



Annual Report 2023-24

(Covering period 01.8.2023 – 31.07.2024)

Priorities 2024-25

(Covering period 01.08.2024 – 31.07.2025)

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Foreword

Once again, it's a pleasure to present this year's South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) annual report.

Although South Ayrshire is often thought of as affluent, and affectionately remembered as “Scotland’s Holiday County” like everywhere else South Ayrshire has challenges, with the 12th highest deprived data zones in Scotland in areas that include Ayr Central, Ayr North, and Carrick. Recent studies suggest the number of children in South Ayrshire is around 16,800, with 1.2% of our 16–17 year olds claiming unemployment benefit.

By way of reference, looking over a two-year period from 2022 to 2024, we can see that 29% of children placed on the Child Protection Register and 47% of children being looked after are living in the Ayr Central and Ayr North locality.

So, in part, this will explain why, over this academic year, CPC activity and indeed this annual report has a deeper dive into the local trends and patterns that cause or influence child poverty, and in conjunction with South Ayrshire’s Community Planning Partnership, Child Poverty Strategy, identify what mitigating factors we can influence and support to reduce the risk.

Despite the challenges of budgets, workloads, recruitment and retention of a skilled trauma responsive workforce, I must recognise that on an almost daily basis, I see evidence of the commitment and dedication of practitioners and managers right across services, to protect South Ayrshire’s children from abuse and neglect, and this has to be commended.

Over this year there continues to be a noticeable change in the approach to Child Protection in South Ayrshire, with the ethos of the “*Signs of Safety*” being further developed in year two of implementation. There has also been a long-term investment in training and testing of the approach, which has contributed to the change in culture in South Ayrshire.

Moving forward we plan to revise this annual report, and indeed create a child friendly version, as engaging with children & young people is the ultimate reason we exist.

Jim Kerr
Independent Chair

South Ayrshire Child Protection
Committee (CPC)



South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

Background

South Ayrshire covers 472 square miles with both urban locations in towns including Girvan, Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Symington, Dundonald and Tarbolton, and rural locations that include Annbank, Mossblown, Coylton, Maybole and Dailly. It has a population of around 112,000.

In this reporting period, South Ayrshire had 508 registered care experienced children and young people attending school or an early learning partner centre. We began this reporting period with 43 children on the Child Protection Register (CPR). This was almost double the 2022 figure of 22. It's the voices and opinions of these care experienced children, and those who feature on the CPR that essentially influence the direction, priorities and activities of the CPC.

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

As detailed at Appendix 1 of this report, the CPC comprises of membership and participation from people with skills and experience throughout a range of services, and agencies including amongst others, Children and Families Social Work, the Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS, Education, Police, Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP), Scottish Childrens Reporter Administration (SCRA), and the third / voluntary sector including Aberlour Trust and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA).

This year we saw the first production of the Child Protection Lead Officer's quarterly report, advising the CPC and Chief Officers Group (COG) of key national developments and local issues which may impact on child protection work within South Ayrshire.

The CPC considers and evaluates information from a variety of sources including the production of a quarterly data report, the data from the Child Protection Register, SCRA, Learning Reviews, formal inspections of Childrens Services, case file audits and national developments.

The CPC is committed to its responsibility to keep children in South Ayrshire safe from harm, whether abuse or neglect has or is likely to take place. It has an obligation to promote awareness of child protection to the South Ayrshire communities, and to broadcast good practice within and across agencies, as well as leading on training and development. Given the expanding specialist membership of the CPC this year it created a members induction guide, placing an emphasis on all members to participate

in and support the CPC, helping to make South Ayrshire the best place for children and families, that it matters to us that all young people are listened to, and get the chance to grow up loved, safe and respected.

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

Vision, Mission, Values and Aims

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

Vision Statement
The South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is committed to working together to protect South Ayrshire's children from abuse and neglect.
Mission Statement
It is everyone's job to make sure that children in South Ayrshire are safe from abuse and neglect. We will strive to ensure that the protection of children is a responsibility that is shared by all our staff and with the community.
Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect• Equity• Child-centred• Collaboration

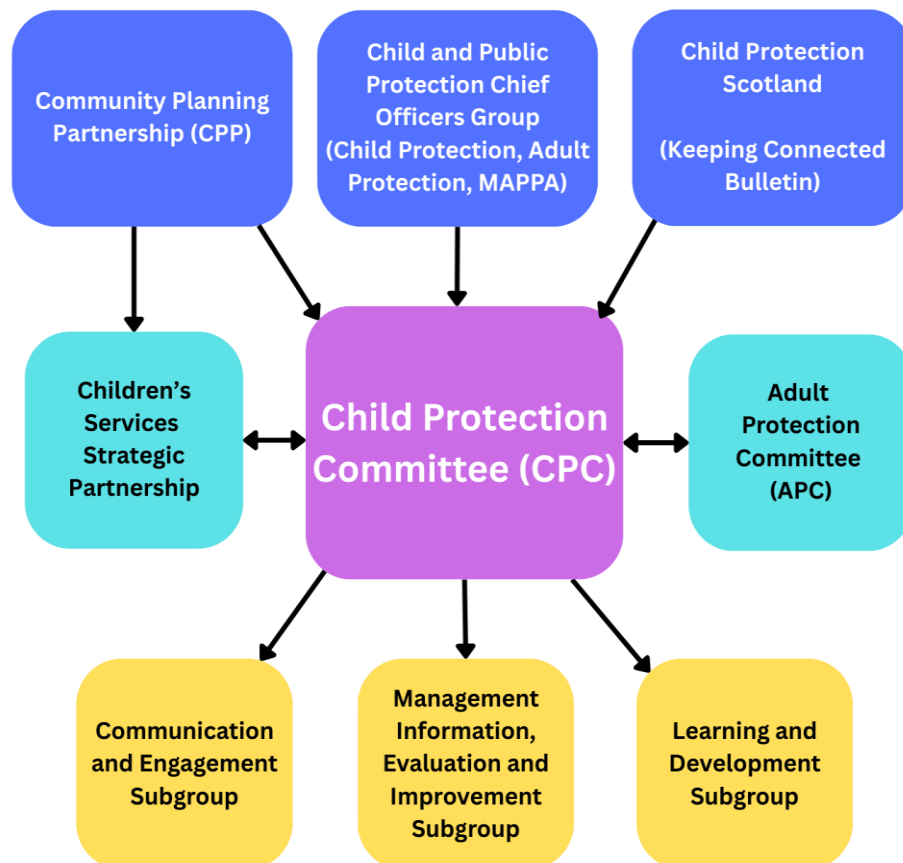
Aims of South Ayrshire Child Protection Committee

The aims of the Child Protection Committee are to ensure:

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

Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Local Governance Arrangements



In principle, the CPC is viewed as a subgroup of the Community Planning Partnership under the directive of the Child Services Planning Partnership (CSPP), which has overall responsibility for producing the integrated Children & Young Peoples Services Plan which you can access [here](#). The CPC reports annually to the CSPP and influences this report.

In addition, the South Ayrshire CPC works in partnership with both North and East Ayrshire's CPCs to encourage, where practicable, a comprehensive approach to policies, practice, and peer development.

Recent examples of this include the development of the Pan Ayrshire Learning Review Guidance, the production of the Pan Ayrshire Child Protection Procedures, the implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) and establishment of the Ayrshire Joint Investigative Interview (JII) Team. We have also developed Pan-Ayrshire guidance on the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 (ACRA) which raises the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years. This Guidance provides both the local framework and defines the operational roles, responsibilities

and processes that allow agencies to respond to situations where there is reason to believe that a child, whilst under the age of 12 years, is responsible for causing or risking causing harm to another person.

The CPC also maintains close dialogue which takes place on a national basis with CELCIS (Centre for excellence for children’s care & protection) and active participation within the CPC (Scotland) arena.

Chief Officers Group

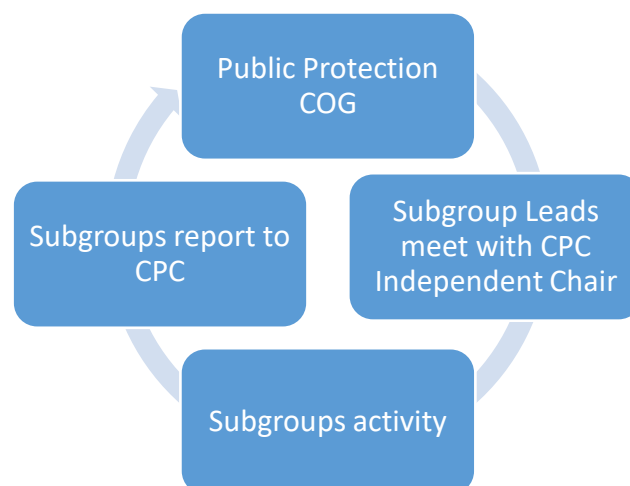
The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 requires that each CPC be governed by a Public Protection Chief Officers Group. (COG). The COG comprises the Chief Executives of South Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran and the Ayrshire Commander for Police Scotland. The COG is responsible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

The CPC reports developments to the COG every three months and is one of several key foundations which are obligated to report. The others include:

- South Ayrshire Adult Protection Committee (APC).
- South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP).
- South of Scotland Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- South Ayrshire Suicide Prevention Oversight Group.
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The COG drives forward an extensive work plan and routinely evaluates CPC tasks to ensure there is a clear focus on continuous improvement and accountability.

This was the first full operational year for our three new subgroups since they were revised in January 2023. The reporting mechanisms for these subgroups are detailed below:



Management Information, Evaluation & Improvement sub-group (MIEI)

The Lead Officer for Child Protection chairs this sub-group and call upon a multi-agency response to inter-agency guidance, providing an overview of data and evidence, having responsibility for quality assurance and self-evaluation mechanisms. This ensures that the processes of annual, and quarterly reports would be framed and administered more timeously and effectively.

Further outcomes are detailed at the 'Child Protection Trends Analysis' section of this report.

Learning and Development Subgroup (L&D)

This subgroup remains shared with the Adult Protection Committee (APC) with representation from SCRA, Voluntary Agency South Ayrshire (VASA), Quality Assurance, Social Work, Policy Implementation, Education, NHS, Corporate Patenting, Children & Families, Adult Mental Health, Adult Social Work, Procurement, and Planning & Performance.

Its outcomes can be linked to the Training section of this report.

Communication & Engagement Subgroup (C&E)

The subgroup has updated its multi-agency membership to focus on developing a model and process for engaging with communities and professionals across South Ayrshire. The subgroup has expanded its reach to include housing, education, health, individuals with lived experience, and thriving communities. This work is being achieved by providing clear public information and engaging at community events, including information on how to report child protection concerns.

