



Embedding The Promise in Practice

An evaluation of South Ayrshire's Improvement Actions
2021-2024

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Introduction

It is an honour for me to do this Introduction to the South Ayrshire's Promise plan review report for the period 2021-2024.

This report reflects our commitment to improving the lives of our Care Experienced and Looked After infants, children, and young people in our community, as well as their families.

Over the past three years, we have worked hard to ensure that the Promise is not understood to be a “project” or an “initiative” for some services to have responsibility to implement. Rather, what the voices of 5,500 Children, Young People, parents, carers, and those who work in the Care Sector, have told us, is that a whole system reform of Care was needed, to ensure that every child in South Ayrshire grows up loved, safe, and respected.

The journey as a Community Planning Partnership in delivering on The Promise has been marked by significant achievements and progress as well as challenges, such is the scope of the change required. We have diligently taken a Transformational approach to delivering on the whole system change that the Promise requires, by using the five foundations of **Voice, Family, Care, People & Scaffolding**, and developing fifty-five Calls to action ten improvement areas with thirty-one actions and forty-seven measurable improvements, which we have measured as a multi-agency partnership asking, what actual difference and benefit in all our efforts with the Promise have we made for our Children, Young People and Families.

What follows in this report, is a detailed reflection on the Promise activity, that we have worked on together to enable the necessary change required. The appendix contains the detail of all the thirty-one actions and forty-seven benefits that sit under our 10 improvement areas, and I am really pleased and proud of the work that this report reflects, where there is strong evidence of the beginning of change across the system in South Ayrshire, but clearly there is much more to do.

The Promise sits within our Community Planning Partnership and more specifically the Children Services Planning Partnership (CSPP), who have taken real ownership of the Promise and supported the priority through making it a Local Outcome Improvement Priority for South Ayrshire. There is also a real commitment from the Children Services Planning Partnership for the Promise to be woven throughout all elements of their six priorities, so that while it is a unique priority an LOIP it is also seen in all we do for infants, children, young people and families in South Ayrshire, collaboratively.



I am so grateful for the work that all partners have contributed to this work over the past three years. In particular our Corporate Parenting Lead Officer Dawn Parker and the Champions Board, who have led magnificently on this agenda. I can confidently say that there is real authenticity to the measurable change evidenced within this evaluation report, because this really matters to those who have driven the required changes in South Ayrshire. This is no more true than for those young people themselves who have experienced care in South Ayrshire or who now live in South Ayrshire and experienced care elsewhere.

I also want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders, and dedicated staff who have contributed to this important work. Together, we are making a difference and building a brighter future for our children, so that all our Children in South Ayrshire grow up loved, safe and respected.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to South Ayrshire's Promise.

Mark Inglis

Head of Service, Children's Health Care and Justice



The Promise in Scotland

The Promise is Scotland's commitment to care experienced children and young people that they will grow up loved, safe and respected. This is a promise that Scotland has set out to achieve by 2030 by working together to ensure care experienced children and young people grow up **“safe, loved and respected”** and that they and their families receive the right support at the right time from the right people.

In 2016 the Independent Care Review was commissioned by the Scottish Government to conduct a root and branch review of Scotland's care system. The Care Review heard over 5,500 experiences from children, young people and adults who had lived in care as well as hearing from the paid and unpaid workforce.

In February 2020 the Care Review published its findings and recommendations in a set of five reports. These reports covered the changes the Care Review proposed, plans for implementing these changes and the investment in services required to realise the changes. All five reports can be accessed [here](#).

The Promise is built on five foundations: **Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding**.



You can learn more about the five foundations [here](#).



Plan 24-30 launched on 20 June 2024, setting out a route map on what needs to happen, who must act, and by when.

Policy Context



The Promise is underpinned by the children's rights-based approach by the [United Nations Convention of Right of a Child](#) (UNCRC) which means this must be fully incorporated and upheld in all work taking place in South Ayrshire.

Within our [Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26](#) we dedicated actions relating to the UNCRC to ensure that not only Children's Services, but the entire Council and Health Social Care Partnership (HSCP) understand their duties and responsibilities to uphold Children's rights in the work we do.

The UNCRC sets out how organisations should work better together to ensure that children rights are upheld. The 54 articles within the UNCRC align with the key aims of The Promise and we recognise the importance of reflecting and including these within all the work that takes place in South Ayrshire.

As well as the UNCRC, The Promise takes on a trauma informed approach that understands psychological trauma and adversity. We recognise the different ways trauma can affect people and how common trauma and adversity is. Our approach seeks to support those suffering from trauma and ensure everyone involved in delivering the Promise is a trauma informed practitioner in line with the [Getting It Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC).

In 2021 the Strategic Planning Advisory group (SPAG), a sub-group of our Integration Joint Board (IJB) agreed that our [Parenting Promise 2021-2030](#) should be aligned to South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP). This decision was made on the basis that Corporate Parenting activity aligns with Children's Services Planning, which is held within the CPP and that implementing the Promise requires a wider reach than may not have been achieved had the strategy remained solely within the Health and Social Care Partnership. We chose to name our Corporate Parenting Plan [South Ayrshires Parenting Promise](#) to reflect the plan's close alignment with the Promise and a change in response to the challenge from children and young people to use language which is clear and relatable.

Supporting our care experienced young people and implementing our corporate parenting duties are vital to driving our strategic objectives and improving outcomes for the community. The [IJB Strategic Plan](#) outlines seven key objectives, and the Parenting Promise aligns clearly with these.

Corporate parenting is given the highest importance in South Ayrshire and [the Promise is woven through both South Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnerships values and activities and ambitions.](#)

A focus on corporate parenting and supporting care experienced children and young people is given strategic priority across our key plans and strategies, for example: In 2023 the Promise was agreed as a local priority area of South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2024-29 [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2029](#) and in the same year our Children's Service Planning Partnership identified the Promise as one of 6 priority areas of [South Ayrshires Children and Young Peoples Services Plan-2023-2026.](#)

Our roadmap to Keeping the Promise in South Ayrshire

South Ayrshire worked to develop 55 promise calls to action. Our calls set out how we would approach implementing the Promise in South Ayrshire and were aligned directly to the language used in the Promise. The calls to action offered us a clear structure and framework to understand the changes that required and are a source of motivation to achieve this change.

In 2021, we identified [Ten Promise improvement](#) areas for 2021-24 were created for which we established thirty-two associated actions and a further forty-eight benefits (measurable improvements) which we honed over time **to thirty-one actions and forty-seven benefits**. We established baseline information to allow us to measure the impact of our Promise activity. The process of 'benefit tracking' has allowed us to clearly identify the progress we are making and the impact of each action we take to embed the Promise in South Ayrshire.

For more detailed information on our 10 promise improvement areas and associated actions please see Appendix 1.

South Ayrshire's Ten Promise improvement Areas

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

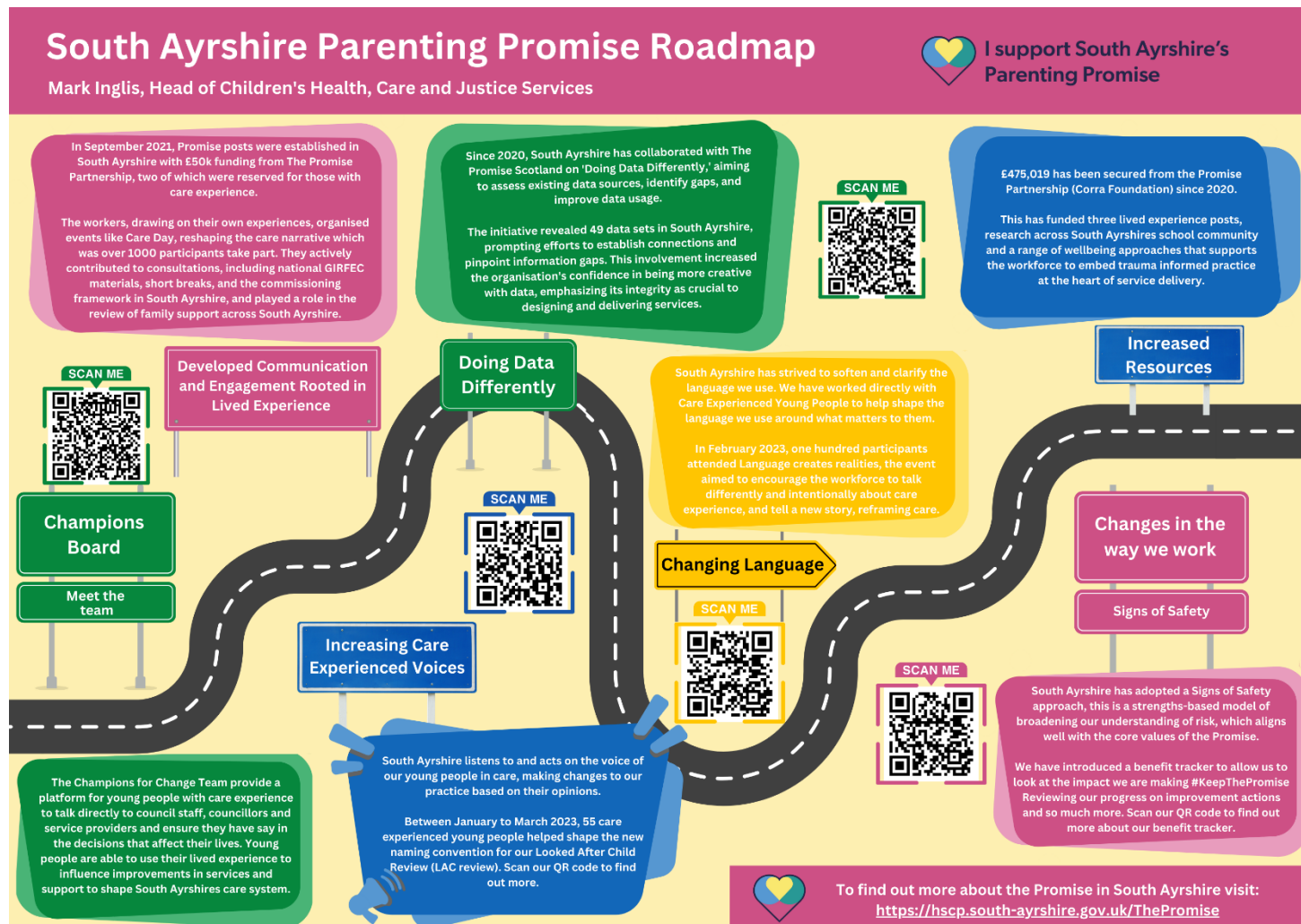
5. South Ayrshire recognises that 'language creates realities' those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their own lives.

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

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.

The Promise 21-24 Road Map

The image below illustrates our journey to implement The Promise in South Ayrshire. We still have some road ahead; to keep the promise by 2030 however much work has taken place over the past 4 years to get us to this stage.



Click the image of the road map to find out more.

Champions for Change South Ayrshire Champions Board

“

Hundreds of care experienced young people have a voice through their participation in Champions Boards and know they have influenced decision making in areas of real importance to them.

”



Hearing the voice of people with lived experience is crucial for us to keep The Promise.

In 2017 we took steps to establish *Champions for Change*. This is South Ayrshire's Champions Board which was set up to support young people with experience of care to work alongside those who make decisions about the care system in South Ayrshire. This allows care experienced young people to be involved in the decisions that affect their own lives and the lives of others.

Champions Boards are an important vehicle for young people, corporate parents, and other professionals to come together with a shared goal. This powerful shared space ensures that services are tailored and responsive to the needs of young people with care experience. Champions Boards build the capacity of young people to influence change, empower them by showing confidence in their abilities and potential, and gives them the platform to flourish and grow.

Champions Boards are characterised by genuine relationships being formed between young people, staff, and Corporate Parents. This is a shift in culture from consultation to participation, from 'doing to' to 'doing with' and is key in our Champions Board approach.

