timeline:

<b>Date: all dates tbc</b>	<b>Action:</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> September 4pm - 6pm</b>	2-hour training session online or in person
Week commencing October 2 <sup>nd</sup>	We Matter Team meeting in school - observation and coaching session (action plan developed - approximately 2 hours)
Week commencing Oct 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Phone consultation to assess progress of action plan (approximately 1 hour)
Week commencing November 6 <sup>th</sup>	We Matter Team meeting in school - evaluation of impact and discussion about next steps (approximately 1 hour)
Week commencing November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Participants feed back to school team
Ongoing beyond project - completed by We Matter Team.	Practice resource finalised and shared with participating schools



## Appendix 6

### Keeping the Promise Accreditation

#### Keeping the Promise Award Programme

#### Information and Summary Guidance

This professional learning was originally developed by North Lanarkshire Council in response to The Promise. The West Partnership Promise Working Group, Education Scotland, and CELCIS have since updated the original resources to create an accessible resource for all Local Authorities.

The resources have been designed to be used in any educational settings and to be delivered flexibly. For example as:

- Whole establishment setting - In-Service training or as a collegiate activity
- Personal professional learning for individuals as part of their CLPL/PRD/PDR
- Induction Training for new staff

#### **Purpose**

To support practitioners in developing their awareness and understanding of The Promise - the commitment made by the Scottish Government to improving the educational experiences and outcomes for Scotland's care experienced children and young people.

# Appendix 7

## Keeping the Promise Accreditation

### Aims

- To raise awareness and understanding of The Promise – the commitments made around education to support inclusion and improve outcomes
- To highlight the particular needs of our care experienced learners including some of the challenges they face which impacts on their access and engagement in learning
- To highlight our responsibilities under The Promise – what we need to do as “good parents” to ensure the best for our care experienced learners
- To support our workforce to consider how they can contribute to positive changes both individually and collectively
- To provide formal recognition for individuals and settings who successfully complete this professional learning

### Key principles

- This professional learning (PL) is for ALL staff and there is an expectation that over time ALL staff complete it (including office, catering, and janitorial staff)
- This PL should be a mandatory part of induction training for new staff
- The PL should be regularly refreshed for all staff - at least every three years (to include refreshed data and resources)

# Appendix 7

## Keeping the Promise Accreditation

### Structure

The course consists of:

- Two professional learning sessions (1-1.5 hours each)
- National context, local data, and our responsibilities & duties
- Understanding and Supporting Care Experienced Children and Young People
- An E-learning module for all participants to include a summative quiz.

### Outcome

1. Participants receive a professional learning I Promise Award on completion of the course.
2. Educational settings receive a professional learning We Promise Award when:
  - all staff have participated in or viewed the two presentations: and
  - a minimum of 70% of staff have successfully completed the e-learning module.
3. Educational settings receive a Keeping the Promise Award when they can demonstrate they are making a positive difference to care experienced children and young people in terms of their learning experiences or their educational outcomes. The Promise In Education Framework could be useful in collating evidence for the Award. For more information please contact Janine McCullough at Education Scotland.  
[Janine.mccullough@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:Janine.mccullough@educationscotland.gov.scot)

**Please note:** although created for the education workforce with a little adaptation this professional learning could also be used in other children's services settings.

# References

<https://thepromise.scot/>

A commitment by the Scottish Government to improve the lives of care experienced children and young people.

<https://thepromise.scot/resources/2023/promise-oversight-board-report-two.pdf>

The Promise Oversight Board reports on progress that Scotland is making to #KeepThePromise.

[https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/4045/South-Ayrshire-Parenting-Promise-2021-2030/pdf/2022\\_01\\_28\\_South\\_Ayrshires\\_Parenting\\_Promise\\_FINAL.pdf?m=637812254157270000](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/4045/South-Ayrshire-Parenting-Promise-2021-2030/pdf/2022_01_28_South_Ayrshires_Parenting_Promise_FINAL.pdf?m=637812254157270000)

South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise is a plan written for those who are care experienced and details what you can expect of us as your Corporate Parents. As Corporate Parents, under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, it is our role to make sure that our attention and resources are focused on upholding the rights, safeguarding, and promoting the wellbeing of South Ayrshire's 'looked after children' and 'care leavers'.