Additionally, this work involved updating the Child Protection Website in consultation with our partner agencies. You can visit the website at <https://hscp.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ProtectingYoungPeople>

They are working to develop our Child Protection information leaflets for families and children. The leaflets aim to provide clear and accessible information for children, young people, parents and carers around Child Protection processes.

We are enhancing our information sharing for local and national awareness-raising campaigns and disseminating relevant information, policies, good practices, and learnings from reviews and other improvement activities.

Regular bulletins, titled 'Keeping Connected,' continue to be issued by CPC Scotland and are distributed across CPC members in South Ayrshire to share knowledge and experiences.

Child Protection Activity

National Child Protection (CP) Procedures 2023

In January 2022 the three Ayrshire Independent Chairs, of the CPCs, suggested the creation of a Pan Ayrshire Group to analysis the existing Child Protection guidance and to plan, coordinate, and deliver the new Child Protection Guidance (2021) across Ayrshire.

The task was that the Child Protection guidance 2021, which we deemed a procedure, would be presented to the three Ayrshire CPCs and the three Ayrshire COGs from September 2023 for approval and adoption. South Ayrshire's Head of Service for Children's Health Care and Justice chaired this Pan Ayrshire Child Protection Implementation Group (PACPIG) with representatives from across the three Ayrshire's and partner agencies.

Engagement with the National Child Protection Implementation Group and attendance at the Pan Ayrshire group by one of the Chief Social Work Government advisors was ensured.

A draft Pan Ayrshire Child Protection Procedures was produced, presented, and endorsed at our CPC in September 2023, and it was noted the new procedure sits within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021. It aligns with Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the GIRFEC Refresh, as well as the Independent Care Review 2020 and The Promise.

The Lead Officer for Child Protection then development bespoke South Ayrshire practice guidance for staff, which supports the application of the procedures, and which reflect the unique demographics and impact upon our equalities.

The CPC also commissioned and participated in a short life working group (SLWG) incorporating a self-evaluation process to consider and report on the implementation planning of the National Guidance for Child Protection 2021, based on the principle of self-assessment reflecting on South Ayrshire's planning.

The CPC believe there is still a requirement for a successor to the PACPIG, an Ayrshire wide Child Protection Oversight Group to support the application of the procedures, to look for opportunities for joint training, communication, and engagement, and to refine the procedures as they develop in practice and improvements rightly identified, nonetheless this remains under consideration.

Our Stories

The CPC strives to enhance our commitment to encourage care / lived experience voices to attend the CPC in person, through a live or recorded video link, or through another's voice. We created a standing agenda item, "our stories" to encourage members to identify and contribute to the project.

This year we saw participation from Aberlour Childrens Charity, recognising how they build trust, support young people, and bring their stories to the attention of the CPC under this agenda item. We heard Bronwyn's story around experiences of services in South Ayrshire. The CPC also received an input from "Oor Lives Oor Ane" relative to case studies undertaken by parents in Moray.

The CPC continues to develop ways to bring in the voices of people with lived experience in a way that is comfortable for them while ensuring that these inputs can provide context to the policy decisions that are made by CPC partners.

Complex Case Oversight Process

The CPC are developing a process to ensure effective multi-agency review and scrutiny of complex cases – including children who have been on the child protection register for more than a year.

This multi-agency model will bring a new approach to the oversight of complex cases and the child protection register in South Ayrshire. It should also allow agencies to work together to identify potential solutions to improve outcomes for children and families.

A bespoke membership oversight group would consider complex cases, the views of the child and family, undertake the role of 'critical friend' and provide advice and guidance to those managing the case.

For example, the group could have oversight of children who have been on the child protection register (CPR) for more than one year, children who return to the CPR

within 12 months and can consider other complex cases at the request of operation managers.

The group will support those involved with the child and family to consider the support that has been provided to date and identify alternative approaches. The oversight group will also consider emerging trends in relation to children remaining on the Child Protection Register for a significant period and will make recommendations to CPC in relation to this. Work continues to establish this concept.

ADP Whole Family

The South Ayrshire ADP successfully secured additional four-year funding through the Corra Foundation National Drug Mission Children and Family funds to develop an ambitious 'no wrong door' proposal for young people looking for support with their own emerging substance use issues and to provide individual and whole family support to those being affected by familial alcohol and drug use.

This additional funding will support the ADP to bring together dedicated whole family support into one coordinated team and stream new pathways into that support. This Whole Family Approach (WFA) team will increase the provision, including out of core hours support, and coordination of tailored provisions for young people and family members.

The CPC welcomed the progression of this approach and recognised correlation between domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health, the three primary factors in Child Protection referrals. CPC also acknowledged and supported and were keen to support the no wrong door approach in the framework.

Inter-agency Referral Discussions & Child Protection Referral Audit

Like previous years The CPC continued to seek assurances around the processes and decisions around Inter Agency Referral Discussions (IRD) taking place in South Ayrshire, supporting, and encouraging IRD audit activity, and assessing Child Protection referrals that were not deemed necessary for IRD. The findings of both audits were reported on an annual format this year.

The purpose of the audit activity was to test the competence of the inquiries made into a child(ren)'s circumstances, the decision making as to the level of support required, the analysis of risk, as well as identify any training and development issues arising across the multi-agency partnership in respect of those matters being raised and referred into social work as 'Child Protection.'

The multi-agency team auditing referrals and IRDs comprises of: Service Manager, Children and Families Social Work, Police representative, Public Protection Unit, Child Protection Advisor, Health, Child Protection Lead Officer, Child Protection Officer, Education.

The audit tool itself is based on the Care Inspectorate's scaling in offering evidence of self-evaluation and continuous improvement around how well partners are working together in assessing and responding to risk.

Following each Audit, a findings report is collated and shared across participants to give a summary of themes and support learning & development.

This year overall, the CPC were advised Child Protection concerns were clearly evident and the referrals were appropriate, referral Information was clear, concise and gave a good picture of the current difficulties, circumstances and what has been tried to address to current worries, there was good evidence of the wider family and relevant persons being brought in as part of discussions to understand all viewpoints and perspectives with sound links made with universal services and named persons who know the child/family to ensure they were sighted on the current concerns, as well as being part of the onward supports with information being well triangulated between the child, family, services and/or any other relevant persons when exploring relevant matters.

Nonetheless some referrals were identified as below that required standard areas of development as they included Information within the referral that was not clear as to the immediacy of significance of risk/harm for the young person, inconsistency with referral templates with limited evidence of the child's views being considered or worries being discussed with parents prior to making a Child Protection referral.

In South Ayrshire there naturally remains a level of multi-agency debate and consideration around what constitutes a Child Protection matter and what requires the need for an IRD. Consequently the CPC will continue to request sustained audit activity in this area.

Inter-Agency Referral Discussions (IRDs) - Police

The Ayrshire Police Division has a well-established and effective IRD process. IRDs are primarily managed and conducted by the IRD staff during standard working hours (0800–1700). Outside of these hours, a multi-agency discussion between Police and Social Work Out of Hours Standby takes place to determine the best course of action for safeguarding the child or young person until a formal IRD can be scheduled, ensuring that all relevant agencies can attend.

This process guarantees that experienced professionals in child protection and multi-agency collaboration are involved, while prioritising the safety and well-being of the child or young person. Police are working towards increasing resources and to

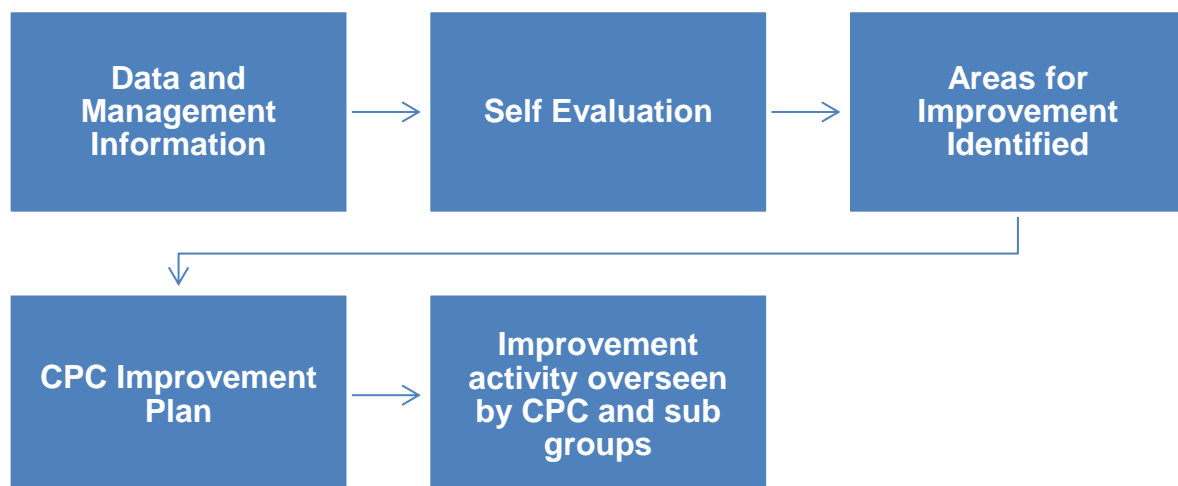
having more staff trained in IRD to meet the demand as over the last quarter the Ayrshire IRD desk has carried out IRDs discussing 431 children.

Quality Assurance & Self Evaluation

Continuous improvement in child protection is underpinned by robust self-evaluation. It is a reflective process which enables the CPC and Community Planning Partners to understand how well they are protecting children, understand what is working well and identify areas for improvement.

This year saw the CPC setting out its approach, strategy and plan to deliver self-evaluation and quality assurance, recognising that the CPC must undertake several functions to jointly identify and manage risk to children and young people, monitor and improve performance and promote their mission statement that "It is everyone's job to make sure that children in South Ayrshire are safe from abuse and neglect".

CPC's quality assurance activity is underpinned by robust data collection and analysis. The process is set out below:



Permanence Practice Guidance

The CPC acknowledged that some children are not able to be cared for by their parents and that alternative care arrangements will be required. The revised guidance sets out the process where permanent alternate care is required and takes account of the relevant legislation and national policy. The guidance also pays cognizance to [South Ayrshire's Childrens Services Plan](#), GIRFEC and The Promise.

CPC recognised permanence planning aims to support children's reunification with their families following an episode of being cared for out with the family network.

However, when this is not possible its aim becomes to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family.

Signs of Safety

The Signs of Safety 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.

In furtherance on the Signs of Safety implementation in South Ayrshire, a second baseline audit was conducted in the later part of 2023 and the CPC were particularly interested in how the practice had been influenced, were children returning home under rationalised safety plans, the language used, young people attending their meetings, and the relationships between social work and families.