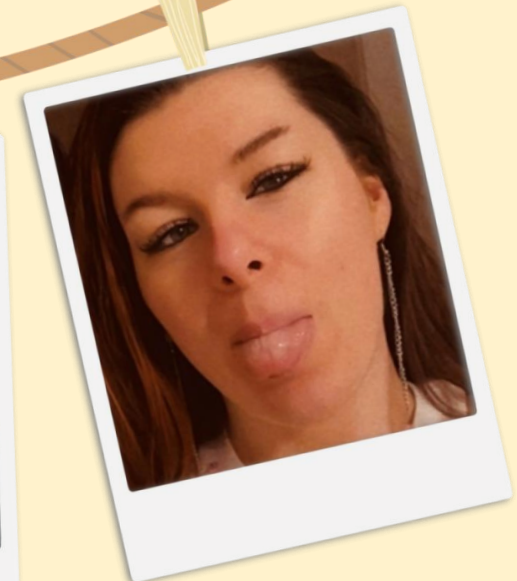
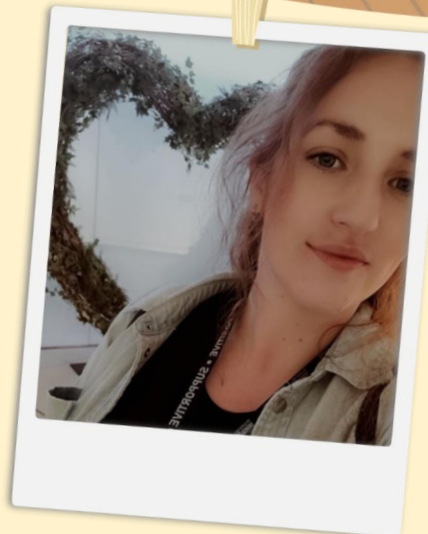
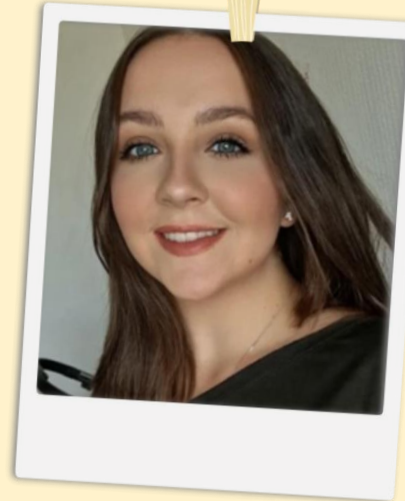
Champions for Change

SOUTH AYRSHIRE CHAMPIONS BOARD

All the employability opportunities we offer allows our champions board team the chance to nurture and grow a talented workforce with lived experience at the heart.

In 2023-24 the Champions Board housed a Research Assistant and 3 additional young people with care experience. Two young people joined the team at the initial stages of their Employability pathway where they learned how to manage the patterns and expectations of a work environment. The team also currently support a youthwork modern apprentice who uses his lived experience to influence change including creative writing.

The work of the Champions Board focuses on ensuring the voices of those who use our services are amplified. The following peer led consultations have taken place between 2023-2024.



Consultations and Voice

Champions for Change

SOUTH AYRSHIRE CHAMPIONS BOARD

**Scottish
Government care
experience
definition.**

**Contracts and
Commissioning
Quarriers.**

**Contracts and
Commissioning
Stepping Stones for
Families.**

**Contracts and
Commissioning
Women's aid.**

**Education
Previously looked
after outcomes.**

**Supportive
School
Structure**

**Champions for
Change Shine Even
Brighter grant.**

**Care Inspectorate
Participation and
rights.**

**Champions for
Change Quarterly
meetings.**

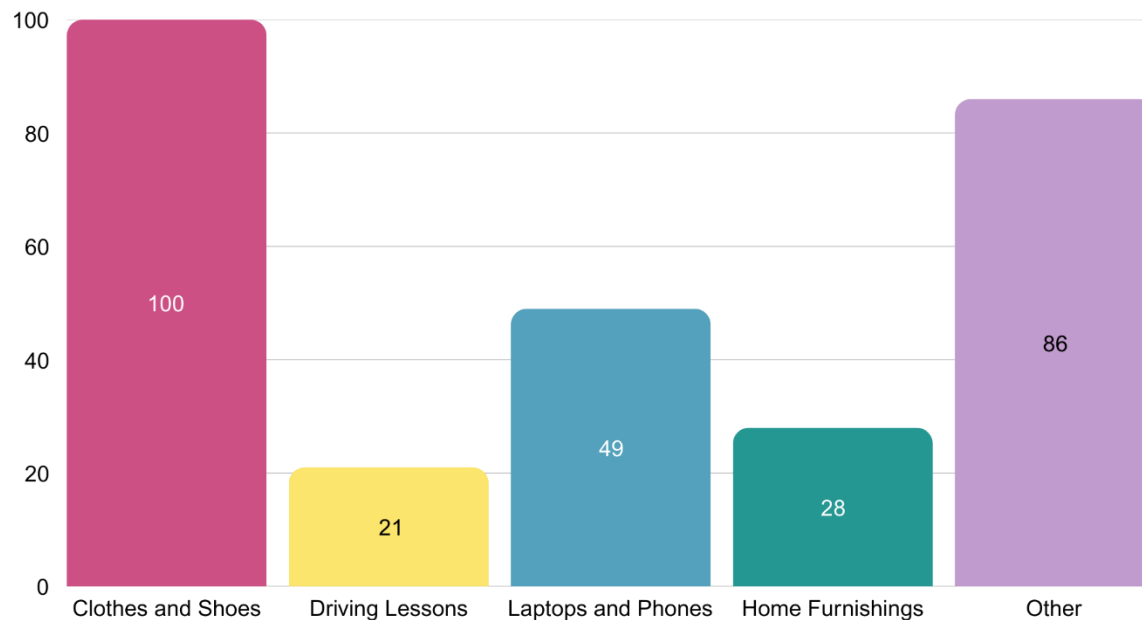
**South Ayrshire
Free Travel
consultation
for care
experienced 23
– 30-year-olds.**

**Contracts and
Commissioning
Young Carers.**

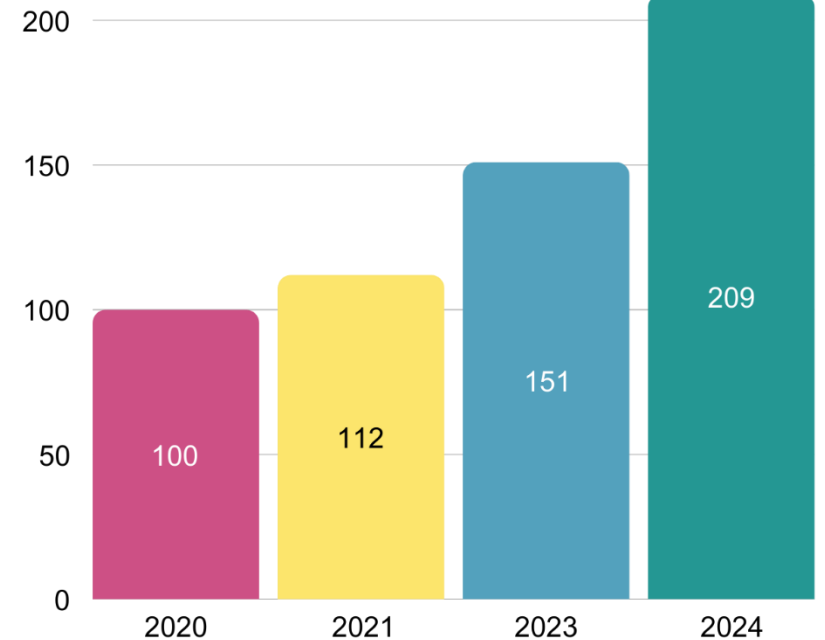


The graph below shows how participation in the small grants scheme has increased from 2020 – 2024 and the breakdown of asks across 2024.

Small Grants 2024 most applied for breakdown



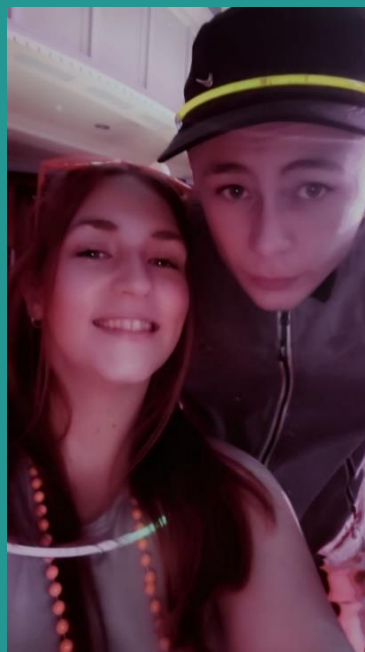
Small Grants application numbers over time



“Offering the Small Grants has proven to be a great way to connect with other care experienced children, young people, and adults in South Ayrshire. Reading about what they are applying for helps us spot themes in things that might be missing or desired by the care experienced population. The Small Grants scheme has also offered us the opportunity to connect people with supports that they did not know existed, including free travel and access to leisure services”.

- Olivia - Participation Assistant South Ayrshire Champions Board

Champions Board Participation network





Weekly Champs groups take place in Ayr and Belmont Academy and a monthly drop-in group in Queen Margaret Academy. Evening groups supported by Thriving Communities take place in Girvan and Ayr. The participation network of groups includes over seventy young people aged 8 – 23 years.

Champions Board members can participate in a summer programme which in 2024 offered 16 different activities with 150 spaces over the six weeks of the summer holidays starting with Youthbeatz in Dumfries and ending with Bouncefest in Ayr. Other activities included Cornish Hill Walk, rowing on the river Ayr, cycling around Millport, outdoor activities, picnic in the park, and film making with Scottish Youth Film Foundation. The team also supported 25 young people to take part in three residential in June, October, and November in partnership with Dolphin House where the groups tried a treetops challenge, water sports, and gorge walking.

The aim of the participation network of groups is to create a space that nurtures a sense of belonging and ‘collective identity’ where young people understand the very real possibility of influencing positive change across the care community.

**“I love going to champs
– they just get me”.**

– Devlin

**“I get to try out new
things and make new
friends”.**

– Hollie

**“they’ve supported me in lots of
whys with my hobbies and interests
like photography – they bought me
software for my camera and now I’m
at college studying photography”.**

– Stephen

**“You just care about me,
you’re there for me”.**

– Kai

**“I don’t know what I
would have done if I
didn’t have champs in
my life!”**

– Ben

Influencing

Every 3 months a Champions Board 'strategic' meeting takes place between Champions Board representatives and key senior leaders across South Ayrshire Council. These meetings look at the main care themes emerging from across South Ayrshires participation network alongside national topics, and finds ways to address these as a council. Some of the changes made include:

- Tightening of South Ayrshire's discretionary fund to ensure that young people with care experience living in temporary furnished accommodation have the right financial support to cover rent when in employment.
- The development of twilight training designed by young people with care experience for all education staff.
- Consolidation of whole family wellbeing funding to deliver small grants in response to growing demand.
- Support to establish a reverse mentoring programme with senior leaders.



The Promise gets creative!

Over 2023- 2024, young people have worked with a musician and a playwright to write songs which a wider group of young people then devised music videos for. Please follow these links to enjoy the music videos! [Make it through](#), [Paradise](#) and [15 years round the sun](#).

The young people involved showcased their incredible work at a Care Day event at Cutty Sark on the 16th of February 2024. The songs have been played on Radio Scotland and all videos are available on YouTube and Spotify to stream.



"Make it through"



"Paradise"



"15 Years Around the Sun"



Participation and co-production

The participation work undertaken by the Champions Board encapsulates the ethos of The Promise. It provides shared experiences which nurtures a sense of community and collective identity for young people with care experience and offers a platform for their collective voice.

Co-production is at the centre of all our Promise improvement areas across South Ayrshire, specifically areas 1, 3, 4 locally. The Champion's Board is a significant contributor to enabling South Ayrshire to deliver on the national Promise foundations of Voice, People and Scaffolding.

Improvement Area 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”.*

Improvement Area 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”.*

Improvement Area 5: *“South Ayrshire recognises that ‘language creates realities’ those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their own lives”.*





TONIE'S ROLE

Tonie is 30 and works as Participation Assistant with South Ayrshire Champions Board. Thanks to the Corra Promise Partnership funding Tonie secured a sessional promise post with South Ayrshire Champions Board in 2021. This post was specifically protected for someone with care experience. Tonie then applied for a permanent Participation Assistant post in September 2023, and was successful. Tonie runs the Ayr Academy school-based group and Domain Champs group.

“I’ve learned so much since I started doing this job, I feel that by being a working mum I’m a good role model for my children. I have delivered presentations, contributed to planning new services, shared my experience of services through film and used my story to speak to elected members and shape training such as permanency training. The bit I love most about my job is that I get to be the adult for young people that I needed when I was younger. I’m a worker a team member and role model and I can really see the difference we’re making. The promise has given me the opportunity to find my people across the care community”.

Valuing Lived Experience

Priority Area 4 of children’s service planning in South Ayrshire places a focus on Voice – voice priority group supports our commitment to listen to children and meaningfully involve them in decision-making around their wellbeing. The remit of the group is to ensure that compassionate, responsive decision-making for children is embedded into everything we do and measure where we are in achieving this.

In 2021 we recruited two people with care experience into *Participation Assistant* posts that were funded by CORRA foundation Promise Partnership funding. These roles are playing a pivotal role in the development of the Promise as both Tonie and Kayleigh bring their experience, knowledge and understanding of the Promise to the work they do.