Who Care's Communities that care impact report

<https://education.gov.scot/media/futfrbfi/-that-care-impact-report-dec20.pdf>

# References

[https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/10203/South-Ayrshire-Children-and-Young-People-s-Services-Plan-2023-2026/pdf/South\\_Ayrshire\\_Children\\_and\\_Young\\_Peoples\\_Services\\_Plan\\_2023-2026.pdf?m=638322037862570000](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/10203/South-Ayrshire-Children-and-Young-People-s-Services-Plan-2023-2026/pdf/South_Ayrshire_Children_and_Young_Peoples_Services_Plan_2023-2026.pdf?m=638322037862570000)

The Children and Young Peoples services plan shares our journey in South Ayrshire to place families at the heart of everything that we do, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. Demonstrating our commitment to work together, the six key priorities within the plan are informed by consultation with our children and young people, Children's Services partners, and practitioners in South Ayrshire. Using our local data and through further consultation, a detailed Action Plan will be created for each priority area to inform improvement and measure progress.

[South Ayrshire Council Parenting Promise Performance Report 2022-2023](#)

Exclusion and attendance data for Care Experienced pupils

[https://south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/10257/Education-Standards-and-Quality-report-2022-23-V4-Sept2023-final/pdf/Education\\_Standards\\_and\\_Quality\\_report\\_2022\\_23\\_V4\\_Sept2023\\_final.pdf?m=638332419019830000](https://south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/10257/Education-Standards-and-Quality-report-2022-23-V4-Sept2023-final/pdf/Education_Standards_and_Quality_report_2022_23_V4_Sept2023_final.pdf?m=638332419019830000)

Breakdown of primary and secondary care experienced pupils exclusion and attendance data.

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/inc83-nurture-adverse-childhood-experiences-and-trauma-informed-practice/>

Nurture, adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed approaches practice in Scotland.

# References

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338751170\\_Mixed\\_Methods\\_Research\\_An\\_Overview\\_for\\_Beginner\\_Researchers](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338751170_Mixed_Methods_Research_An_Overview_for_Beginner_Researchers)

Advantages on using mixed method data collection.

<https://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/equality-diversity/care-experienced/care-experienced.aspx>

Definition of care experience for the purpose of the report

<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FRAJ8071-Robertson-Childrens-Care-in-Scotland-200424.pdf>

How to talk about care experience in Scotland – Each and Every Child

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

The United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was created to protect the rights of children. It is a very specific list of all the things children need.

The UNCRC explains that all children everywhere have the same human rights as adults, as well as extra rights that they need so that they can learn, grow, play, develop and reach their full potential.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trauma-informed-practice-toolkit-scotland/>

The Trauma Informed Practice Toolkit has been developed to further support Scotland's workforce with clear, tangible examples of where trauma informed practice has been successfully embedded across different sectors and how that learning can be applied in a range of contexts.



# References

<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2018/august/trauma-informed-approaches-with-young-people-frontline-briefing-2018/>

An introduction to trauma research for practitioners working with young people whose experiences (either earlier in their childhood and/or in the present) may lead to complex traumatic responses across the lifespan.

<https://edtrust.org/resource/the-importance-of-strong-relationships/>

The importance and benefits of strong relationships within schools between adults and pupils.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/sense-belonging/202201/the-power-relationships-in-schools>

The importance of relationships in schools.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>

ACEs and trauma can have a significant negative impact on people's lives. However, such experiences should not be seen as placing limits on someone's aspirations and achievements. Individuals' experience of and response to adversity and trauma depends on a range of factors, including the existence of supportive relationships, positive community experiences, access to financial resources and other forms of support. It's therefore not possible to determine an individual's longer-term outcomes (like their health or education) based on the number of ACEs they have experienced.

# References

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is our commitment to provide all children, young people, and their families with the right support at the right time. This is so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential.

[https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/Policies/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20\(Scotland\)%20Act%202014%20Notes%20and%20Guidance%20to%20the%20Named%20Person%20Legislation.pdf](https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/Policies/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20(Scotland)%20Act%202014%20Notes%20and%20Guidance%20to%20the%20Named%20Person%20Legislation.pdf)

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 guidelines

[Twilight Sessions - 1 \(canva.com\)](#)

South Ayrshire Champions for Change soundbite for Teachers twilight training session on “ Tell me about your teachers”.

[Twilight Sessions - 3 \(canva.com\)](#)

South Ayrshire Champions for Change soundbite for Teachers twilight training session on “ Too many professionals in my life”.

[Dear Corporate Parent - Letter 2 - YouTube](#)

Short video on the language Care Experienced children and young people would like corporate parents to use.

## References

<https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ParentingPromiseResources>

South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise Video on the use of language.