CPC noted that in this audit most parents and carers interviewed were experiencing positive working relationships with their social workers with strong correlation between strength-based approaches and improved outcomes for children and their families' noting improvements have been aligned to the vision of embedding and growing relationship-based practice across South Ayrshire's Children's Services.

A theme emerged of young people suggesting they do not always feel like active participants in their own safety planning, that for some children, decisions are made that they do not always understand or contribute to. This highlights a need to tackle the identified barriers to hearing and collating children and young people's views so they can continue to shape and influence practice across South Ayrshire's Children's Services, a view very much aligned to the CPC activities.

Care & Risk Management Guidance

In line with The Promise, GIRFEC principles and as part of the Whole System Approach in accordance with National Guidance, Framework for Risk Assessment Management and Evaluation (FRAME), The CPC reviewed and endorsed a revised Care and Risk Management (CARM) guidance for all agencies working with children and young people, aged 12-17, in South Ayrshire who present a risk of serious harm to themselves or others, with the purpose of identifying appropriate Care and Risk Management strategies to reduce the risk of significant harm occurring. This included a practitioner's process map, a refined referral system, immediate tasks to be undertaken, information sharing criteria and duties of the CARM Planning Group members.

CPR De-registration Audit

In line with South Ayrshire's commitment to continuous improvement, a multi-agency self-assessment of the effectiveness of practitioner guidance and Post De-registration from the Child Protection Register Team Around the Child Responsibilities was undertaken in conjunction with members of the CPC and Childrens Services Planning group. This allowed the CPC to reflect on outcomes for children and families and to ensure compliance with the revised Child Protection Procedure timescales.

The audit activity allowed an assessment of the extent to which the guidance is being implemented across social work, health and education, consider models of service delivery and support provided to children and families, evaluate the current deregistration procedures that are in place ensuring that they are understood and being implemented across agencies effectively whilst encouraging best practice where de registration plans are in place.

This audit concluded that post de-registration guidance should be reviewed, and consideration given to including information on recording of decisions, frequency of visits, the process for de registration meetings when a child is subject to looked after proceedings, support for families when a pregnancy is non continuing or the child dies, consistency in the recording of concerns within records, with consideration given to the use of the pan Ayrshire system AYRshare for this purpose.

Work should be undertaken to ensure the Child's Plan used in line with Signs of Safety remains Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and time-bound (SMART), while the process of where reports / minutes are stored within individual agencies in health, education and social work should be agreed, including the use of AYRshare.

These improvement activities will form part of the CPC priorities in 2024-25.

CPC Improvement Plan

This year saw the introduction of a new improvement plan incorporating any outstanding tasks from the previous business plan and outlines the current and considered business activity aligned to the sub-groups' activity.

At its initial compilation the plan detailed 36 actions across child protection business, many of which are highlighted in this report. The activity also included the revitalisation of the child protection website, promoting integrated approaches to protecting the children of South Ayrshire, developing, and extending our social media profile, and growing a system to allow streamlined access to all child protection policies.

The plan is very much a living document, but by the end of this reporting period 11 actions were completed, 8 significantly processed with another 4 commenced. This activity continues into 2024-25.

Scottish Child Interview Model / Joint Investigative Interviews

A Joint Investigative Interview is undertaken by a police officer and social worker. It is defined as a formal, planned interview with a child, carried out by staff trained and competent to conduct it, for the purposes of eliciting the child's account of events (if any) which require investigation.

The CPC recognises that social work and police services across Ayrshire have shown significant commitment to ensuring that there is investment in the quality of interviewing and questioning of children who have been harmed or have witnessed such distress. This is a trauma informed approach to Children who have experienced suffering from someone who have harmed them.

There is no fixed site, the team delivers trauma-sensitive joint investigative interviews for children and young people in Ayrshire, using Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)-trained interviewers.

They conduct routine monitoring and evaluation of the entire investigative process, including interview planning and decision-making. This ensures a balance between preparing the child, accounting for their individual needs, and capturing the best possible evidence for both child protection and justice purposes.

Over this year there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of practice, particularly in interviewing younger children and those with additional needs, leading to an increase in the number of children making clear disclosures during interviews—from 82% to 91%.

The SCIM Team are testing various methods of gathering feedback from children, young people, and their families. Based on this feedback, the practice will be continuously refined from initial contact, the notification of concern through to the Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) and interview ensuring it remains trauma-sensitive and streamlined. The SCIM team and Police IRD desk are co-located, facilitating easier decision-making and communication.

The CPC remain committed to the collation and sharing of SCIM developments and insights, as they progress a child-centric approach to identify areas for improvement.

There are three Children 1st staff members in Ayrshire, trained in recovery, advocacy, and trauma, who provide increased awareness of the support needs of children, young people, and their families.

Following interviews, children, young people, and their families are offered holistic, trauma-sensitive support, ensuring that their experiences within the child protection and justice processes are more rights-based and child-centred.

There is ongoing planned SCIM training for 2025, to build upon and increase resilience.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran (A&A) – Public Protection

Over this year NHS Ayrshire and Arran have moved towards a public protection model mirroring developments being progressed nationally. In Ayrshire the revised Public Protection Model aligned Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) co-ordination. In addition, there has been close professional links strengthened with multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), PREVENT, and gender-based violence (GBV). The new Public Protection Model has led to a strengthened strategic leadership and governance.

A newly formed Public Protection Executive Governance group (PPEGG) was established in January 2024 and meets quarterly. Their purpose is to provide strategic direction and oversight for NHS Ayrshire and Arran in the protection of children, young people, unborn babies, adults, and groups at risk of harm, in accordance with national policy, guidance and legislation, including any associated frameworks on Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection.

The membership of the group includes relevant leads across all disciplines in health including representatives from the local authority and it is chaired by the Executive Director of Nursing (Depute – Associate Nurse Director for Public Protection).

There has been a focus on child protection case supervision to ensure that clinical practice continues to protect children and promotes their welfare. A refresh of NHS Ayrshire and Arran Child Protection Supervision Policy was ratified replacing previous Child Protection Supervision Guidance. This is in alignment with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021). Overall, the policy aims to support NHS Ayrshire and Arran workforce and promote positive outcomes for children and families through creating a safe contained environment where the practitioner has the capacity to think and reflect.

NHS Public Protection Assurance & Accountability Framework

The purpose of the national framework is to support health boards in quality assuring public protection responsibilities and processes. It is recommended that each health board undertakes self-assessment using the toolkit to apply the framework and analyse the adequacy and effectiveness of their public protection arrangements and, where there are gaps, progress improvements.

A national Short Life Working Group (SLWG), convened in December 2022 at the request of Scottish Government colleagues, and has worked to develop a toolkit to sit alongside the framework. Taking a quality improvement approach, the group coordinated a national test of change of the toolkit from April to October 2023.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran was one of nine volunteer boards who tested the toolkit and provided relevant feedback. By January 2024 this resulted in final amendments to the toolkit which are now approved.

Applying the draft toolkit has allowed NHS Ayrshire and Arran to consider whether the available evidence provides assurance that local public protection arrangements reflect the framework. The activity has been positive, and assurance has been provided for many aspects of the framework including (but not limited to):

- NHS Ayrshire and Arran has an executive lead who is responsible for public protection and supports multi-agency governance arrangements.
- There are lead nursing and medical clinicians who are supported to provide child and adult protection expertise and professional leadership across the health and care system.
- Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and MAPPA Leads have links with relevant national networks.
- Local Public Protection guidance is reflective of national and local public protection policy and guidance.
- There are a number of trauma champions who are responsible for overseeing, encouraging, and raising awareness of trauma informed and trauma responsive practice across all services within their area.

An Improvement plan against the eight standards is underway. The governance for this work will be scrutinised via the PPEGG and actions will be driven through a newly combined NHS Ayrshire and Arran Public Protection Improvement Group. Reports and improvement plans will be shared through the CPC.

NHS Child Protection Professional Advice & Support

Since January 2024 the leads have set up a Public Protection Data and Evaluation group from Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and Safeguarding Midwifery.

The aim of this group is to create a robust system to collect quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. This group will meet quarterly in line with Adult Protection committee (APC) and the CPC to review the data and consider what improvement/ audit activity is required. The progress of this work will be monitored throughout 2024-25.

It is anticipated that the data group will be able to consider the reasons and sources of calls.

Educational Safeguarding Evaluation Visits

Session 2023/24 has been a successful year for inspection in South Ayrshire Schools and Early Years Centres (EYC), with all 13 Early Years settings inspected receiving an overall rating of good or higher.

His Majesty Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspections were conducted in 6 locations in session 2023/24, with 1 secondary school and 5 primary schools inspected. All HMIE inspection reports for South Ayrshire recorded '*no significant areas for improvement*' with the local authority in relation to safeguarding or wellbeing.

Additionally internal Child Protection and Safeguarding visits are led by South Ayrshire Child Protection and Wellbeing Officers for Education. Visits are conducted as per the rolling program visit calendar, and schools also receive the same support when an HMIE inspection notification is received. In session 2023/24 Internal Safeguarding visits are undertaken independently of Authority Peer Review Visits. This decision was made to allow school management additional time, focus and support in the monitoring and self-evaluation of child protection and safeguarding practices in their respective South Ayrshire Schools.

New self-evaluation tools were also developed in this session, which have been positively noted through a Child Protection Coordinator survey to improve the school's ability to conduct their own assessment and to prepare for their visit effectively.

To support the wellbeing of pupils and to prepare schools for successful inspection - session 2023/24 also saw an increased focus on internal safeguarding visits. 21 visits were conducted by Child Protection and Wellbeing officers in this session with visits consisting of 1 Early Years Centre, 19 Primary and 1 Secondary school. This was an increase of 31% from session 2022/23 where 15 visits were conducted with visits consisting of 2 Early Years Centre, 10 Primary and 3 Secondary schools.

School Attendance

School attendance is a subject close to the heart of the CPC, following the review of Child B in 2023, and subsequent improvement activity.

In session 23/24, education efforts to improve school attendance were centred around three key areas: policy, practice, and processes. They focused on enhancing approaches to tracking and monitoring attendance in our secondary schools. By effectively scrutinising and utilising data, they identify early warning signs and implement well-planned support, positively impacting attendance rates.

This year, attendance in primary schools was 93%, up 1% from session 2022-23. There was also a significant increase of 6% for children looked after at home. Secondary schools increased by 2%, up from 85% in 2022-23 to 87%. There were also significant increases of 3 and 13 % respectively for young people living in quintile 1 and for those who are looked after at home.

There was an introduction of the Family First Forums which has enabled South Ayrshire Education to target support for learners with emotional based school avoidance and persistent or chronic school non-attendance by re-engaging them with learning using a multi-agency approach with colleagues from the Health and Social Care Partnership and Thriving Communities.