KAYLEIGH'S ROLE

Kayleigh is 36, in 2021 Kayleigh secured one of the three promise posts funded by the Corra Promise Partnership. Kayleigh remained in the post for an additional year until 2023 and then covered maternity leave in the champions board team. Kayleigh ran the Belmont (school based) Champs drop in and Girvan Champs Group. Kayleigh now works as part of the Corra funded Supportive School Structure Team "I have been a full-time mum since I was 15 and now in my 30s this is my first proper job, and the only way I can describe it is that I feel that I've found me. The thing I love most about my job is that I really get to make a difference to lives of young people, being that support network that I needed when I was in care. It's hard to put into words the things I have achieved and new experiences that I've had since joining the team I never knew that all my experiences of residential care foster care and child protection processes could ever be used for so much good".



South Ayrshire Youth Council

South Ayrshire's Youth Council was elected on 20 June 2024, with 2558 young people across South Ayrshire turning out to cast their votes. Young people who live, study, or work in South Ayrshire were encouraged to sign up as candidates and design their own campaigns. There were 53 candidates who stood for election and from this 25 were elected by their peers as members of the new Youth Council. They range in age from S1 school pupils, all the way up to school leavers of 21 years of age. Young people with care experience are actively involved in the youth council and have contributed to setting priorities that they would like addressed across South Ayrshire.

Doing Data Differently

Promise Improvement area 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”.

We know that we need to understand how the work we are doing is making an impact. We do this by understanding the effectiveness of our impact and our activities through data.



Since 2020, South Ayrshire has been one of few organisations who has worked with The Promise Scotland on ‘[Doing Data Differently](#)’. The work attempts to understand what data sources exist, how they are currently linked, and how to identify and understand information gaps to make better use of what is already there.

As a result of our participation, we now know that we have 49 data sets in South Ayrshire and are in the process of establishing how these data sets link and identify where there are gaps. Our involvement in this work has increased our curiosity and confidence to be more creative with our data and make a clear connection to the integrity of our data and its importance as key to designing and delivering services. This also lets us see how we are doing.

A corporate working group has been established to support the data map activity. The group comprises of representatives from across South Ayrshire Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership. The purpose of the working group is to oversee responsibility for updating the Promise Data Map to ensure all datasets currently uploaded are fully complete and to identify and map any additional datasets in South Ayrshire which should be included in the tool. The Planning and Performance Team are also providing data to the Public Health Scotland Local Intelligence Team Analysts (LIST) to further develop the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Ayr Town Profile by incorporating data on the care experienced population.

The Planning and Performance Team are also working to improve the range and quality of data which is reported to the Corporate Parenting Executive. This will be a continuous improvement project. They have met with the SAC Education Analyst to request more frequent and detailed reporting around aspects such as attendance at school, exclusions, and attainment. The team will also

be focusing on providing trend information on the numbers of brothers and sisters living together along with some indicators yet to be reported upon around number of care leavers holding a driver's license and learning to swim. This new way of collecting and working with data allows us to make more informed decisions with care experienced young people.

In South Ayrshire we have also been on a journey to improving our data in terms of integrity and consistency. It can feel that we are at times data rich, but with data integrity issues and a lack of relational data due to system complexity. It has highlighted that there are many data sources available to us, but few are linked up, making analysis, and reporting challenging. It has also highlighted gaps in our available data or informed us that snapshot data is available.

Therefore, we have a focus in 2025 to understand how to translate relationships and experiences into evaluation work. We will further utilise the Promise data map to support our work as we move forward.

Changing our Language

Improvement Area 5 – *“South Ayrshire recognises that ‘language creates realities’ ; those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their own lives”.*

Incorporating care-based language into our work in South Ayrshire has been a key improvement we have made over the past few years.

As far back as 2018, care experienced young people told us of how different they felt from their non care experienced peers due to the language used around care. The term LAC (looked after child) was noted as particularly marginalising and derogatory. A series of events and awareness raising sessions have focussed supporting the workforce to talk differently and intentionally about care experience and tell a new story.

In 2023, fifty-five young people with care experience who responded to a questionnaire and focus group told us their preference was to change the name of LAC reviews to [name of young person's] meeting.



**"It is my meeting anyway;
I prefer people to use my
name".**

- Jamie

**"I hate LAC it's horrible just
another label really".**

- Demi

**"The word review is so triggering for me that I now
can't take part in anything with the name review.
If you haven't experienced this, it must be really
hard to understand but trust me the name is so
important".**

The importance of listening and responding has been exemplified in our change of language where we have listened to young people's requests and have changed LAC reviews to 'name of young person's meeting' i.e., 'Chloe's meeting'. This was sanctioned by the Social Work Governance Group in August 2023 and implemented on 1st November 2023. This new language was communicated widely across both South Ayrshire Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

As a result of this work, we have made the changes noted below.

Name before November 2023	Name post November 2023
Initial LAC (ILAC)	Jack's First Meeting
LAC Review	Jack's Meeting
Substantive LAC	Jack's Next Steps Meeting

A change of language in the recording of Social Work files has also been noted in the most recent file audit undertaken at the July 2024. This audit indicated an increased awareness of the impact of the written word on anyone accessing their files. Some practitioners have explored writing directly to the person they are working with, and this has brought a softening of language and clarity.

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety is an approach which aligns the core values of the promise including a shift from a deficit based to strengths-based approach broadening our understanding of risk and using simple caring language. Signs of safety particularly supports South Ayrshires promise **Improvement Area 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 for children not having loving supportive relationships and regular childhood and teenage experiences”*.



Signs of Safety Approach draws on solution-focused therapy and the direct experience of effective practice by child protection social workers and the experiences of families within the child protection system. The approach empowers and enables families to make the necessary behavioural changes to live together safely. It is a strengths-based approach and works with family's assets to support change, reducing the need for more significant intervention from statutory agencies and the need to remove children from their families.

Various surveys were undertaken as part of the evaluation around the implementation of the model, with Parents/ Carers, Children and young people and staff. The outcome of the second survey following two years post implementation indicated a positive change in overall culture and service users experience of our Children and Families Social Work services. This reflected a change in how parents perceive social workers, towards being far more positive about their involvement in their lives. From the eight questions asked in the 2021 audit to the repeat audit in 2023, there are significant improvements in **all areas** with parents/carers either agreeing or strongly agreeing that their social worker is practicing in a relationship-based manner with them and their family. The outcome of this survey aligns with the vision of embedding and growing relationship-based practice across South Ayrshire's Children's services, which supports our delivery on the Promise. We know that relationship-based practice is critical to enabling change and improving outcomes for Children and families, the experience of Children and Families of being listened to and working WITH Social Workers, towards agreed outcomes, rather than having things done TO them, has been an essential change to our culture.

“ There has been a positive change in the climate and culture across South Ayrshire's Children's Services. The shift towards a learning organisation that aims to practice in a risk sensible manner (Munro:2020) is strongly evidenced by the findings from staff and leadership surveys. Furthermore, a decrease in intrusive protective approaches such as a reduction in child protection registrations over this period, aligns with other local authorities implementing Signs of Safety across Scotland (Inglis: 2022).

– Signs of Safety consultant, Leigh Taylor

”

Changes in the Way We Work

In line with Improvement Area 1 and 6, there has been a vast amount of activity taking place between 2021-24 to build on how we work within South Ayrshire. This ensure that the promise is linked to how the whole Council and Community Planning Partners work together and understand the role they play as Corporate Parents in delivering on the findings of the Care Review.

Improvement Area 1: *“South Ayrshire's workforce and commissioned services will have a comprehensive understanding of The Promise including how to embed Promise values in their approach”.*

Improvement Area 6: *“The ten principles of intensive family support are embedded into the practice (planning, commissioning and delivery) across all of South Ayrshire's directorates and commissioned services”.*

As part of our commitment to the Priority of the Promise, in 2023 the Promise was selected as of high priority by the Children Services Planning Partnership as a local priority area of South Ayrshire's LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan). Along with this, South Ayrshire's Children's Service Planning Partnership identified the Promise as one of the six priority areas of South Ayrshires Children and Young People's Service Plan 2023-26.

However, it is evident that the Promise is not just a priority area within the Children Services Plan, but sits across all Children Services Priorities, shaping and influencing the “whole system”. The Children Services Plan delivers on many of the foundations of the Promise and in particular the focus on preventative and early offers of help for each individual family member, to improve outcomes for children and young people, from the right person at the right time, is seen within all six priority areas.

Considering the Promise priority, areas identified to work together on include:

1. A good childhood - children in the 'care system' feel loved, have their needs met and their rights upheld.
2. Whole family support - families look different in every household and all families need support at different times in their lives.
3. Planning - equity around experiences and outcomes regardless of location or service.
4. Supporting the workforce - supporting the people who directly and indirectly help children and families.
5. Building capacity - the structure of the 'care system' should be focussed on the needs of children and young people.



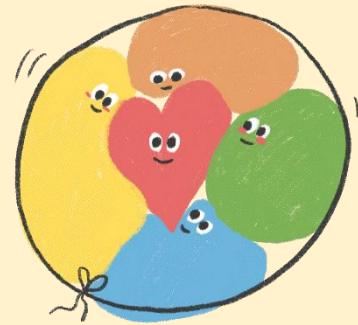
Our Priorities

-  The Promise
-  Families
-  Voice
-  Healthy
-  People







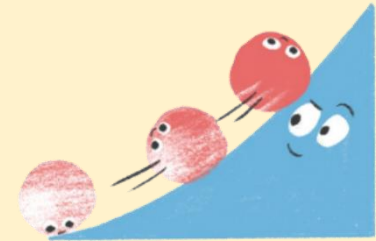
Our Commitment

To provide you and your family with the right support, at the right time. Creating locally placed services with your wellbeing at heart, where you will be treated with kindness and respect. We will work together to make South Ayrshire the best place in Scotland to grow up.



At our heart

-  Whole families
-  Young carers, Children, and young people with care experience
-  Physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of children and young people
-  A trauma sensitive workforce



Our Focus

South Ayrshire's Plan will make a significant contribution to improving wellbeing and outcomes for our children, young people and families.

All partners within South Ayrshire's Children's Services Planning Partnership recognise the significance of The Promise and remain committed to delivering on it.

Integrated Equalities Impact Assessment (IIA)

In 2023 South Ayrshires Integrated Equalities Impact assessment (IIA) was developed to include The Promise Child Rights and Wellbeing, Trauma Informed Practice, Our Ageing Population, Health and Wellbeing and Rurality. Within the IIA we have recognised 'Care' as a protected characteristic specific to South Ayrshire Council, anyone introducing new policies, procedures, strategies, projects, and financial decisions whether working directly or indirectly with young people and their families will have to consider the Promise and acknowledge care as a protected characteristic as core to all new initiatives.

Kinship Care

Kinship care is a form of alternative care for children and young people who are unable to live with their parents. Kinship is provided by family or friends of the child/young person.

South Ayrshire's Kinship Team was formed in May 2022 and comprises two kinship social workers, overseen by a team leader. Since the formation of the kinship team, kinship carers now have access to dedicated workers with specialist knowledge, who can offer personalised support when needed, through a relationship-based approach. The kinship team works directly with kinship carers and have been instrumental in supporting them to care of the children and young people they look after. South Ayrshire's approved kinship carers and engaged with through a quarterly newsletter which signposts to training, events and provides general information relating to kinship. Additionally, Information leaflets have been produced to support the understanding of prospective and approved kinship carers regarding the assessment and review process and in relation to kinship allowances.

Improving outcomes for kinship carers and the children and young people for whom they care, ensures they live well, grow well and age well. The formation of the kinship team also reflects South Ayrshires commitment to changing the balance of care, where we have committed to ***"Keep South Ayrshire's Children in South Ayrshire and within families or family-type support wherever possible"***. In South Ayrshire there is a commitment to Children living with their families. With the introduction of the kinship team, there has been an improvement in the quality of assessments and the quantity of formal Kinship Carers from 82 in 2017 to 107 children and young people being cared for by their kinship carers (January 2025). This ensures that young people are within loving and supportive family relationships when they can no longer live at home with their parents.



The Kinship Team continues to advocate and raise awareness around Kinship carers income. As a result, the Scottish recommended national allowances for kinship Carers have been implemented and all eligible kinship carers received the uplift. The kinship care team have supported carers to apply for additional benefits, such as Scottish welfare payment, pension credit, disability allowances and some young people have been supported to apply for young carers payments and to access care experienced bursaries. We have also accessed the corporate parenting budget and provided additional financial support, counselling, and essential item purchases through kinship assistance.

“I was grateful for the financial input and advice recently provided, information that I was none the wiser for. Thank you”.