[https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/10403/7-minute-briefing-Care-based-language/pdf/7\\_minute\\_briefing\\_-\\_Care\\_based\\_language.pdf?m=638344293365100000](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/10403/7-minute-briefing-Care-based-language/pdf/7_minute_briefing_-_Care_based_language.pdf?m=638344293365100000)

South Ayrshire Update on change of language to be used in the Looked After Childrens review process

<https://www.whocarescotland.org/resources-learning/communities-that-care/>

A whole school approach to ensure that Care Experienced children and young people are nurtured and supported in the educating entire schools about what care experience is and helping them to develop empathy and understanding towards their Care Experience pupils.

[https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/2669/Children-and-Young-People-s-Services-Plan-2023-2026/pdf/South\\_Ayrshire\\_Children\\_and\\_Young\\_Peoples\\_Services\\_Plan\\_2023-2026.pdf?m=638348638694270000](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/2669/Children-and-Young-People-s-Services-Plan-2023-2026/pdf/South_Ayrshire_Children_and_Young_Peoples_Services_Plan_2023-2026.pdf?m=638348638694270000)

The South Ayrshire Children and Young Peoples Service plan 2023-2026 plan is in place to ensure that South Ayrshire is the best place in Scotland for children to grow up

# Literature Review:

## **Beyond Sticky notes**

KA McKercher, 2020

GF Books

This book discusses mindsets and methods of co-design . It also covers design, trauma informed practice, collective learning, and social movements. “Love and co-design go hand in hand. We can’t elevate the voices and contributions of people with lived experience if we don’t see and champion their wisdom and resilience. We can’t partner with anyone we don’t think highly of.”

## **Thinkspace – the Creation of a multi-agency consultation group for Looked After Children**

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20516057/#:~:text=THINKSPACE%20has%20had%20a%20significant,i n%20a%20child's%20care%20plan.>

This paper describes a model of multi-agency consultation created for social workers and other allied professionals working with Looked After Children. THINKSPACE is based on a reflecting team model as developed by Andersen (1987). This paper describes some of the dilemmas and solutions faced when implementing the model and incorporates feedback from those providing and using the service. THINKSPACE has had a significant impact on creating a shared understanding of a child's behaviour and needs across agencies, containing the system's anxiety about a case, and at times ensuring that the relevant agencies are informed and appropriately involved in a child's care plan. It is a successful example of the Government's drive for multi-agency working and has allowed professionals to work together effectively across agencies to support some of the most vulnerable Looked After Children.

## Literature Review:

### **Educational exclusion and inclusion- common themes from the Improving Life Chances Implementation Group**

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/educational-exclusion-and-inclusion-common-themes-from-the-improving-life-chances-implementation-group/>

This has been produced by the Improving Life Chances Implementation Group on behalf of the Youth Justice Improvement Board. Members of the Implementation Group shared examples of young people who were experiencing, or at risk of, exclusion from education to illustrate themes and factors which have led to children and young people being successfully included in school. These have been developed into short case studies which draw on the voice and experiences of young people. The case studies show that school exclusion is often just one of a number of factors experienced by these young people.

It looks at The impact of moving from primary school, where 'someone really knew me' to secondary school, where it was difficult to form relationships with a large number of new adults whose expectations and styles of interacting were often very different. The powerful effect of peers, especially the influence of older young people while excluded, and the sometimes rapid escalation of substance abuse, violence and offending.

Broken connections with school but also with out-of-school activities and the role models and pro-social pastimes such as football which that wider community can provide.

## Literature Review:

### **UCAS : Next Steps – What is the experience of students from a care experienced background in education?**

<https://www.ucas.com/about-us/news-and-insights/ucas-reports/next-steps-what-experience-students-care-background-education-report>

Ucas identifies the potential barriers care-experienced students face in accessing higher education and training and explore their motivations and expectations as they prepare to take their next steps.

The report makes recommendations for a range of organisations with the aim of easing the transition for care-experienced applicants, who remain underrepresented in higher education. Their key findings include.

Three in five care-experienced applicants receive no support specific to their circumstances: 60% of surveyed applicants said they did not receive guidance at school around applying to higher education specific to their status as a care-experienced student, and there is a knowledge gap about support options among both applicants and their advisers.

Students' decision making is influenced by their individual support needs: three quarters of surveyed applicants took mental health and wellbeing support into account (76%), with financial support (64%) and guaranteed accommodation (63%) also important when researching higher education options.

Care-experienced applicants have a less linear education pathway: they are 69% more likely to apply aged 21 or above than non-care-experienced applicants, making access to careers advice and statutory support more difficult, and they are over twice as likely to take an Access to HE Diploma.