Many of our schools attended Sharing Good Practice events where themes included engaging learners, managing data, and preparing for inspection concerning attendance and safeguarding.

The CPC welcomed Educations launching of a Promoting Attendance Strategy and toolkit, a product of collective efforts. This toolkit was created in collaboration with the Educational Psychology Service and the Attendance Working Group, which includes representatives from both primary and secondary schools. It is designed to support schools with effective interventions that ensure pupil voices and families are included when tackling persistent non-attendance at school.

Our Education Safeguarding team are piloting a new Child Protection and Safeguarding Self-Evaluation Toolkit for schools in session 2024/25. 1 Secondary school and 5 Primary school settings have agreed to use the toolkit in their settings, with a view to refining ready for full roll out in session 2025/26.

They have collaborated with Groupcall and the ICT Team to develop a system to improve attendance data intelligence. This new tool will allow schools to analyse attendance data from the whole school to individual learners and create bespoke groups categorised by many different organisers. This new tool will roll out across August and September during session 2024/25.

Child Protection – Confidence in Schools

The Education Safeguarding team undertook an evaluation of local child protection processes in academic year 2023/24. This work sought to assess the discrepancy observed between a perceived high level of child protection concerns in schools, and the low rate of referrals to the Children's Reporter (SCRA) from Education. The work also intended to assess Education staff confidence in local child protection procedures. Those who participated in the survey and subsequent focus groups held the named person role, including staff who have a lead responsibility for safeguarding pupils.

Analysis of results has assisted in identifying several key local strengths, as well as some challenges, training needs, and opportunities for increased collaboration between children's services to promote the best life chances for our infants, children, and young people in South Ayrshire. A multi-agency action plan, agreed by the CPC, was created to support in addressing areas for improvement - including increased opportunity for multi-agency safeguarding training and reflection opportunities.

South Ayrshire Police – Partnership and Prevention

The Ayrshire Policing Division have renamed the Community Wellbeing Unit to the Partnership and Prevention Unit and within this unit sits the Campus Police Officers and the Missing Person Coordinator. The remaining officers who previously sat underneath the Community Wellbeing Unit have been moved under the Locality Policing Teams, however, maintain their original remit.

Expanding these teams aims to enhance resilience in addressing community issues and foster a collaborative approach to training officers in trauma-informed policing, particularly regarding vulnerable children and young people.

The officers within this team are involved in various initiatives aimed at supporting vulnerable children and young people in Ayrshire. One such initiative, a three-day program for care-experienced 12-15-year-olds from North, South, and East Ayrshire, is delivered in partnership with the Police, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) & The Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS).

On day one, participants will receive training in search and rescue and fire safety from SFRS. Day two, led by the Police, will include a tour of Kilmarnock Police Station, a visit to the mounted branch in Stewarton, and an introduction to various police departments. On day three, a first aid course from SAS focused on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

Participants will receive certificates of participation, as well as official certifications from the British Heart Foundation for CPR and from East Ayrshire Council for food safety and catering. This Pan-Ayrshire program aims to build essential skills, boost self-esteem, and inspire potential career aspirations among the young participants.

South Ayrshire's Locality Policing Team (LPT) are based across four offices: Ayr, Girvan, Maybole and Troon. Each LPT officer adopts a trauma-informed, victim-centred approach to policing, regularly engaging with children and young people, particularly those at risk of harm within South Ayrshire. They work closely with partners across public, private, and third-sector agencies to prevent criminal behaviour, provide education, and promote overall positive well-being. Additionally, the officers focus on breaking down barriers between children, young people, and the police, fostering trust and confidence in the community.

Within the Partnership and Prevention Unit there are eight full time Campus Police Officers based across all South Ayrshire Council secondary schools. These officers focus on student support and prevention, offering educational programs like Mental Health Awareness, Domestic Abuse, and Violence Prevention. These initiatives have received positive feedback from students and staff.

The Partnership and Preventions unit also includes the Missing Persons Coordinator, who works closely with care homes for Looked After Children. This role

involves providing training in collaboration with the care homes, covering topics such as the Philomena Protocol, the Not at Home process, and general missing persons training. These efforts are designed to minimise the risk of harm to vulnerable children and reduce their exposure to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

NHS Child Protection and Wellbeing Concerns

Child Protection Advisors (CPAs) carefully review and analyse the wellbeing concern referrals from NHS 24 and NHS Ayrshire & Arran Emergency department (ED). The concerns are vital information that has the potential to lead to child protection referrals. Concerns are shared with relevant leads and named persons as necessary. The CPAs also provide any additional advice and support as required.

The CPC noted this development around data which has been gathered since January 2024. There is ongoing audit and evaluation with NHS Ayrshire & Arran ED around the referrals.

Learning Reviews

Protecting children and young people is an inter-agency and inter-disciplinary responsibility overseen by the CPC and it is responsible for deciding whether a Learning Review is warranted and, if so, for agreeing how the review is conducted. The CPC will keep the Chief Officers Group (COG) advised of all cases referred for a potential Learning Review and will report their recommendations on these matters to the COG for consideration and ratification.

The overall purpose of a Learning Review is to bring together agencies, individuals, and families in a collective endeavour to learn from what has happened in order to improve and develop systems and practice in the future and thus better protects, children and young people.

The CPC contributed to the commissioning and creation of new Pan-Ayrshire Learning Review Guidance. It has been locally adapted based on the National Guidance for Child Protection Committees undertaking Learning Reviews (Scottish Government, 2021), and the National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews (Scottish Government 2022).

This year we established a bespoke membership for a Learning Review Core Group, tailored to the circumstances and agency involvement for any referral.

Over this year we provided governance on the improvement action plan and publication of the Learning Review focusing upon Child B.

We continued with multi-agency assessments and facilitated in person Practitioner reflective discussion forums in relation to the Learning Review titled Child A. This included a recognition from the CPC on the work of the health-based Ayrshire Child Death Overview Process and their continuing development and influencing of the Safer Sleep communication and training.

We concluded the improvement activities following on from the Learning Review titled Child P, which had focused on Child Health Surveillance, Short Stay Pediatric Assessment Unit Standards, Child Protection Training, Effective Multi-agency working around child deaths, Inclusion of Partners in child health services, Standard Operating Procedures for Crying Baby.

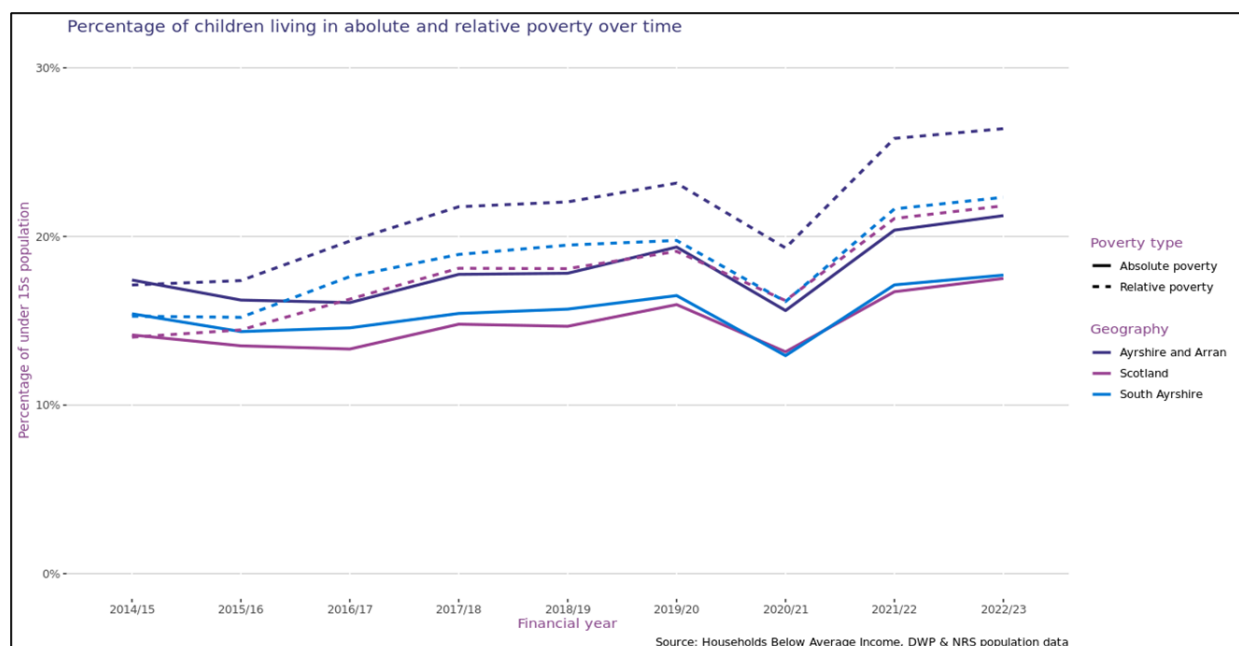
Although Child F remained a single agency (Health) review under their Significant Adverse Event Review process, it continued to be monitored by the CPC. This remained ongoing as we headed into 2024-25.

In the year we had 9 referrals for the consideration of commissioning a Learning Review, and while post referral activity was identified no formal multi-agency Learning Review process was deemed necessary.