“Thank you again for all of your support through the last 2 years couldn't have done it without you”.

“You have made this Christmas special for K and I and I will never be able to thank you enough”.

Therapeutic Support

Another element of support available since February 2024 to children and their kinship families has been the formation of South Ayrshire's Play Therapy Service, made up of two part time qualified play therapists, overseen by a team leader. This Therapeutic support has had a direct impact upon children being supported within family type care in South Ayrshire, be it foster care or kinship care. According to Improvement Scotland data 2022-23, over the past three years, South Ayrshire is now below the comparator Benchmark Authorities in terms of number of places a child has lived in any given year. This is when a child's living arrangement with a foster carer or kinship carer has broken down and they need to be with another family. This is hugely traumatic for children and results in a further sense of rejection. This work has enabled children to remain in families longer than previously recorded. Access to good therapeutic support to process past trauma, along with the implementing of the Signs of Safety and trauma informed practice, has had an overall benefit here. However it is recognised that there is still more work to do in this area.

Elected Members

In South Ayrshire we are lucky to have support from key Elected Members, who are just as committed to the Promise as we are. We recognise the importance of sharing our good work and championing care experienced young people amongst key decision makers and so since November 2020, we now carry out 6-monthly Elected Members' briefings which are held by South Ayrshire's Promise team and Champions Board. This along with the regular three-monthly Champions Board 'strategic' meeting, where Elected members with Portfolio responsibility for Children in the Council and HSCP attend, ensures young people with care experience are heard and understood. This has directly effected changes in how we support our Care Experienced population in South Ayrshire.



Digital Promotion

To promote the work taking place across South Ayrshire and to ensure access to local and national information regarding The Promise, a dedicated Promise webpage was developed on South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's website. The page includes sample local workshops, materials and links to The Promise Scotland resources which can be accessed [here](#).

A Promise 'tile' on the main home page of South Ayrshire Councils website has been added in order to show the reach of the Promise across [South Ayrshire](#) including [Plan 24-30](#).

New branding for The Promise South Ayrshire was designed in 2023 and all South Ayrshire staff were encouraged to download and add to their email signature, this was also advertised via our Communications Team. The branding includes an icon which links to South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise and action plan and promotes staff engagement and awareness raising of The Promise and its values.



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

Young Persons Support Team (YPST)

In collaboration with the CYCJ (Children and Young People's Centre for Justice) YPST have been undertaking a redesign of the service utilising 'Reimagining Justice with Children and Young People: Building Rights Respecting Services Together' which is a service design approach based on the best available evidence about how to respect and uphold children's rights and deliver on The Promise to Scotland's care experienced community who are in conflict with the law.

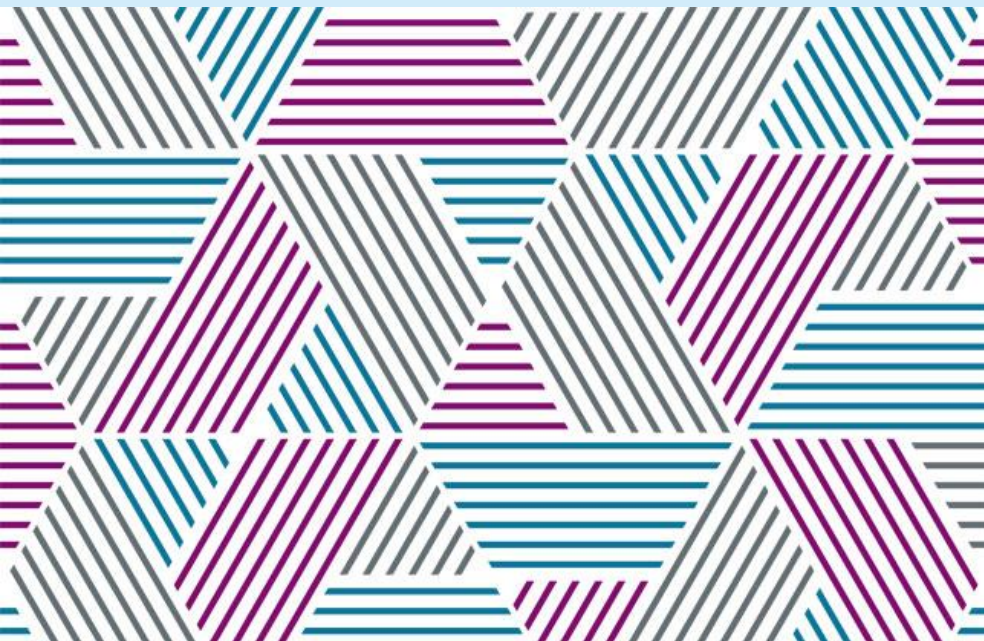
'Reimagining Justice' places those who use the services (including children and young people) at the heart of the design process, working alongside practitioners and managers.



This model, grounded in the principles of the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtdSD), has enabled South Ayrshire to design a rights-respecting service that will meet the needs of our children, young people, families, and carers with workers who have specialist knowledge, understanding and experience in throughcare and aftercare, children in conflict with the law, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and youth homelessness (16/17 years old).

Significant legal and policy changes in Scotland, including a commitment to #KeepingThePromise, the incorporation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, have all had a direct impact upon how Children and Young people in South Ayrshire experience support and care, while their voices are heard, and their rights upheld. These changes will ensure that children, young people, and their families are at the core of decisions being made about them, while providing an opportunity for them to shape the delivery of services they receive.

In South Ayrshire we celebrate that in alignment with current legislation, anyone under the age of 18 will be referred to as a child within this document and those up to the age of 25 are classed as young people. Some of this work has included the identification of problems and priorities, exploration of the referral processes, routes, criteria, service specifications, staff roles, training requirements and creating personas, which were developed through the redesign sessions to test what our model would be like for those young people whom it was designed with and for.



**Children and Young People's
Centre for Justice**

Youth Diversion from Prosecution

Youth Diversion is those aged 16 and 17 years who are diverted from prosecution by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), for Children who are caught up in the adult justice system. This is where the offence does not demand a prosecution through court, and the COPFS can choose at “case marking” an option of diversion from prosecution, so that a meaningful intervention can be delivered to address the identified needs and risks for the individual. Reducing the likelihood of re-offending. It also avoids labelling these children as convicted criminals and the consequences this could have for them transitioning into adulthood.

Youth diversion is delivered by Young Persons Support and Transition Team (YPST) and in the period of March 2023 to April 2024 there were 36 referrals for diversion from prosecution.

In addition to the above, the Young Persons Support Team support young people who come into conflict with the law on a voluntary and statutory basis via the Children’s Hearing and Court. Relevant assessments are undertaken, and a child’s plan developed in conjunction with the young person and their family to address the identified risks and needs and build on strengths and protective factors.

All this work has resulted in a positive reduction in the number of under 18-year-olds in custody, subject to Community Payback orders through the Courts and the number of Children referred to the Children’s reporter for Offence grounds.

The work undertaken with the Young Persons Support Team supports improvement area 7.

Improvement Area 7: “There must be significant, ongoing, and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for South Ayrshires children, families and communities”.



Increased Investment in the priorities of the Promise in South Ayrshire

Workforce Wellbeing Fund

As part of South Ayrshire's commitment to *"Caring for the carers"* has allowed us to secure funds from the Promise Partnership, CORRA Foundation, to develop a Supportive Framework for Workforce Wellbeing which offered an opportunity to implement staff wellbeing initiatives and resources.

This additional funding has enabled us to employ a dedicated wellbeing officer and a staff wellbeing project, called: *"Be Well Live Well"*. There has also been the creation of an online hub that offers a range of wellbeing activities, resources, training, and signposting materials; a grant scheme where staff and teams can apply for funds to support individual or team wellbeing; the funding has also enabled the reduction in gym membership for all South Ayrshire staff; and the creation of a Mental Health First Aid Network to ensure support is available for staff that require it at the earliest opportunity. A Staff Wellbeing Strategy is also currently being developed to ensure that wellbeing remains a sustainable priority once the funding ends.

The impact of this focus on staff wellbeing has had a very positive impact upon staff morale, with staff stating that this renewed focus has positively impacted the stress levels, work life balance, and ability to practice self-care. Some feedback is highlighted below:



"The opportunity to step away from everyday stresses and pressures. It was very relaxing".

"My wife and I are both SAC employees and work with young people in Education and HSCP, we have really appreciated the reduction in leisure pass costs, which enables us to keep fit, socialise, and manage the stresses of the day job. Well done South Ayrshire – the Promise in action, even for staff!"

"Thank you to SAC for organising. It has made me feel really valued as an employee. Keep up the good work".

"Great session and felt this benefitted my mental health and wellbeing. Not just on the day but I am still feeling the positive effects of the session 3 days later".

"Thank you for this opportunity to try something new and add to my box of wellbeing tools".

Working with our Schools

Improvement Area 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”.*



South Ayrshire Virtual School

Our Virtual School in South Ayrshire improves life chances and experiences for care experienced children and young people. In 2023-24 the Virtual School has supported over sixty young people across the authority, with different levels of support.

Support has varied across the status of young people this year, with young people in various care settings across South Ayrshire, and many of them securing positive destinations at the end of involvement with the Virtual School team.

Operational support from the virtual school has included transition from primary to secondary school, eight young people have transitioned as well as supporting two young people who did not attend school, to now **attend on a full-time basis**. The team focus mostly on social and emotional support for young people referred into the team. The Welfare Officers within the virtual school are trained in LIAM, Sleep Scotland and Trauma Informed Practice level 3, which has been implemented in supports across the year, benefitting many families.

Each secondary school continues to promote a care experienced lead teacher, who is responsible for tracking, monitoring and championing each young person with experience of care, ensuing equity and promoting attainment at all levels. There is close connection between this lead teacher in each secondary school and the Virtual School Head Teacher, who tracks and monitors authority level attainment, exclusions and works closely with Inclusion staff around improving attendance, which has struggled to recover to pre-Covid levels.

The Virtual School has delivered on successful, fun family residential events at Inverclyde Sport Centre as well as various outdoor learning days taking place at Dolphin House and in our local community. The Virtual School team also maintain a level of support and re-assurance for Children and young people during all school holidays, families have reported that they have benefited from this level of support and advice during these months.

Strategically the Virtual School has taken responsibility for South Ayrshire's Skills Academy (SASKA) this year (2024), where all young people who attend have experience of care. The young people who have attended **have all gained qualifications** at level 3, 4, 5 and almost all have achieved 1 level 6 qualification. This reporting period has also involved work around the strategic implementation of The Promise, with close working with colleagues from HSCP and housing.

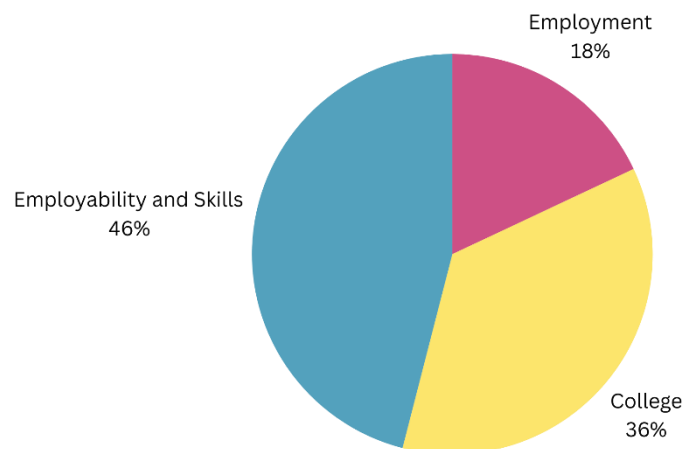
The Promise in Action: Collaboration between South Ayrshire Virtual School Welfare Officers and South Ayrshire Skills Academy (SASKA)

“R experienced a lot of change in her life in a short period of time. This led to multiple school moves, and R reported feelings of disconnect from her education due to this. This disconnect also presented itself in her school attendance, which was low, as was her trust in school staff due to limited opportunity to build those key relationships.

When R met her Virtual School Welfare Officer, she was not attending school. Through consistency and time, a trusting relationship developed between R and her Welfare Officer. With their constant, nurturing and reliable relationship as a foundation, R and her Welfare Officer were able to attend SASKA together to begin a bespoke enhanced transition for R.

*Virtual School staff have close relationships with SASKA staff and as such were able to support R to find her ‘person’ within SASKA, widening her network of Education support. This careful and considered approach to transition planning into an alternative education provision, was successful for R. She now has over 90% attendance and has multiple achieved qualifications. R is also an avid attendee at the **Virtual School Homework Club** and even brings her little sister along to help her with her homework!*

R is really proud of herself for all her hard work and achievements, as are we!”