## Literature Review:

**“What about me?” Stories of the educational experiences of care-experienced children and young people in a Scottish local authority**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/03085759211011736>

This qualitative study explores the educational experiences of looked after children and young people in one Scottish local authority. The preoccupations of government are academic achievement and school attendance, but these are not the prime concerns of the children, carers and professionals involved. Moreover, they can be both enhanced and restricted by the background characteristics and care situations of the young people and the responses of schools to their needs and behaviour. Five influential factors emerged from interviews and focus groups with professionals, carers, and young people: behaviour; school attendance; carers as educators; friendships; and communication between home and school. Each of them is discussed with extended quotations that convey the voices of participants.

**Who Cares – Communities that Care**

<https://www.whocarescotland.org/resources-learning/communities-that-care/#:~:text=Our%20Communities%20that%20Care%20programme,of%20belonging%20within%20their%20communities.>

Who Cares? are committed to building stronger communities for everyone by creating more inclusive and caring environments for Care Experienced people to live in . Their Communities that Care programme educates Scotland about care through awareness raising in local areas. It is a whole school approach and by educating entire schools what care experience is and helping them develop empathy and understanding towards their Care Experienced pupils.

# Literature Review:

## **South Ayrshire Council Children and Young people's service plan 2023-2026**

[https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/2669/Children-and-Young-People-s-Services-Plan-2023-2026/pdf/South\\_Ayrshire\\_Children\\_and\\_Young\\_Peoples\\_Services\\_Plan\\_2023-2026.pdf?m=638348638694270000](https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/media/2669/Children-and-Young-People-s-Services-Plan-2023-2026/pdf/South_Ayrshire_Children_and_Young_Peoples_Services_Plan_2023-2026.pdf?m=638348638694270000)

This plan is in place to ensure that South Ayrshire is the best place in Scotland for children to grow up. Our journey since the last plan has been one of progress and reflection, more recently engaging in a valuable learning partnership of self-evaluation alongside Horizon's Research. This opportunity to appraise service delivery and consider how the Children's Services Planning Partnership can best improve integrated services and impact Whole Family Wellbeing has been invaluable to the production of this plan's shared priorities. Through consultation with children, young people and partners the priorities and aims within this plan build on the progress of previous plans, celebrating achievements and identifying areas for continued collaborative improvement. Families have told us they want to be able to access help that is right for them, at the right time. Central to this are our six interconnected priorities: The Promise, Families, Included, Voice, Healthy and People. Each priority underlines our commitment to delivering integrated, effective, and caring services in South Ayrshire.

## **The Importance of a Safe space and student voice in schools that serve minoritized learners**

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282572778\\_The\\_importance\\_of\\_safe\\_space\\_and\\_student\\_voice\\_in\\_schools\\_that\\_serve\\_minoritized\\_learners](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282572778_The_importance_of_safe_space_and_student_voice_in_schools_that_serve_minoritized_learners)

Through a commitment to building a supportive school culture that includes developing robust relationships and foregrounding the voices of women, this community of learners is working in a very socially just way so as to allow pupils to own and embrace an identity and access supports and change the future of historically minoritised groups.



## Unintentional Outcomes:

As the research has taken place there have been many opportunities to connect with people and at times provide support that while not directly connected to the research assistant role, it has responded to a need at the time.

Services	Connection
Promise Branding	Research Assistant raising awareness of email signature logo
Time to Live short break funding	Signposting families for Time to Live funding (adults and YP), Activ8 leisure membership, help with completing some applications- 23 people.
Young Carers	Linked CF to Spotty Zebras group and Dundonald ASN gymnastics groups
AB & ZH	CE school leaver linked in with employability and skills for College transition.
Quarriers	Link to Kincaidston community larder
Barnados - Belmont Family First	Group in Belmont Academy requiring input around vaping/drugs and alcohol – staff not trained. Signposted to Barnados. Barnados had approached the school previously but got no response.
Aberlour Urgent Assistance fund	Application made for care experienced mum
Food bank referral	Voucher arranged for a family
Westcoast furniture bank	Referral submitted for a family – children’s drawers were broken x 4 sets
South Ayrshire school clothing bank	Referrals made for 4 children for outstanding uniform items
Kincaidston community larder	One family signposted
South Ayrshire food bank	2 families received food bank vouchers

## Unintentional Outcomes:

As the research has taken place there have been many opportunities to connect with people and at times provide support that while not directly connected to the research assistant role, it has responded to a need at the time.

Services	Connection
Edinburgh Council Carmel Jacob Thomson	We matter in the classroom information
East Renfrewshire Council Claire Creighton	The Promise Accreditation in Schools information
Sian Wild	Who Cares - Shetland Moving into your first home project. Boxes with soft home furnishings for care leavers.
Children 1st and Stepping Stones for Families	Consultations with Families for service monitoring and evaluation.
Salvation Army	Christmas gifts for recent foster care leaver