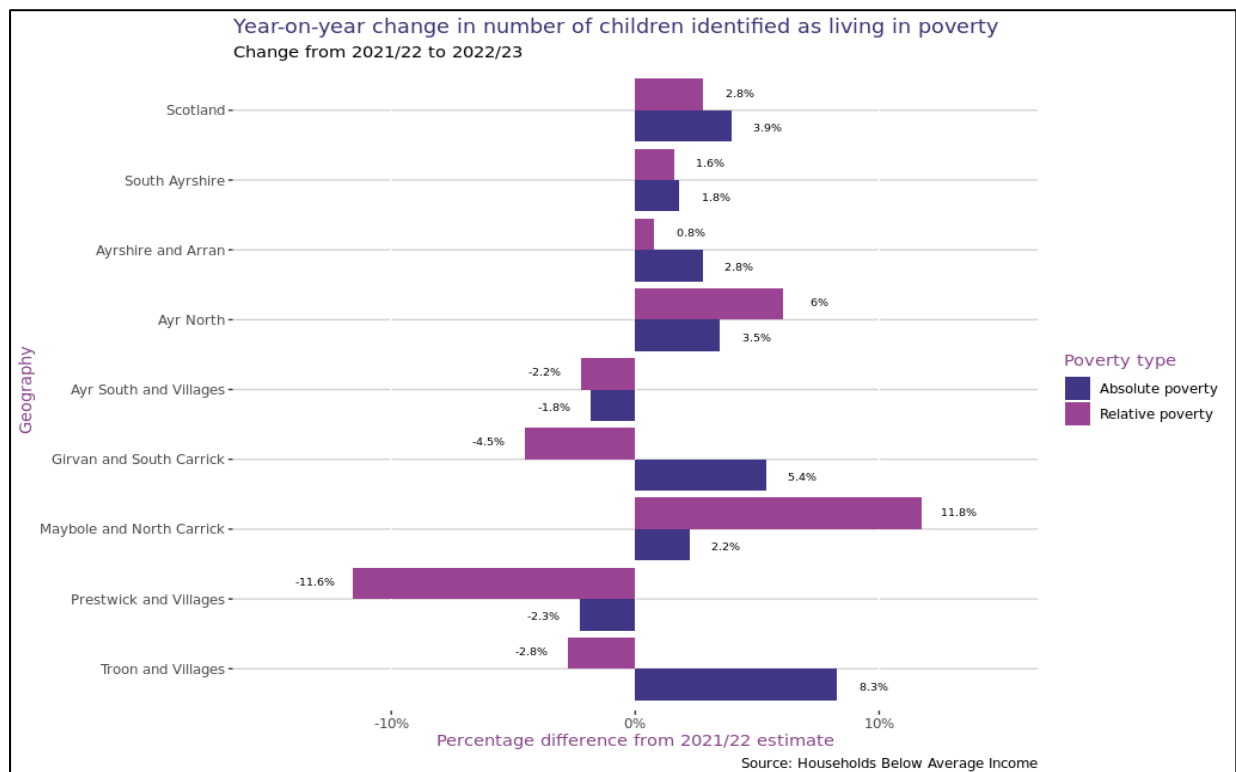
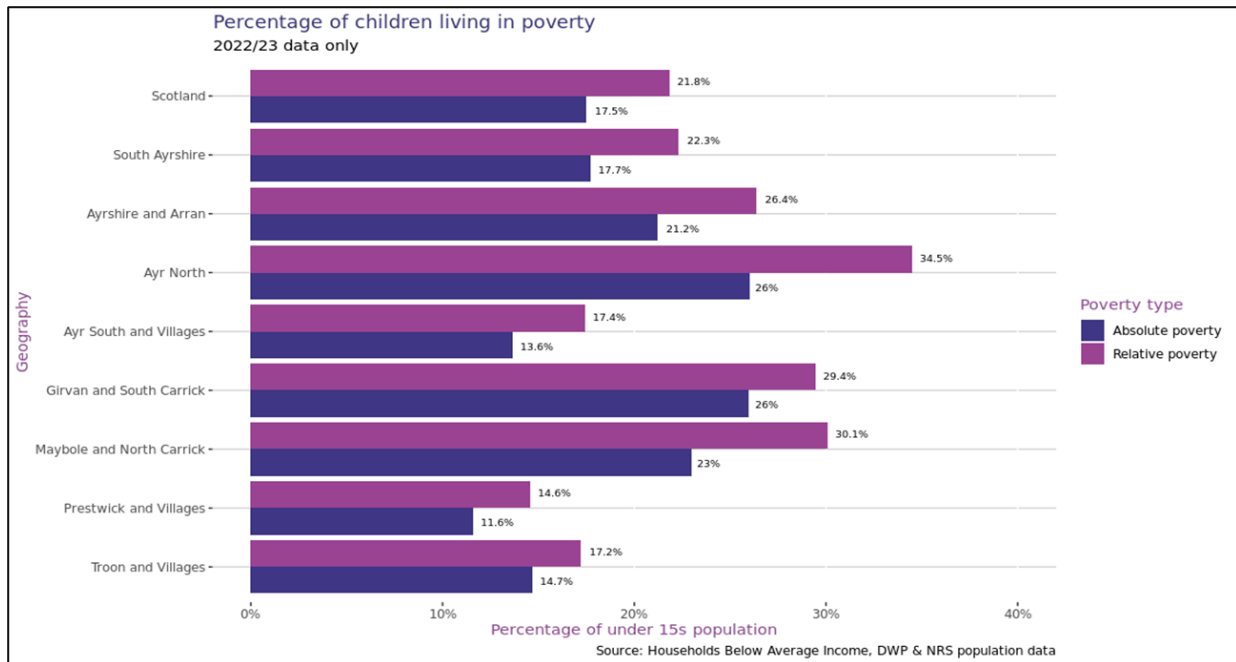
Child Poverty

Within the reporting period 1 August 2023- 31 July 2024, 15% of newly registered children live in the Ayr Central and North Locality with 9% of children living in the Wallacetown Area.

In 2022/23, data tells us that 17.5% of children in South Ayrshire are living in absolute poverty with 22.3% (nationally 21.8%) of children in South Ayrshire living in relative poverty (nationally 15.5%). This is an increase in both absolute and relative poverty from the year prior.



This data has been further broken down into South Ayrshire localities where we see that children in the Ayr Central and North locality have the highest percentage of relative poverty at 34.5% and absolute poverty at 26%. This is followed closely by the Girvan and South Carrick and Maybole and North Carrick localities. Data charts below show the data Nationally, within Ayrshire and Arran and locally and included year on year changes from the previous year.



Training Delivered 2023- 24

During this reporting period all Child Protection learning and development opportunities were available through an annual Public Protection training calendar to increase accessibility of learning opportunities and to aid the planning of staff, practitioners and teams in meeting their learning needs. In addition, we continued to develop our training and development webpage on the Health and Social Care Partnerships website which can be accessed [here](#) to provide all members of the workforce with increased information on the content and intended outcomes of learning and development courses available.

The Practice Development Team hosted a Pan-Ayrshire cohort of Child Protection Level 3 to enable Children and Families Social Worker's to become the lead professional in a Child Protection Assessment and facilitated a Call Back session on the topic "Safeguarding Midwives" to support additional identified learning needs.

Four core Child Protection training courses were available.

Course	Number of Courses	Participants
Child Protection Level 1	6	58
Child Protection Level 2	4	36
Child Sexual Exploitation	3	28
Child Protection Level 3 for Qualified Social Workers	1	10

The Child Sexual Exploitation training course was submitted to undergo a rigorous independent assessment process, following which it was recognised and accredited as training that meets the learning value and structure of Continuous Professional Development learning events. A number of complementary learning events were also developed or commissioned by the Practice Development Team, including Working with Neglect, Working with Families through Challenging Times, and Life Story Work to enhance and support practice in this area.

In 2023 we began a learning and development research project in partnership with the Open University, which aims to deconstruct the current model of Level 3 Child Protection training for social workers in the local authority context, and transform this, testing a new experiential workplace learning approach. The experiential pathway we are working towards, aims to harness the supports already available in the workplace to deliver and evaluate a creative, new, and enhanced learning solution based on current research and evidence-based approaches to developing workplace learning for social workers. The project aims to demonstrate key variables within the ecology of the organisation to scaffold workplace learning. A Learning Passport has been developed, informed by the National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2024 which identifies key practice elements and the knowledge, skills and understanding required to meet

these, which supported by the Supervision model, will capture the experiential learning and development that takes place in social work practice.

We facilitated two online Multi-Agency Child Protection Practitioner Briefing sessions which were attended by over 100 practitioners in South Ayrshire and revised the Child Protection E-Learning module hosted by Coast, bringing this in line with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2023). In addition, we have initiated a Child Protection Learning and Development group to explore the possibility of delivering Child Protection training on a Pan-Ayrshire basis moving forward.

Health Child Protection Training

An NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Protection Training Strategy and Framework has been designed to guide NHS managers, and their teams to identify the competencies needed in order for staff to:

- Identify children and adults at risk of harm.
- Share concerns appropriately and,
- Cooperate with social work colleagues undertaking inquiries and investigations.

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) have designed two modules to support the health workforce in relation to Child Protection responsibilities and help them understand and respond appropriately. Practice Level 1 module is for all members of the health workforce, whether employed or volunteers. Practice Level 2 is for our skilled workforce, within their role, have direct and/or substantial contact with Children.

Staff in the Specific and Intensive workforce groups are recommended to complete NHS Child Protection Level 3 training and Multi-Agency Training provided through CPC subgroups; Child Protection Advisors are part of these sub-groups. Staff undertaking level 3 training mean they are/potentially are frequently involved with public protection processes, see NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Protection Learning and Development strategy and framework.

In 2024-2025 the Child Protection Team are predicted to offer over 1200 Level 3 places for staff who fit into these criteria.

Child Protection Committee Priorities

As alluded to earlier in this report, the CPC has developed a robust improvement plan to ensure that we continue to meet our aims, promoting the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people and support families to remain together.

Whether it's through influencing or amending practice language or actions we must guarantee our children are respected and listened to.

The CPC "Our Stories" program continues to be the foundation to this strategy and members will seek to influence and develop these processes.

There are 36 actions on our improvement plan focusing on the three subgroup activities. As highlighted in this report, 11 were completed this year and over the next year we will focus on the various other innovative and inspiring activities that include the development of this annual report, considering the production of a Child version, the creation of a tracker for Child Protection Policies, development of the Child Protection website including animations, creating an internal and external communications plan, Child Protection training for the public, supporting the revision of South Ayrshire Child Protection training.

We will progress a focus of protecting children encouraging tailored guidance around Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding.

As initially highlighted in this report the CPC endorsed a Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation Activity plan for 2024-25. This activity includes a multi-agency case file audit, a focus on Child Protection multi-agency activity, Child Protection referrals / IRD and contextual safeguarding.