In 2023/24 **SASKA** have worked with young people to support them **all** in securing a suite of qualifications and a positive destination post school. This year 18% of young people attending SASKA are Care Experienced, 9% are Young Carers and 55% of our young people are being supported by Social Work Services.

This graph shows us the positive destinations for pupils who have attended SASKA with the majority being supported in their transition to Employability and Skills.

Next Steps for the Virtual School:

The Education Promise Award is being rolled out across schools to support the Education workforce understanding of The Promise and has an aim to be completed by all schools by June 2025.

Family First

Belmont Family First Service was first introduced in 2020 as part of a pilot project, with an additional £465,000 being asked for from the Council to transform Children Services, this enabled the establishment of the Signs of Safety and the creation of a Health and Social Care Team within the Belmont School cluster as well as an additional flat extension for one of our Children's houses. This team was created to reduce the number of Children entering the Care system, particularly those who became looked after away from home, in expensive out with authority settings. The approach of the Belmont Family First model aligned perfectly with the aspirations of The Promise, and our ambition that Children and Young People of South Ayrshire will Grow Well, Live Well and Age Well and that South Ayrshire's Children should remain in South Ayrshire and in Families or Family type care. Based on the Ten Principles of Family Support, the team delivers a family centred approach to early intervention and prevention.



Due to the success of the approach the service received permanent funding from the Health and Social Care Partnership in December 2022. Belmont Family First Service is a partnership with Education, health, Thriving Communities, and community partners, applying GIRFEC and preventative approach within Locality School Clusters to meet the needs of Children at the point of concern from people already known to them within the School Cluster.

The initial aim of the service was to reduce the number of referrals to statutory services and the escalation of Children through the Care System by providing early intervention and direct support to families at the point of need, and as a means of avoiding crisis. The support offered is timely and responsive, empowering families to strengthen relationships, grow together, develop resilience, and reach their full potential with proportionate supports available for the time needed to enable change. The team embraced the Signs of Safety approach, as described previously, being a strength based, family centred approach, utilising a nurturing family-based approach within a locality.

Building on the Team Around the Child process, the project identifies those children who are at greatest risk of being accommodated away from home or those who are already living in external provision but from the Belmont School cluster, with a view to supporting a return home or to a kinship or foster setting in South Ayrshire. The success of the Belmont Family First Schools project became the template for the current Family First model now embedded in South Ayrshire Children and Young People Services Plan 2023-2026.

Horizons research were commissioned through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to test the Belmont Family First model and engage with families and young people to further refine and inform the approach in South Ayrshire to Whole Family Wellbeing through a Family First model. The engagement work of Horizons was captured in three Insight reports which gave clear guidance as to the way ahead. The conclusion was that building upon the Belmont model to create the Family First across all Eight School clusters was what the data pointed to, but was also what Children, Young People and Families told us would be of greatest benefit to them.

Funding for extending the model is provided through the Scottish Government Promise, Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. Implementation of the Family First “Team Around the Cluster model” is now in place. The model is based on early intervention and prevention, through locally based multi-agency teams working at the earliest opportunity to prevent needs arising.

Supportive School Structure

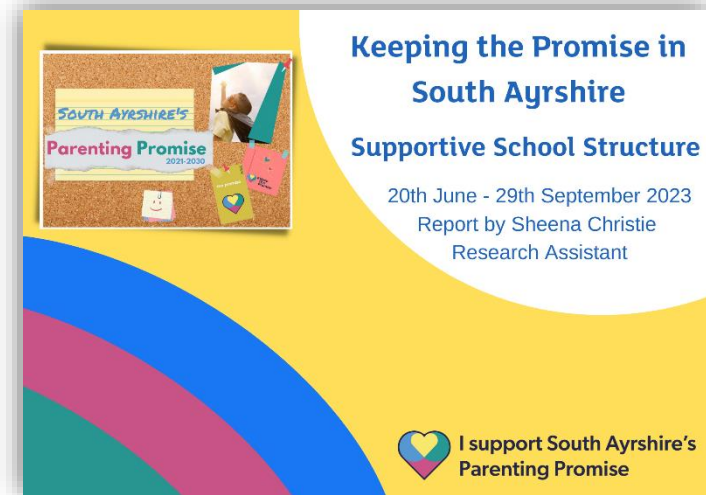
In 2024 we developed our new Supportive School Structure which sees that all care experienced children and young people receive support, opportunities, and a sense of belonging which allows them to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils. While according to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework South Ayrshire had a lower exclusion rate for our Looked After Pupils than our comparators or Scottish Average in 2022/23 (33 per 1,000 compared to comparator authorities of 80.1 and Scotland of 96.9 per 1,000). We still believed that exclusion rates were still high amongst our previously looked after young people and absences were also increasing in line with national trends. Young people with Care experience are often lost in the complexity of the system that surrounds them and do not always feel that they can participate meaningfully in planning their education or that they are heard when it is not working or accessible for them. Therefore not attending school can become even more problematic for those Children and young people with care experience.

This work began in December 2022 when South Ayrshire secured £229,937 Corra funding to #keepthepromise across our school community to increase the participation of children young people and their families in education, leading to a co-produced curriculum offer. The Year 1 funded research across the whole school community to better understand what supports help best and some of the things that were getting in the way for South Ayrshire’s care experienced learners.

From this, research took place where 108 surveys were completed, with an additional 12 face to face interviews and 2 focus groups.

Five shared themes emerged across each group:

1. Choosing your key person
2. Trauma Informed approach
3. Benefits of positive relationships
4. People – too many/ consistency
5. Safe space

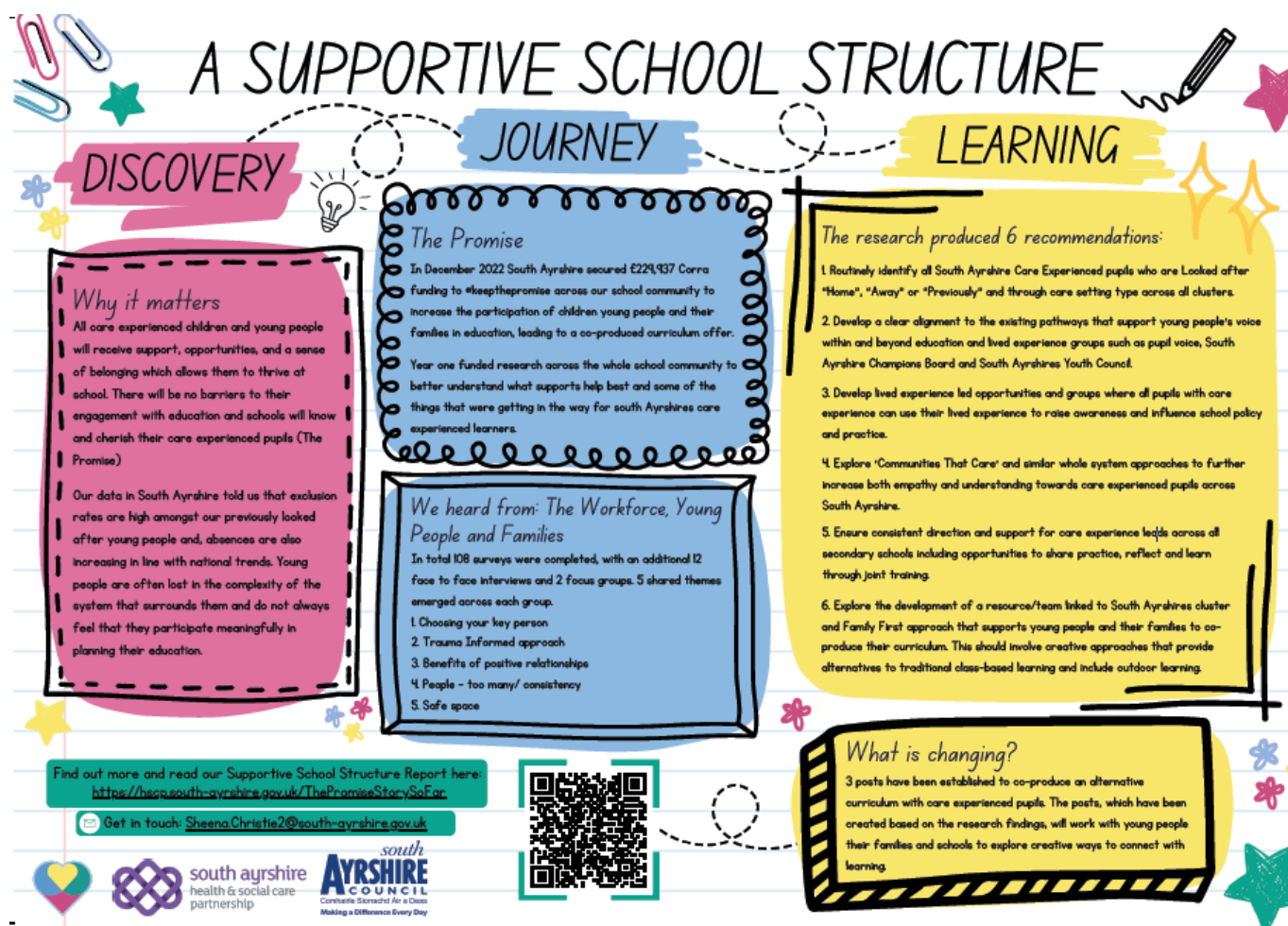


The research produced 6 recommendations:

1. Routinely identify all South Ayrshire Care Experienced pupils who are Looked after “Home”, “Away” or “Previously” and through care setting 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.
4. 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.

A further £425,019 was secured from Promise partnership Corra Foundation, £229,937 under supportive school structure, and South Ayrshire has employed a Research Assistant as part of the Champions Board to work with young people and families to develop a co-produced curriculum. The Research Assistant spoke to the workforce, families, and young people and produced six recommendations.

All 6 research recommendations will be incorporated into South Ayrshire's promise improvement areas 2024-30. There will be an evaluation of the impact on young people and families who take part in the co-produced curriculum.



Our story through data

Over the course of the last four years, we have continued to develop how we record our progress and the data we collect in South Ayrshire as support care experienced young people and the work of The Promise. We know that our data collection supports us to identify improvements for care experienced children, young people and adults and lets us identify areas that require further attention.

Our 10 **local** South Ayrshire promise Improvement areas have been tracked through a benefit tracking process see appendix 1.

The Promise Progress Framework was introduced in December 2024 to better understand and organise **national** level data that relates to care experienced children and young people and we have aligned our data to the ten national vision statements to reflect where we are on our Promise journey.

Reflections

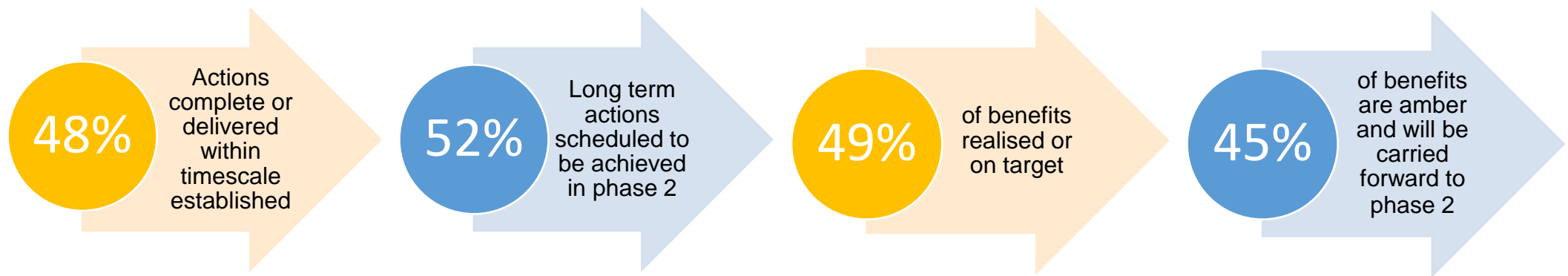
Over the last four years we have worked continuously to embed The Promise, and as can be seen from the report, a range of activities have taken place since 2018 to raise awareness around Corporate Parenting and our corporate responsibility to deliver on the ambition that South Ayrshire's children grow up, loved, safe and respected.

The alignment of cross-cutting agendas which share the principles of the Promise, such as Signs of Safety, National Trauma Training program and our Family First Model, have seen a significant cultural change within South Ayrshire, with emphasis on a strength-based approach, which places relationships at the heart of what we do and how we do it. This has allowed us a greater insight into lived experience, choice and control, early intervention, and whole family approaches, where services work with children, young people and families, rather than doing things to them.