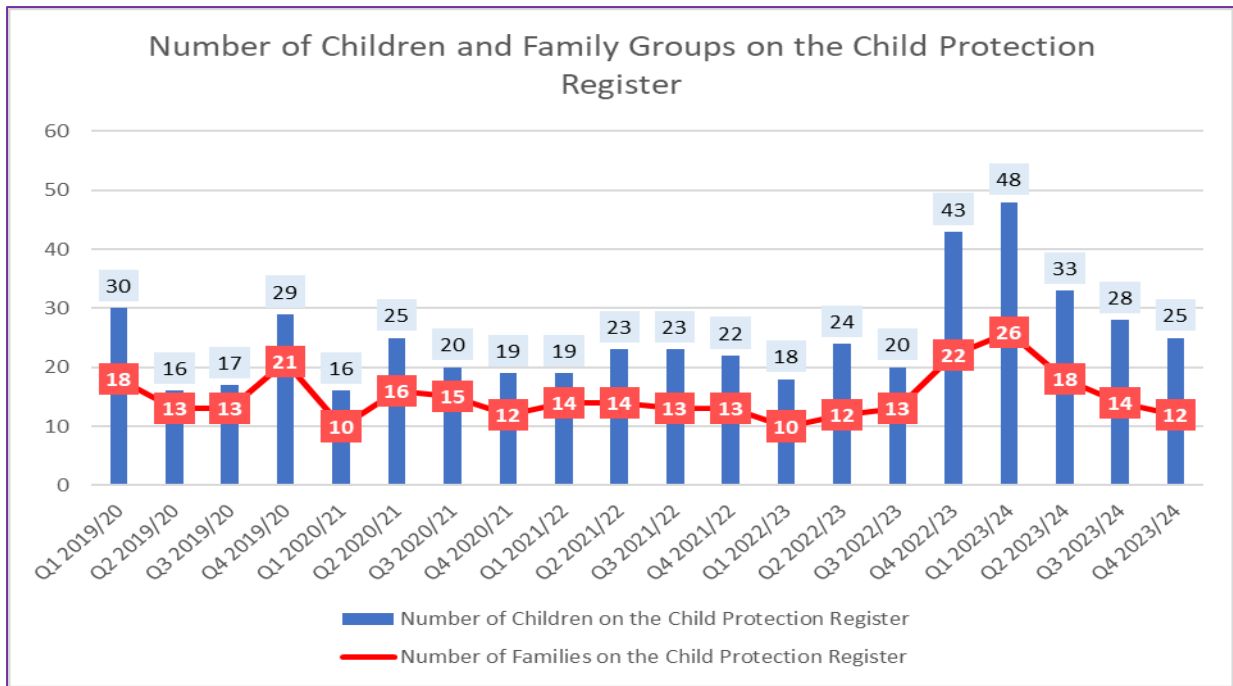
We will start the conversation around our branding, purpose and messaging ensuring it remains vibrant, credible, and inviting.

Child Protection Trends 2023-24

The CPC continues to monitor performance information through the Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees. A monthly child protection dataset has been submitted to Scottish Government.

Child Protection Register

As of 31 July 2024, in South Ayrshire, there were a total of 25 children from 12 family groups on the Child Protection Register. This is a significant decrease from 31 July 2023 when 43 children from 22 family groups were on the Child Protection Register

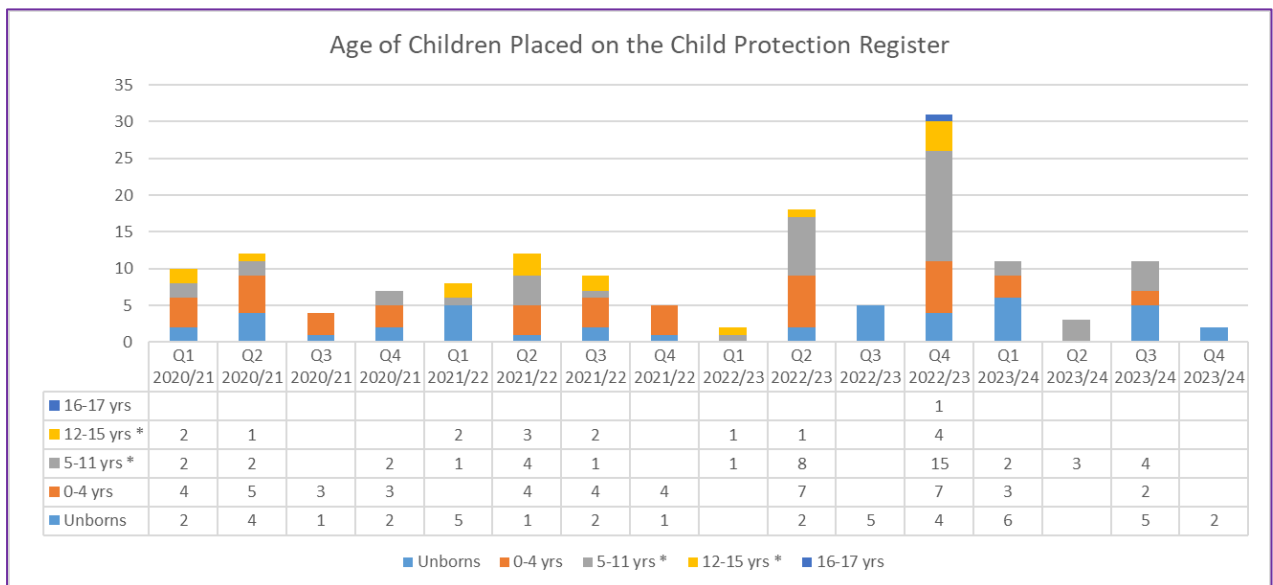


Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

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

Age of Children and Young People at Registration

The graph below shows the age profile of children placed on the Child Protection Register each quarter from July 2020 to July 2024.



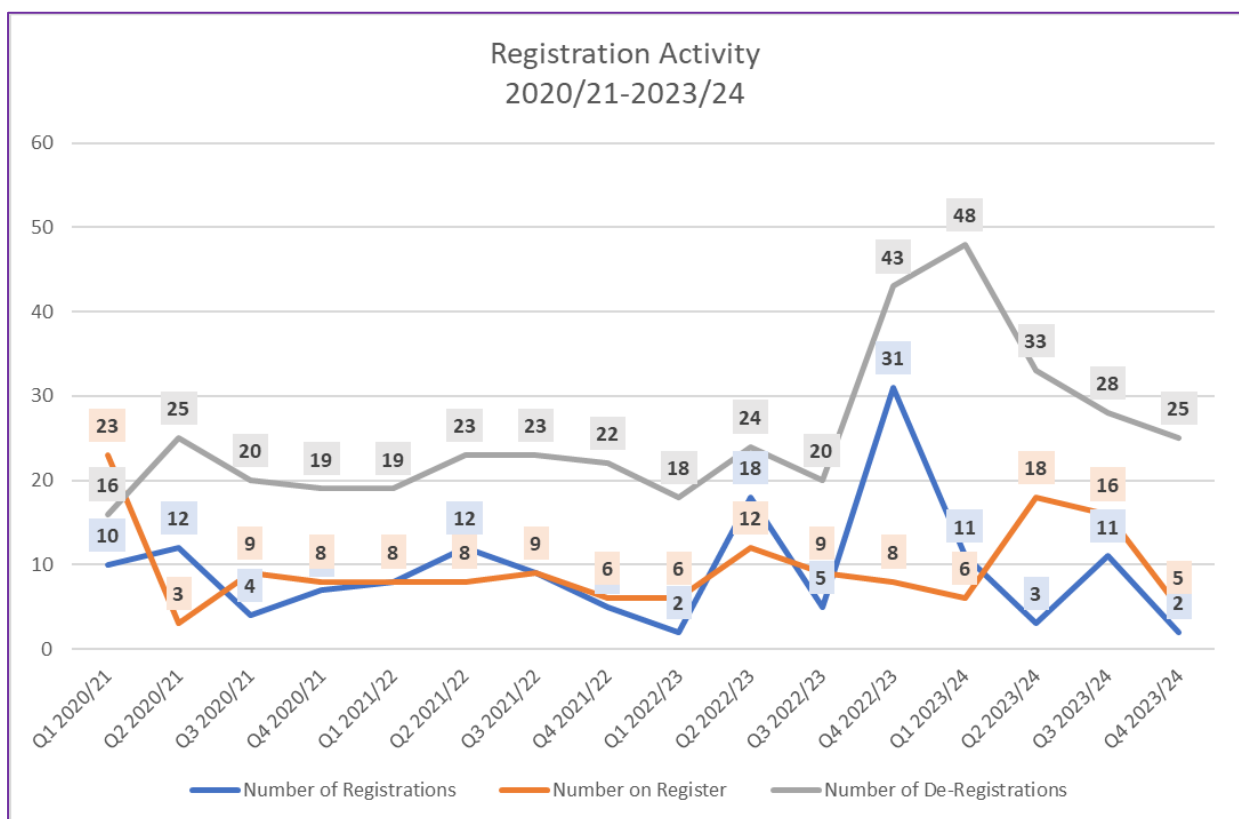
Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

In the reporting period of 2023/24, 27 children have been added to the child protection register of which 13 are pre-birth, 5 are aged 0-4 years and 9 are aged 5-11 years. There have been 0 children aged 11 years plus added to the child protection register in this reporting year.

The Joint Investigative Team quarterly report shows that over the past year, the highest number of children interviewed across Ayrshire was in the 11-15 age bracket. In the last quarter 61% of interview were in age range of 11-15 and 3% were in the 16-18 age range. Although this is data from across all the Ayrshires, it indicates that there is significant concern for those aged 12+ that is not being reflected in the age range of children placed on the Child Protection register. The implementation of a contextual safeguarding approach may assist in addressing this imbalance, but further audit work around understanding of exploitation may also be helpful.

It is also worth noting that over the past year, 13 out of the 27 (48%) of new registrations were for unborn babies. This may indicate increased use of IRDs to consider pre-birth referrals, as per new National Child Protection Guidance; however, the ongoing work to refine the pre-birth assessment process and provision of earlier support to families in pregnancy will hopefully result in a decrease in unborn babies being placed on the CP register moving forward.

Registration Activity

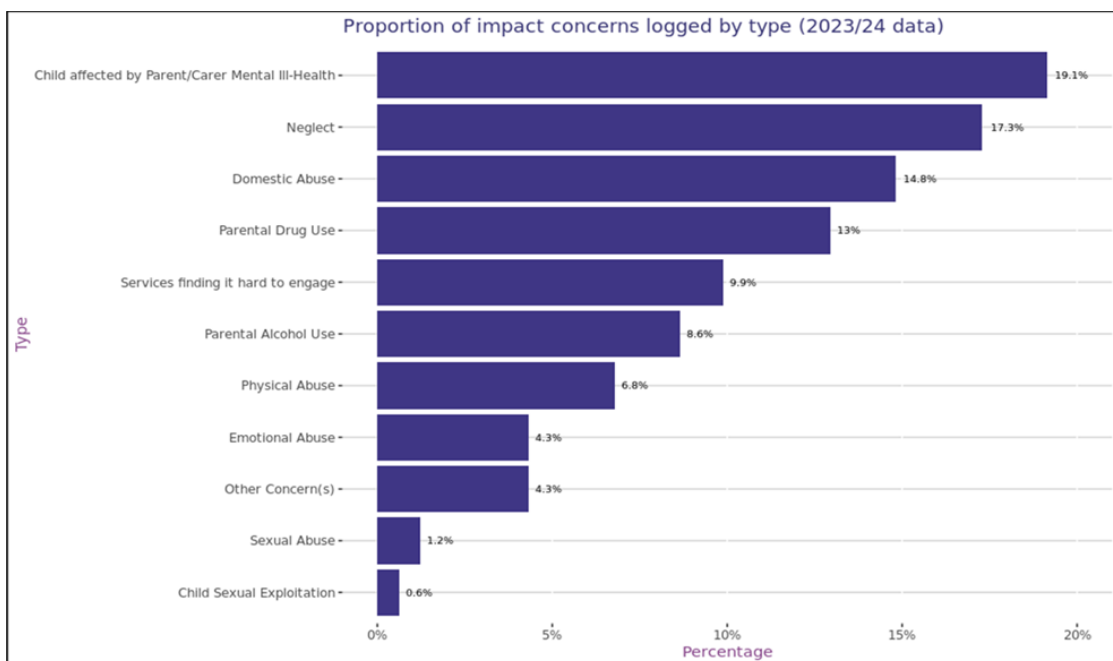
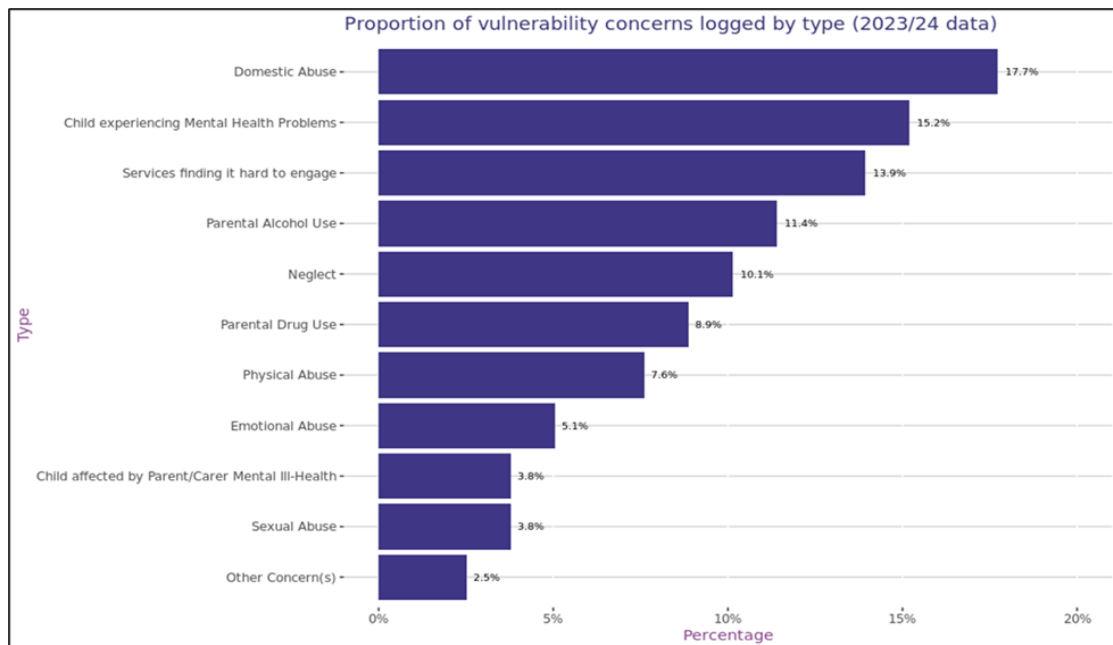


Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

Vulnerability Factors and Impacts on/abuse of the Child

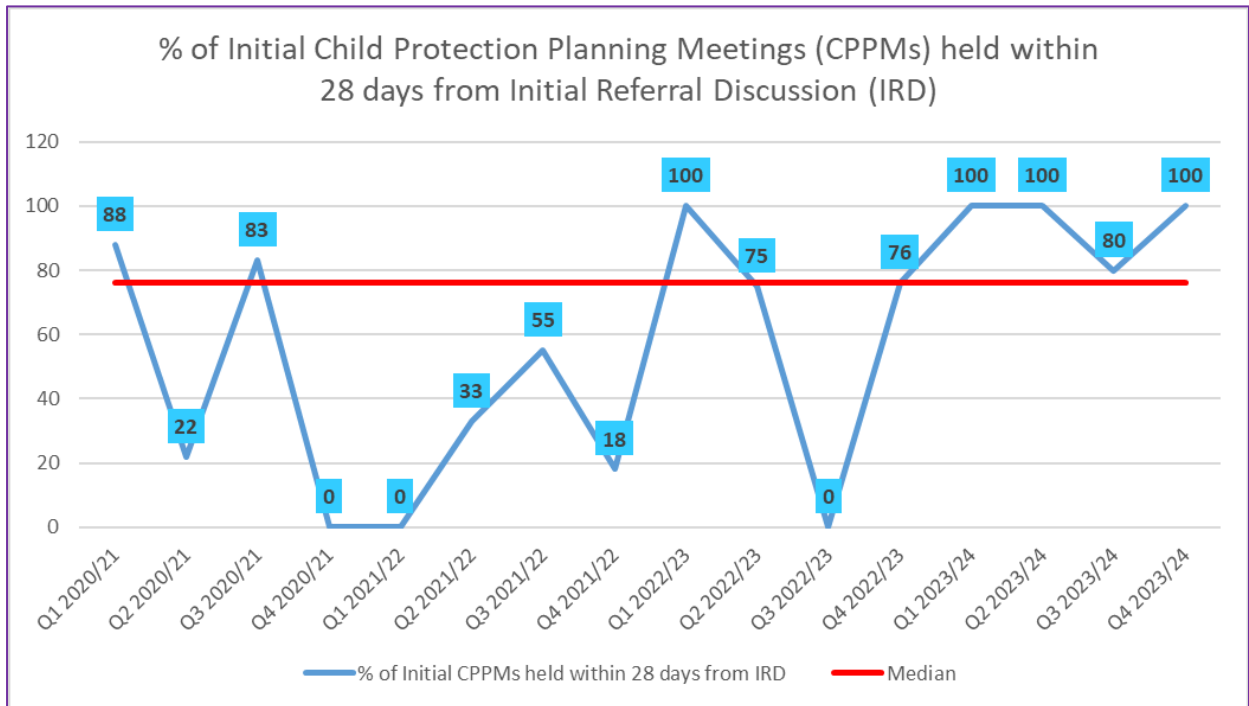
On 31 July 2024, the main area Vulnerability Factor was children experiencing mental health problems followed by domestic abuse and parental drug use. The highest impact on / abuse of the children was neglect. Within the reporting year 2023/24, we see the highest number of concerns reported as domestic abuse. The same concern was recorded as the highest in the previous reporting year with the highest concern being child affected by parent/ care mental ill health.

In relation to impacts on / abuse of the child, we see in 2023/24 the highest recorded impact is neglect which was also the highest in 2022/23.

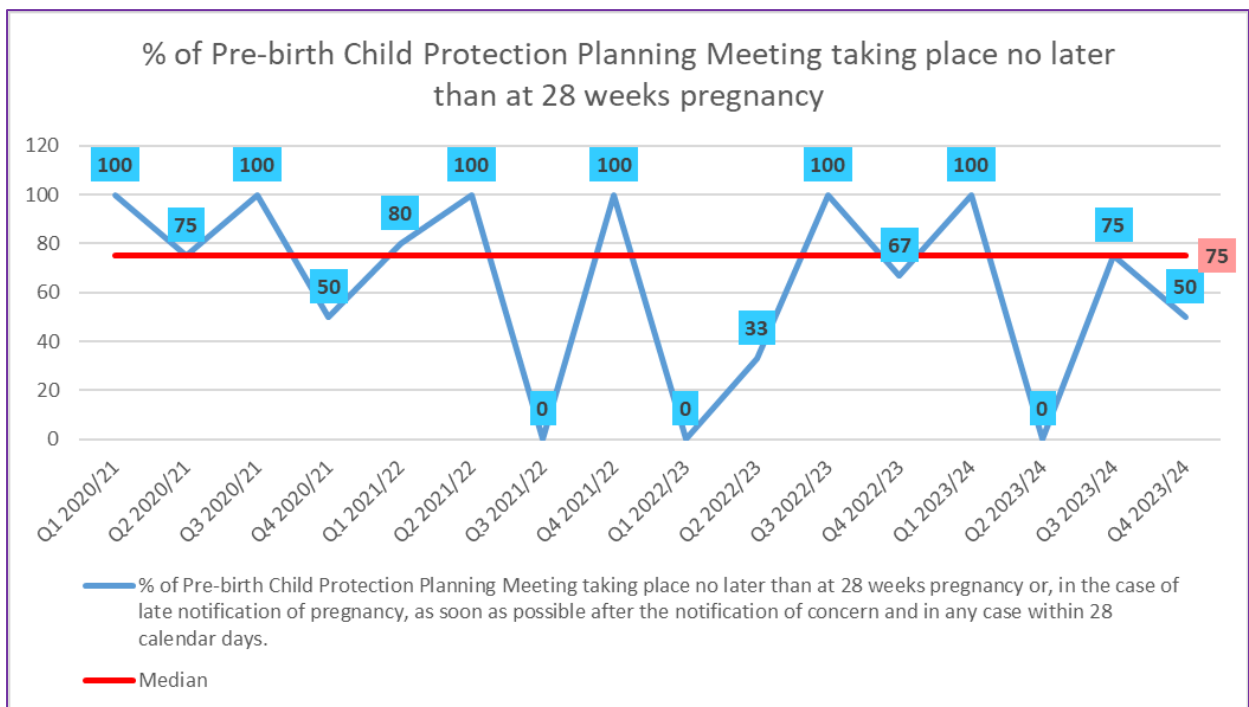


Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

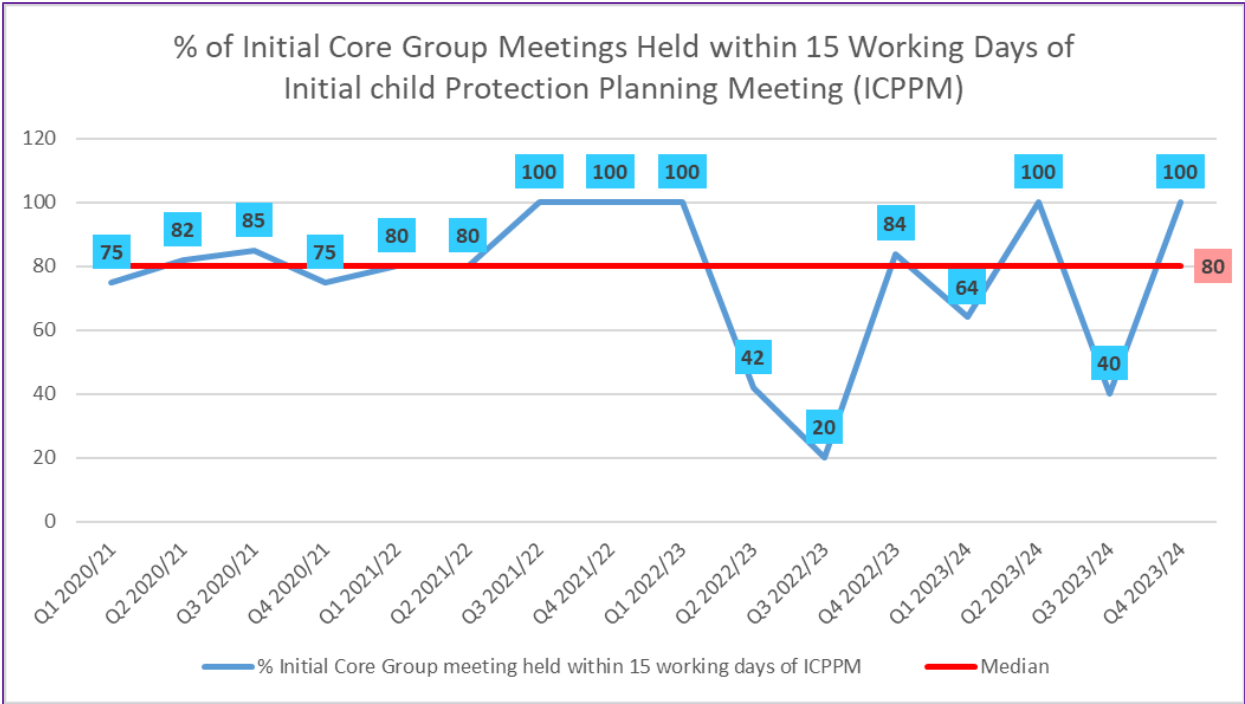
**Timescales in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland
(Percentage within Timescale)**