South Ayrshire's, Elected Members, Community Planning Partnership and key leaders from the Council and Health and Social Care Partnership have been huge advocates, positioning the Promise as a priority not only within our Children's Service Plan, but setting out local priority areas within South Ayrshire's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and have also been key agents of change to embed the cultural change we have witnessed over the last 4 years. An example of this is seen through the development of South Ayrshires Equality Integrated Impact Assessment process, which now has Care as a protected characteristic, ensuring that the rights of our Care Experienced Children and the Promise, are considered at every point of our organisations transformational journey for future years and generations to come.

The awareness raising that has taken place through the duration of this plan has been rooted in the voice of Children and Young People with lived experience and it is due to the South Ayrshire Champions Board that Promise information and bespoke workshops were delivered across the workforce and our commissioned services.

Proactive and effective engagement and communications has been a key strength for South Ayrshire, and we have been able to see and track the impact our Promise actions have had. Thanks to our improved relational approach we are now able to understand from children, young people and families the difference that the changes we have made is making to their lives.



Over the past four years, we have focused our whole system change to deliver on the Promise, through our ten improvement areas. We have been able to measure authentic transformation through our benefits tracker on 47 measurable benefits.

This report describes the story of the journey that we have been on, and the changes made across a range of activities. It also emphasises how children and young people with experience of care have been at the heart of what we do, and how we do it. The benefits tracker enables us to evidence what difference this has made in a measurable way.

Of the thirty-one actions identified 2021-24, Fifteen (48%) are now complete a further sixteen (52%) are on target and will be carried onto plan 24-30. Over the course of 21-24 one action was superseded by a new action and two actions required an extension to the due date to accurately measure their impact.

Of the 47 benefits that were identified 14 (30%) have been realised as intended and delivered on in relation to the Promise action they were set within. 9 (19%) are green and on target 21 (45%) are amber and have been carried forward to phase 2 of our promise activity and 3 benefits are red these will be reevaluated and carried forward to phase 2. This is significant meaning that of the initial intention from the 2021 Plan, 49% are being delivered within the time scale established. The 45% of benefits which are amber link to longer term actions which will be carried over into the Plan 2024 – 2030. This reflects what we know about whole system, culture change, it is not without its challenges, the approach to care in Scotland requires a persistent and tenacious attention to ensure the change that the Promise told us was necessary.

Next Steps

We know that there is still more work to do to keep the promise by 2030. As we look ahead to the next phase of our plan, we will work towards the following:

Care as a protected characteristic: more work is required to map out implications this includes an exploration of our recruitment processes in relation to care experience. This may pose a challenge if extra resource is required to map implications and create additional provision.

Education and a supportive school structure: We have a strong long standing virtual school and will build on the family first model and take the learnings from the supportive school structure to progress improvement area 10 and engage the whole school community in the realisation of this improvement area.

The language of care: more time and energy is required to help to broaden our use of language that is easily understood, is positive and that does not compound stigma. Working alongside our trauma lead we can look at combining cross cutting agendas to incorporate trauma informed language. Support is required for some sections of our workforce to feel comfortable and able to push the boundaries of language.

Commissioning: We now need to extend the work we have been doing around commissioning and the Promise beyond services commissioned by South Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership, to ensure that South Ayrshire will incorporate 'quality of relationships' into all commissioning and monitoring frameworks as standard.

Data: We will continue to work with the promise to do data differently and will explore our data sets to understand their relationship and identify the gaps.

We will use the promise progress framework developed (see 10 Vision Statements below) at the end of 2024 and align this with our corporate parenting reporting to help us tell our story of progress.



Vision Statement One: Supporting children to stay with their families

Where children are in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.



Vision Statement Two: Supporting carers and providing stability

Scotland must limit the number of moves that children experience and support carers to continue to care.



Vision Statement Three: Education

Schools in Scotland must be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising that they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.



Vision Statement Four: Brothers and Sisters

Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.



Vision Statement Five: Physical Restraint

Scotland must strive to become a nation that does not restrain its children.



Vision Statement Six: Mental Health

Scotland must seek to uphold the wellbeing of care-experienced children and young people, and ensure that there is timely access to mental health support before crisis point so that children avoid hospitalisation.



Vision Statement Seven: Health

Care experienced children and young people have access to support ensuring that their health needs are fully met and potential for good health is maximised.



Vision Statement Eight: Justice and Secure Accommodation

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.



Vision Statement Nine: Aftercare

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supporting people to nurture them.



Vision Statement Ten: Support for care experienced adults

Care experienced adults must have a right to access supportive, caring services for as long as they require them. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

Place-based: We will explore how to align the Promise in a place-based way and will collaborate more closely with our Thriving Communities and Housing colleagues to look at the supports offered to those leaving care within the context of the recent redesign of our leaving care services.

Childrens Services Planning: We will map all the actions of the 5 priority areas; families, Included, Voice, Healthy and People through the lens of the promise to support the delivery of integrated, effective, and caring services in our communities.

Listening to those with lived experience: All our work will place those with lived experience at the heart and we will measure our success through the experiences of the people who use our services. This will require commitment and resource to do well, and we are aware that there is always a danger that participation may be tokenistic if not valued as central throughout all aspects of our service, design, delivery, and monitoring of our progress.

Appendix 1

KEY:

Blue – Benefit is realised.

Green – Project is on track.

Amber – Some issues, being managed and monitored.

Red – Significant issues, recovery plan in place.

- 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:

Impact

Five benefits have been **realised** these are:

- **Benefit 1** Lived experience is at the heart of increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise across SA workforce.
- **Benefit 2** Elected members are engaged and have a wide understanding of the promise.
- **Benefit 3** Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise across SA workforce.
- **Benefit 4** Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise using public facing platforms.
- **Benefit 5** The promise' is embedded in local strategy and all SAC staff have an increased awareness of the promise and improved access to South Ayrshires parenting promise.

Status

Action 1.1	South Ayrshire will recruit 3 new promise staff members for 1 year. The new recruits will sit within South Ayrshires Champions Board team and will ensure the voices of those with lived experience are at the very heart of promise activity.	Complete
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Action Update	<p>“Lived experience is at the heart of increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise across South Ayrshire’s workforce”.</p> <p>All posts were recruited to in September 2021. Two of the three posts were ringfenced for workers with lived experience of care. All three posts were given a one-year extension funded through Childrens Health Care and Justice services and ended on 22nd September 2023. Postholders with lived experience of care secured Participation Assistant posts with South Ayrshire Champions Board.</p>	
Action 1.2	6-monthly elected members’ briefings will be delivered by South Ayrshire’s Promise team and Champions Board ensuring young people with care experience have a pivotal role in designing and delivering the briefings	On target and to be carried forward
Action Update	<p>“Elected members will be engaged and have a wide understanding of the promise”.</p> <p>From November 2020, there have been six Elected Member briefings on The Promise including the latest briefing on 3rd September 2024.</p> <p>In addition, updates for plan 24-30 can now be included in the Elected Member Weekly Information Notes which is issued to all SAC Councillors and local MSPs/MPs each Friday, in a SWAY document, allowing the inclusion of images and links to videos/animations. This means Elected Members can be updated regularly and more informally.</p>	
Action 1.3	Promise information sessions and bespoke workshops will be delivered across teams and services including all relevant commissioned services those with lived experience of care will play a major role in designing and delivering all promise sessions target 1,000 participants over 12 months.	On target and to be carried forward
Action Update	<p>“Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise across South Ayrshire’s workforce”.</p> <p>Parenting Promise sessions have been delivered to over 1, 721 participants across South Ayrshire. This work continues and the most recent sessions have included combined Promise and Signs of Safety training for all South Ayrshires foster carers, twilight training for South Ayrshires teaching</p>	

staff and The Promise and children's rights training for residential care staff working across south Ayrshires children's houses in July 2024.

Between September and December 2024 workshops will include a specific focus on Plan 24-30 with 'Promising Times Ahead' events taking place on a regular basis.

Action 1.4	By December 2022 Promise resources including local publications workshop materials and briefing notes will be readily accessible on South Ayrshires intranet.	Complete
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Action Update	<p>"Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise".</p> <p>A Promise webpage was developed within the target timeframe on South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's website. The page includes sample local workshops, materials and links to The Promise Scotland resources which can be accessed here.</p>
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A Promise 'tile' on the main home page of South Ayrshire Councils website has been added in order to show the reach of the Promise across [South Ayrshire](#). The website has been recently updated to include [Plan 24-30](#).

Action 1.5	The workforce will be updated on our implementation of the promise through regular communications and briefings	On target and to be carried forward
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Action Update	<p>1. Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the promise.</p> <p>2. Elected members will be more engaged and have a wider understanding of the promise.</p> <p>The Promise has been promoted through a communications programme including Chief Executives update, Health and Social Care Partnership updates, social media platforms including Facebook livestreams.</p>
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There have been five short animations produced which highlight key elements of South Ayrshires Parenting Promise, these are available to watch on South Ayrshire Health and Social Care website.

South Ayrshire Champions Board have worked alongside leaders in Childrens Health Care and Justice Services to deliver a range of engagement events branded Promising Times Ahead and most recently through our 'keeping our promise video' which can be accessed [here](#).

Action 1.6	The Promise branding will be adopted across South Ayrshire South Ayrshires Parenting Promise will align with The Promise and will hold and monitor the impact of all South Ayrshires promise actions (September 2021- 2024).	On target and to be carried forward
Action update	<p>'The Promise' is embedded in local strategy and all South Ayrshire Council staff have an increased awareness of The Promise and improved access to South Ayrshires Parenting Promise.</p> <p>The Promise branding has been adapted for all South Ayrshire staff to download and add to their email signature. The branding includes an icon which links to South Ayrshires Parenting Promise and action plan as illustrated below.</p> <p>The Corporate Communications Team issued a reminder to South Ayrshire Council staff and Elected Members to add The Promise logo to their email signature. A message of encouragement to do so and a reminder of the process to follow was issued. The work to raise awareness will continue in line with the roll out of Plan 24-30.</p>	
Action 1.7	South Ayrshires Parenting Promise will align with The Promise and will hold and monitor the impact of all of South Ayrshire's Promise actions.	Complete
Action Update	South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise 2021-2030 also has a range of supporting documents and animations to make the key messages as accessible as possible.	

Aspects of improvement area 1 to be carried forward to plan 2024-30

Benefit	
1.2	Regular Elected Members' briefings will be delivered by South Ayrshire's Champions Board ensuring young people with care experience have a pivotal role in designing and delivering the briefings communications will include elected member updates in the Elected Member Weekly Information Notes. The Information Note is issued to all SAC Councillors and local MSPs/MPs each Friday, through a SWAY document, including images and links to videos/animations.
1.3	
1.5	
1.6	

Plan 2024-30 information sessions and bespoke workshops will be delivered across teams and services including all relevant commissioned services those with lived experience of care will play a major role in designing and delivering all promise sessions *identify target of participants over 12 months*.

The workforce will be updated on our implementation of the promise through regular communications and briefings. *We will develop a communications plan that promotes promise and plan 2024 – 30.*

The Promise branding will continue to be promoted and adopted across South Ayrshire.

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.

Action 2.1 is in progress and on target for its 2026 deadline. This action will be carried forward to plan 24-30.

Impact

Three benefits have been identified. Benefit one has been realised through the parenting promise (corporate parenting) performance framework. Benefits 2 and 3 are amber and work will continue through the next plan.

Benefit 1 – Establishment of a quantitative and qualitative reporting system which is fit for purpose giving a standard format for reporting.

Benefit 2 – Data gathered gives a clear picture of care-experience across the service.

Benefit 3 – Real life experiences are understood by decision makers.

		Status
Action 2.1	South Ayrshire will improve the quality and completeness of its data and consider the potential of data linkage to improve accountability for outcomes rather than inputs alone. We will do this by working with the promise Data for Children Collaborative towards developing data that is:	On target and to be carried over to plan 24-30

- Focussed on whole life stories.
- Has a wide understanding of all impact and their fit?
- Flexible and adaptive
- That has a use beyond reporting.
- Looks for impact.
- Focussed on avoiding costs occurring.
- Aims to improve.

Action Update

A comprehensive Parenting Promise Performance Framework has been developed. The Framework is being improved and built on with each iteration.

South Ayrshire is the only area in Scotland taking part in The Promise Data for Children Collaborative. The title of the project is 'What data does Scotland collect and analyse that directly and indirectly impacts the lives of children and their families, and how can we best map it?' The project aims to build a cohesive central picture of all data in processes and systems that directly and indirectly impact children and their families in Scotland. Uniquely, the project approaches the mapping exercise from the perspective of 'what matters' to children and families, as opposed to being driven by the organisations and systems that currently exist. The project carried out a survey with services across the HSCP, South Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran to determine what data services were collecting and what this was used for. The findings were used to shape how to share this information and map what matters to children and families. South Ayrshire continues to be part of the project as they build a data capture tool. This is an incredibly complex process.

A new corporate parenting performance framework (data set) was presented to the Corporate Parenting Executive group in 2023 and has been reported on since August 2024.

Aspects of improvement area 2 to be carried forward to plan 2024-30

- Data gathered gives a clear picture of care-experience across the service.
 - Real life experiences are understood by decision makers.
- Involvement in the national data map will continue.

South Ayrshires Parenting Promise Performance Framework has been developed. The Framework will continue to be improved and built on with each iteration and will incorporate the national promise progress framework which was launched in December 2024.

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.

Of the three benefits identified Benefit 1 has been realised benefits 2 and 3 are on track and will be carried through to the next plan.

Benefit 1 – Upskilled and inspection ready workforce (small test of change)

Benefit 2 – Young people and their families feel optimistic and have a positive outlook towards the future.

Benefit 3 – Young people and their families benefit from stronger nurturing relationships that place their individual rights at the centre.

		Status
Action 3.1	South Ayrshire will introduce Children's Rights training as essential for all SAC Staff to include training on completing Children's rights impact assessments as part of Equality Impact Assessment process	Complete
Action point update	Upskilled and inspection ready workforce (small test of change) As a result of discussions on how we best upskill the workforce on Children's Rights, Taster sessions were delivered on The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in partnership with Education Scotland and Strathclyde University with 30 participants taking part. This was followed by a bespoke children's rights training in September 2023 which was delivered by children in Scotland through South Ayrshire Health and Social Care's Practice Development Team. This work will sit within	

Children's Service Planning Group moving forward to enable wider roll out across South Ayrshire Council.

Care has been identified as a protected characteristic in line with South Ayrshire Council plans to develop an integrated equalities assessment. This means that anyone introducing new policies, procedures, strategies, projects, and financial decisions whether working directly or indirectly with young people and their families, will have to consider the Promise and acknowledge care as a protected characteristic as core to all new initiatives.

Action 3.2	South Ayrshire will recognise that children's rights are most often realised through relationships with loving, attentive caregivers	On target to be carried forward.
Action update	<p>1. Young people and their families feel optimistic and have a positive outlook towards the future.</p> <p>2. Young people and their families benefit from stronger nurturing relationships that place their individual rights at the centre.</p> <p>Relationship based practice is currently being actively modelled through South Ayrshire Champions board (quarterly Champions Board meeting with key decision makers from across directorates), young carers activity, League of Champions, Signs of Safety approach, rights based, nurture and trauma informed practice alongside asset-based approaches to community development with strong examples in Wallacetown and Lochside. All these approaches are being used to provide examples of how relationships with loving attentive caregivers realise rights. The importance of listening and responding has been exemplified by meetings previously known as LAC (Looked After Children) reviews where we have listened to young people's request to eradicate the use of the terminology 'LAC' and have changed LAC reviews to 'name of young person's meeting' i.e. 'Chloe's meeting' this came into practice in 2022. Some young people with care experience will play an active part in South Ayrshires newly formed Youth Council alongside their non care experienced peers and VOICE has been identified as a priority group within South Ayrshires Children and Young Peoples Services Plan 2023-2026.</p>	

Aspects of improvement area 3 to be carried forward to plan 2024-30

Benefit

- 3.1 Although this benefit has been achieved within a small scale 'test of change' we will carry this over to plan 2024-30. This work will sit within Children's Service Planning and GIRFEC
- 3.2 Young people and their families feel optimistic and have a positive outlook towards the future.
- 3.2 Young people and their families benefit from stronger nurturing relationships that place their individual rights at the centre.

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

Overall action 4.1 is completed with trauma informed practice as one of the top 3 Coast modules completed by South Ayrshires workforce (source Organisational Development, May 2024). Trauma informed practice remains critical to the work of the promise 24-30 and actions and benefits will be carried forward to monitor the impact of the work that has started.

Impact

Of the six associated benefits 1 benefit has been realised 3 benefits are on track and 2 benefits are amber.

- **Benefit 1** – Children young people and families are more engaged in their care planning.
- **Benefit 2** – Better planning and impact assessing - based on improved understanding of trauma.
- **Benefit 3** – Upskilled workforce and elected members.
- **Benefit 4** – Reduction in staff absence rates
- **Benefit 5** – improved health & well-being for staff
- **Benefit 6** – Building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council by becoming a relationship and strengths-based organisation and providing more compassionate and responsive services

Action 4.1	Expand existing nurture and trauma informed training as part of a rights-based package and include training around care-based language	
Action update.	<p>Children, young people, and their families are more engaged in their care planning.</p> <p>An accredited training calendar in place for delivery of Level 2 and Level 3 trauma training. We will now need to look at the long-term impact to understand how training is embedding in practice and look at the impact of Wellbeing Officer post that was created. We plan to review wording of the Improvement Action and align benefits to the 24-30 plan.</p> <p>2. Better planning and impact assessing - based on improved understanding of trauma</p> <p>3. Upskilled workforce and elected members</p> <p>4. Reduction in staff absence rates</p> <p>5. improved health & well-being for staff</p> <p>6. Building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council by becoming a relationship and strengths-based organisation and providing more compassionate and responsive services</p>	

Benefit	Aspects of improvement area 3 to be carried forward to plan 2024-30
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will look at ways to ensure there is better planning and impact assessing. This is based on our improved understanding of trauma; integrated impact assessments are in place. We will continue to upskill our workforce and elected members and have rolled out an accredited training calendar until March 2025. Evaluations for training course are in place but further work will take place to understand the long-term impact how learning is being embedded into practice. We will continue to work on the reduction of staff absence rates in phase two. We will review the wording of the improvement actions whilst utilising staff wellbeing surveys and focus groups with the use of the Warwick Wellbeing Scale as a baseline. We will analyse findings of staff wellbeing survey and using data to influence wellbeing plans. The CORA funded test of change work with leisure will be carried over to phase two and will be supported by the level 7 Wellbeing Assistant. This will look at occupational health and maximising attendance.

- A Wellbeing Strategy is to be developed and this will develop through the guidance of the focus groups.
- We will continue to work on building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council by becoming a relationship and strengths-based organisation and providing more compassionate and responsive services. During phase two we will focus on increasing engagement levels working within services, complaint figures, violence at work, and lived experience.

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

Action 5.3 is completed. Actions 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4 are on target and will be carried forward to plan 24-30.

Impact

One benefit has been realised on the basis of the activity outlined under improvement area 5 and 4 benefits are currently amber.

- **Benefit 1** – children and young people will know their own story and will feel more nurtured and included.
- **Benefit 2** Services understand that they exist to serve children and young people.
- **Benefit 3** – All children's hearing reports will reflect care-based language and be understandable for children and their families.
- **Benefit 4** – Young people feel included, nurtured and that they belong.
- **Benefit 5** – Children and young people will know their own story and will understand their childhood.

		Status
Action 5.1	Information will be written in care-based language to ensure it is easily understood positive and non-stigmatising to children and families	On target, to be carried forward
Action update	1. Children and young people will know their own story and will feel more nurtured and included. 2. services understand that they exist to serve children and young people.	

There has been ongoing application of the use of Care Based Language within operational services. Residential service and Young Peoples Support and Transition Team have been particularly focused on the care-based language agenda in their reports and young people records in relation to pathway planning.

The Head of Service has carried out dip samples and has observed some strong practice of Care Based Language and notes written to the young person themselves. Through the application of the Promise, the Signs of Safety, and the UNCRC, young people's voices are heard louder and clearer. Young people have themselves told us to not talk about LAC meeting, but rather to talk of the young person's meeting, such as Mark's first meeting, Mark's second meeting. This is now embedded in practice.

There is a restructuring of the Children Services Planning Partnership and within that there will now be a Voice subgroup to ensure that the voice of Children is heard. As well as a Voice subgroup there is also a Promise subgroup developed.

There has been a resurrection of the Champions Board, with Senior decision makers in the council and Health and Social Care Partnership – where Care Experienced Children are able to talk to and challenge policy and processes for Care Experienced Children. attended by the New Chief executive, elected members, Director of Education and the Head of Service and Senior Manager for Children's Health Care and Justice. And the Champions themselves with other Care Experienced young people. There is momentum around this agenda and more actions around the use of My Future My Plans are being prepared to capture the voice of children in a way which is understood to young people within reports and case notes. This will mean that for those coming back to South Ayrshire to read reports about themselves, and their story they will be able to follow it and engage with it.

The Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers (QARO) have developed an audit tool which is now reported into the Corporate Parenting Executive which measures the quality of the reports and the meeting which is attended by the young person and the Social Worker. There is reflection on the views of the young person in the audit report and evidence of the report being shared with the young person and the family.

Action 5.2	When there are times when statutory language needs to be used, this will be done sparingly and will be explained clearly to children and families.	On target to be carried forward
Action update	All children's hearing reports will reflect care-based language and be understandable for children and their families. There is an appreciation of this, however there is limited evidence to date that formal statutory language is used sparingly in documentation. There is more work required to ensure all our policies and procedures are written with care-based language	
Action 5.3	South Ayrshire will stop using the word 'respite' and rethink the nature of short breaks.	Complete
Action Point update	Young people feel included, nurtured and that they belong. The use of the term "respite" has been removed from formal documentation, where identified and within spoken language, however this is ongoing work. the preferred terminology 'short breaks' is more prevalent. Respite is no longer used formally to describe some of the transformational work that the Council and Health and Social Care Partnership have supported.	
Action 5.4	Simple, caring language will be used in the writing of care files.	On target to be carried forward
Action update	Children and young people will know their own story and will understand their childhood. There are now positive examples of reports for Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and Children's Hearings, written with the child at the centre, including the use of cartoons etc. This has been acknowledged by Children Panel members and Childrens Reporters alike.	

Aspects of Improvement Area 5 to be carried forward to plan 2024-30

- Further attention will be given to ensure all South Ayrshire policies and procedures are written with care-based language.
- Further work will be undertaken through young peoples' meetings (previously known as looked after reviews) to increase young peoples participation in and ownership of their meetings.

6

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

Of the five actions that sit under area 6, 2 have been realised and 1 is on target and 2 are amber and will be carried forward to plan 24-30.

- **Benefit 1** – Improved engagement and participation resulting in better outcomes for those who use services.
- **Benefit 2** – Commissioned services better reflect the needs of the community.
- **Benefit 3** – Children are supported to live at home or with family or in family type care.
- **Benefit 4** – Community based: relational support is available through a Family First approach.
- **Benefit 5** – The collaboration between South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs partnership (ADP) and children's service planning in South Ayrshire will deliver a more aligned service which provides consistency for young people and their families.

		Status
Action 6.1	The 10 principles of intensive family support will be reflected in the planning, commissioning, and evaluation of all support provided for children and their families	On target to be carried forward
Action Update	Improved engagement and participation resulting in better outcomes for those who use services. The ten Principles are seen in the investment of local services, and the commissioning of services. In comparing our application with the Promise there is evidence of our family support being Holistic and relational, Therapeutic, Community Based, working with Family assets, empowering and flexible.	
Action 6.2	South Ayrshire will incorporate 'quality of relationships' into local commissioning and monitoring frameworks as standard	Completed
Action Update	1. Commissioned services better reflect the needs of the community. 2. Children supported to live at home or with family or in family type care.	

100% of core commissioned services must evidence that they can now fully involve those with lived experience in review of services.

We are gathering some rich examples from families' children and young people of the positive impact these services are making to their lives.

Action 6.3	We will build on whole family support models introduced by South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to include intensive family support principles and integrate the work of the Alcohol and Drugs partnership with our Promise activity	On target
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Action Update

1. **Community based; relational support available through the Belmont Family First service.**
2. **the collaboration between South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs partnership (ADP) and children's service planning in South Ayrshire will deliver a more aligned service which provides consistency for young people and their families.**

A volume of work has taken place which is supported by the national focus on Whole Family Approaches through Children's Service planning.

Aspects of Improvement Area 6 to be carried forward to plan 2024-30

The 10 principles of intensive family support will be reflected in the planning, commissioning, and evaluation of all support provided for children and their families.

We will also begin to map out Self Direct Support (SDS) and gather examples to analyse and explore further how we can improve how SDS is used.

All of the work across children service planning which links to whole family support will be mapped and aligned to the promise.

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

Of the six benefits identified under improvement area seven. 1 has been realised, three are amber and on track as their associated action has been superseded by a new action which incorporates care as a protected characteristic. One is red despite the associated action 7.3 being partially achieved.

- **Benefit 1** – Workforce and elected members upskilled in equality impact assessment and the impact of care experience.
- **Benefit 2** – Better planning and impact assessing - based on improved understanding of equalities and care experience.
- **Benefit 3** – Building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership by becoming an equalities-focused organisation.
- **Benefit 4** – Increase in participation and access to range of services and activities by providing free bus transport to care leavers aged 22-30.
- **Benefit 5** – The digital participation of young people with care experience and their families will improve through better Wi-Fi access across South Ayrshire action achieved benefit was not realised within the time despite the completion of the associated action (7.3)
- **Benefit 6** – Children's Health Care and Justice services will proactively engage in addressing Child Poverty in South Ayrshire

Action 7.1	We will recognise 'Care' as a protected characteristic (and map out the implications of this across services)	Superseded by new action
Action Update	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workforce and Elected Members upskilled in equality impact assessment and the impact of care experience. 2. Better planning and impact assessing - based on improved understanding of equalities and care experience. 3. Building a better reputation for South Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership by becoming an equalities-focused organisation <p>South Ayrshire council have been working on an integrated equalities assessment that will include care as a protected characteristic within the integrated Equalities Impact Assessment process and includes the promise and UNCRC as key components the</p>	

Integrated Equalities impact assessment was presented to cabinet on 26th September 2023. Further information on the follow up stages, including testing of the IIA process, training and full roll-out can be found [here](#) in the Cabinet paper.

Action 7.2

We will aim to secure free travel for care leavers and those with care experience.

Testing due to end 2025 to be carried forward to plan 24-30

Action Update

Increase in participation and access to range of services and activities by providing free bus transport to care leavers aged 22-30.

Elected Members supported the exploration of extending free travel for care leavers up to the age of 30 years in response to a request from South Ayrshire Champions Board. Thriving Communities and Childrens Health Care and Justice services have been tasked with working together to look at how we might implement free travel. An amount of £20k from South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Improvement and Innovation fund has been allocated to undertake a test of change which is currently underway with 17 beneficiaries experiencing free travel.

7.3

Explore free community-based Wi-Fi for Ayr North and Glendoune.

Partially achieved to be carried on in new plan.

The Corporate Parenting Lead Officer has worked with ICT Strategy and Delivery to map the potential Wi-Fi reach for communities via South Ayrshire Councils buildings and properties and with colleagues in economic development around Digital Connection and WIFI connectivity as part of Ayrshire Growth Deal. Most recently our care experienced young people and families have benefited from 60 mobile phones with data through our commissioning framework Virgin Media o2 Social Value Plan. This has also allowed us to access to the national data bank through the good thing's foundation.

While this action is complete, and an exploration has been undertaken, further time is required to progress digital connectivity and use access to the databank to understand the impact on families.

Action 7.4	we will strengthen the relationship between South Ayrshires child poverty activity and our Children's Health Care and Justice Services.	To be carried on in new plan.
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Action update	Children's Health Care and Justice services will proactively engage in addressing Child Poverty in South Ayrshire: Child Poverty is a standing item on the Joint Leadership group, which is attended by HSCP CHCJ, Education and the Children Services planning lead officer.
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Additional income has been provided through the Information and Advice Hub for 357 referred families in 2021.

A Virtual Finance Officer is currently based within the Information and Advice hub and their roles main aim is to target and reach parents and families that are unknown to the system as being in the 'poverty bracket' or finding themselves in that situation following the cost-of-living crisis and fallout of COVID and lockdown. We want to preserve the dignity of families so that they don't have to go into school and 'declare' themselves as struggling. Ideally schools will share details via social media, text messages, signposting and that families will be able to make contact remotely and without being seen.

A discussion took place to identify how we ensure an alignment and support to deliver on a cohesive Child Poverty Action plan. Child Poverty will also be a subgroup of the new Structures Children Services Planning Partnership. There is good "raw" data available which will support the performance management of our Child Poverty plan and actions associated, this will inform our Children Services Plan 2023-2026

The Integrated impact assessment ensured that care experience was identified as a protected characteristic when developing South Ayrshires [Child-Poverty-Strategy-2024-2029](#).

Aspects of improvement area 7 to be added to plan 24-30

7.1	We will continue our mapping exercise around digital inclusivity.
7.2	We will aim to secure free travel for care leavers and those with care experience, explore the possibility of pulling into poverty action plan. Test of change underway requires to be monitored to see impact and identify how the offer of free travel might be rolled out linked to poverty strategy and sustainability.
7.4	Children's Health Care and Justice services will proactively engage in addressing Child Poverty in South Ayrshire released 3.05m into families, 1804 individuals supported, adults, justice and health services, Families have extra money to help with care for families. Investment in additional training - awareness raising, Information and advice hub - to sign post - referrals. Now standard practice - issue re child poverty. Child poverty strategy - sight on child poverty action plan and strategy.

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.

Impact

Of the 5 benefits associated with improvement area eight, 1 is green, 3 are amber and 1 is red as outlined below.

- **Benefit 1** – South Ayrshires "whole System" understands and reflects the need for children to have loving and supportive relationships.
- **Benefit 2** – South Ayrshire will develop a better understanding of child protection activity and process including how practitioners manage risk to allow children and young people to remain at home safely.
- **Benefit 3** – South Ayrshire will understand non-familial harm and how this is addressed through a contextual safeguarding approach.
- **Benefit 4** – Children and Young People will not be restricted by processes which impact upon their ability to have meaningful relationships with key adults.
- **Benefit 5** – Children will be able to maintain relationships with caring staff who are important to them.

		Status
Action 8.1	The Signs of Safety philosophy and approach is adopted across Children's Health Care and Justice Services and informs a Family Centred Council and Health and Social Care Partnership approach.	Complete But will be carried on to new plan
Action Update	<p>South Ayrshires "whole System" understands and reflects the need for children to have loving and supportive relationships.</p> <p>The Signs of Safety has been adopted by the CHCJ and it informs all Children and Families work and under pins the culture of "Keeping South Ayrshire's Children in South Ayrshire and in Families or family type support".</p>	
Action 8.2	We will align broadening our understanding of risk to our Child Protection activity.	To be carried through to new plan.
Action Update	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. South Ayrshire will develop a better understanding of child protection activity and process including how practitioners manage risk to allow children and young people to remain at home safely. 2. South Ayrshire will understand non-familial harm and how this is addressed through a contextual safeguarding approach. <p>Of 31, 041 courses completed through the Coast training modules, Child Protection is one of top three completed courses.</p> <p>A contextual safeguarding audit has now been developed for Childrens Health Care and Justice staff and we have a baseline for broadening our understanding of risk. It is anticipated that additional benefits will be identified as this work progresses.</p>	
Action 8.3	There will be no blanket policies or guidance within South Ayrshire that prevents the maintenance of relationships between young people and those who care for them.	to be carried through to new plan

Action Update	<p>Children and Young People will not be restricted by processes which impact upon their ability to have meaningful relationships with key adults.</p> <p>There will be no blanket policies that prevent the maintenance of relationships between young people and those who care for them.</p>	
Action 8.4	Settings of care will be able to facilitate the protection of relationships that are important to children and young people.	To be carried through to new plan.
Action Update	<p>Children will be able to maintain relationships with caring staff who are important to them.</p> <p>There continues to be an emphasis upon maintaining relationships within Children Services and ensuring that those who are important to the Child can continue to maintain that relationship. There are recent examples of young people having the same Social Worker for some 13 years and being consistent through to a present crisis. As well as young people maintaining positive supportive relationships with staff, outside of their day to day working role.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place at the Champions Board which placed an importance on researching what mentoring would look like for Children with Care experience. Various options will be considered moving forward.</p>	

Aspects of improvement area 8 to be carried forward to plan 24-30

8.2	<p>We will continue to develop and use our Contextual Safeguarding Audit Tool.</p> <p>We have carried a Child protection Survey which we presented to the Child Protection Committee. This analysed how we approach risk, and a new staff survey will be carried out in phase 2 to continue our improvements around risk.</p>
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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.

Action 9.1 and Action 9.2 are both currently on target and will be carried forward to plan 24-30.

The two associated benefits are amber.

- **Benefit 1** – An improved quality of supervision to develop a more confident competent and upskilled workforce.
- **Benefit 2** – Improved staff wellbeing which could also maximise attendance and retention of staff by 5%

Action 9.1	South Ayrshire Health and Social Care partnership will establish a standard for supervision which incorporates a range of approaches including coaching, action learning sets and peer mentoring.	To be carried forward to new plan
Action Update	An improved quality of supervision to develop a more confident competent and upskilled workforce. Supervision framework completed and is in operation across sections of Children health care and justice services.	
Action 9.2	Supervision approaches will nurture our workforce to behave and treat children in a way that is relational rather than procedural and process driven.	To be carried through to new plan.
Action Update	Improved staff wellbeing which could also maximise attendance and retention of staff by 5%. It is hoped that the scaffolding of support offered by robust supervision approaches will offer those involved the opportunity to explore and test relational practice and challenge procedural and process driven approaches.	
9.1	Carry over to Phase 2 as some teams are embedding this well but there is still some way to go for further improvements. We are developing a dashboard to have a deeper dive into what the progress looks like. A pilot is going to be rolled out within the Nurture Team within Education which will focus on attachment in action.	
9.2		

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.

Of the seven benefits associated with improvement area 10, one is realised, one is red and five are amber.

- **Benefit 1** – Every school in South Ayrshire will have a clear understanding of relationship-based practice.
- **Benefit 2** – All school and service improvement plans, and Pupil Equity Plans will reflect the range of activity underway to improve outcomes for all children and young people, including those who are care experienced.
- **Benefit 3** – Robust and tracking monitoring systems will be embedded to support improved outcomes for children and young people.
- **Benefit 4** – All care experienced young people will leave school with an appropriate level of SCQF literacy and numeracy qualifications.
- **Benefit 5** – The number of care experienced children and young people accessing extra-curricular opportunities offered by schools and partners will increase.
- **Benefit 6** – A reduction in exclusions supported by early and effective multi-agency intervention.
- **Benefit 7** – All care experienced young people will achieve a positive and sustained destination.

		Status
Action 10.1	All South Ayrshire School Improvement Plans will value and recognise the needs of their care experienced pupils with robust tracking of attendance and attainment so that support can be given early.	On track
Action Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school in South Ayrshire will have a clear understanding of relationship-based practice. • All school and service improvement plans, and Pupil Equity Plans will reflect the range of activity underway to improve outcomes for all children and young people, including those who are care experienced. • Robust and tracking monitoring systems will be embedded to support improved outcomes for children and young people. 	

- **All care experienced young people will leave school with an appropriate level of SCQF literacy and numeracy qualifications.**

Care Experience Leads have been identified across all secondary schools and have the responsibility to track attendance attainment and participation alongside building relationships with pupils with care experience. Attendance This session SAC has identified attendance as a priority and is working with guidance teams across all Secondary Schools to monitor and adapt systems. Teams are sharing good practice across the local authority. Attendance statistics are shared with each secondary school and can be identified as cohorts of learners or patterns to allow support to be identified at the earliest opportunity. Care experienced young people are identified within each school and attendance monitored within the attendance system. Our data analyst provided the virtual Head Teacher with monthly updates on attendance for children and young people who are care experienced. The Virtual School HT has been included in secondary school visits alongside the Director of Education to discuss young people with experience of care, qualifications and supports in place to support young people to achieve their potential.

Action 10.2	Care experienced young people actively participate in all subjects and extra-curricular activities in schools.	To be carried through to new plan
Action Update	<p>The number of care experienced children and young people accessing extra-curricular opportunities offered by schools and partners will increase.</p> <p>School trackers are now able to identify involvement in extracurricular activities to allow supports to be put in place to encourage young people with care experience to take part as fully as their non care experienced peers.</p>	
Action 10.3	The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from South Ayrshires Schools will end.	To be carried through to new plan
Action Update	A reduction in exclusions supported by early and effective multi-agency intervention.	

The introduction of the Family First model includes the virtual head teacher. Focus on those at risk of exclusion will help to ensure supports are in place to support the young person and to reduce the risk of school exclusion. Virtual HT and QIM hosted a 'crisis management' summit. There is representation from secondary school to focus on how we support young people who are in crisis, addressing alternative aspects of the curriculum. All schools must contact Director of education if there is a risk of exclusion of a young person who is care experienced. Supportive school structure activity funded by CORRA has a focus on a co-produced alternative curriculum that offers alternatives to traditional classroom learning.

Action 10.4	South Ayrshire Schools will support and ensure care experienced young people go on to genuinely positive destinations, such as further education or employment.	On track to be carried through to new plan
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Action Update	<p>All care experienced young people will achieve a positive and sustained destination.</p> <p>The Virtual Schools HT now manages South Ayrshire Skills Academy (SASkA) and can ensure care experienced young people can access support from this facility is appropriate. Detail of report published in Aug from Scottish Government shows SAC statistics. Improvements can be made in this area. The promise award has been introduced across South Ayrshire Schools https://education.gov.scot/resources/keeping-the-promise-award-programme/</p>	
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