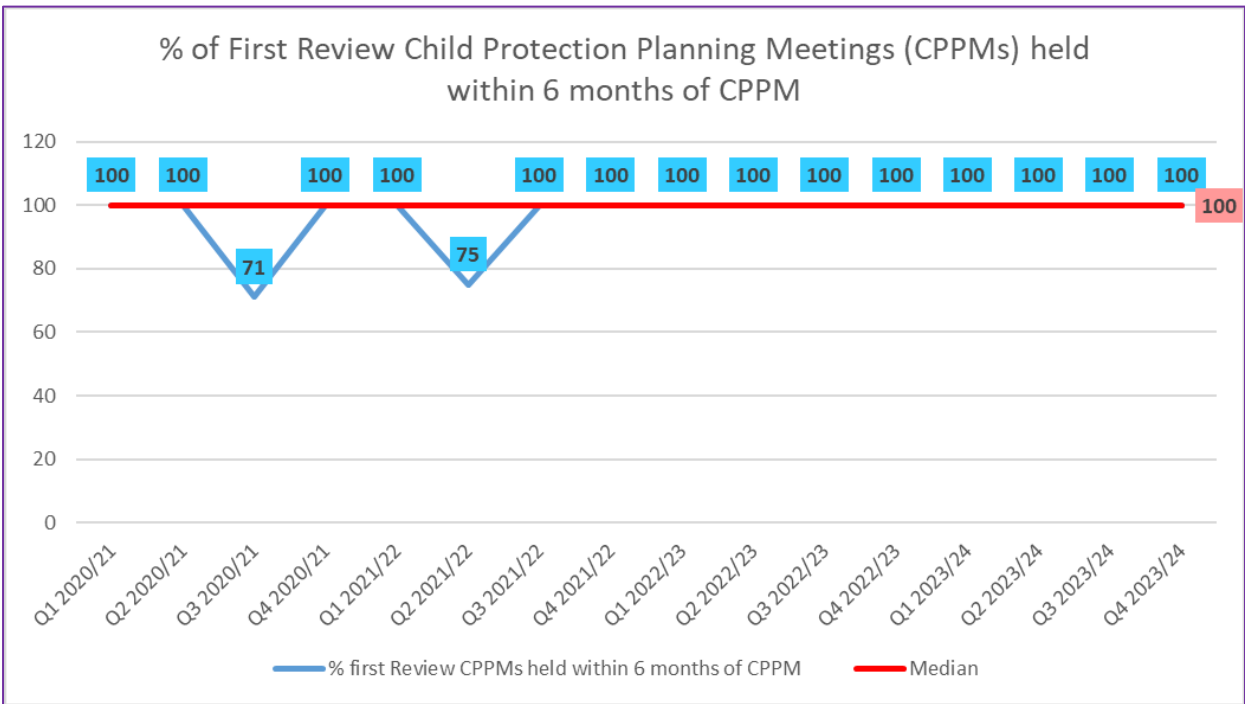
Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)



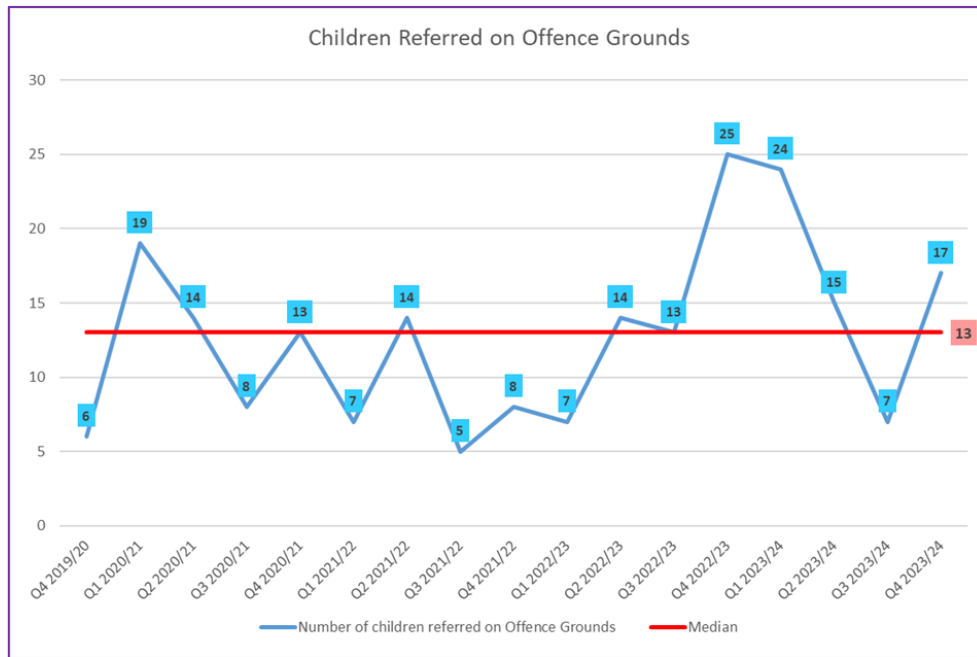
Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

Timescales for initial Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM) remain high and have been consistently above the median of 78% over the last year. The more variable rate for pre-birth CPPMs was noted to be impacted by the varying numbers coming through, with some Q2 23/24 not having any pre-birth CPPMs and as such timescales being recorded as zero for Q4 23/24.

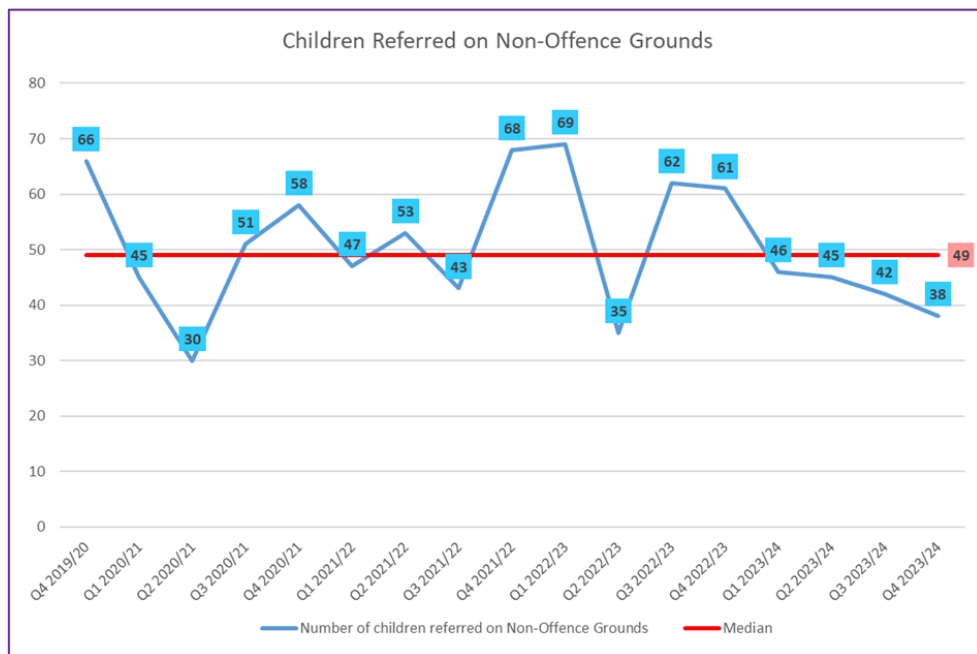
It can also be seen that the core group timescales were back to 100% after the noted drop in Q3 23/24 due to confusion about 15 working or calendar days.

Overall compliance with CP timescales remains high and indicate that families are receiving a timeous response when there are concerns about risk of significant harm to a child.

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



Source: SCRA

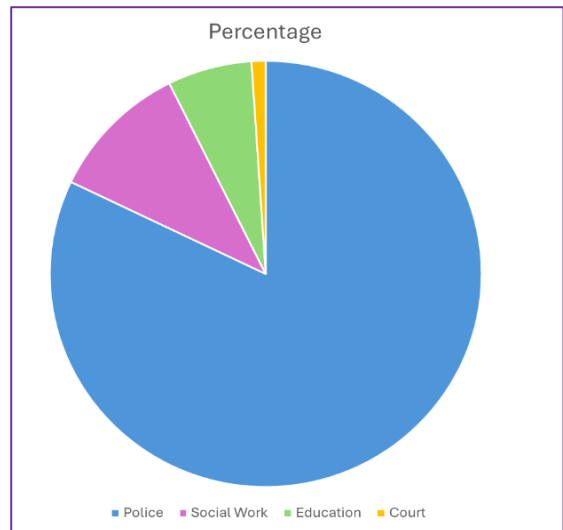


Source: SCRA

It is noticeable that the spike in offence referrals in Q4 22/23 and Q1 23/24 has now dropped and settled nearer the median level over the last 3 quarters. This is reassuring that there is no consistent trend to be concerned about.

The non-offence referrals have also decreased over the past year and SCRA were able to advise that work had been undertaken with the police regarding appropriate referrals; as such it was felt that this decline dropping below the median over the past year is appropriate and not something to be concerned about. This aligns with the national data.

The proportion of referrals coming from the police in South Ayrshire aligns with the national figures. It is notable that referrals from education have increased from less than 5 to 22 since the previous year. Referrals from the Court have also increased slightly from less than 5 to 7.

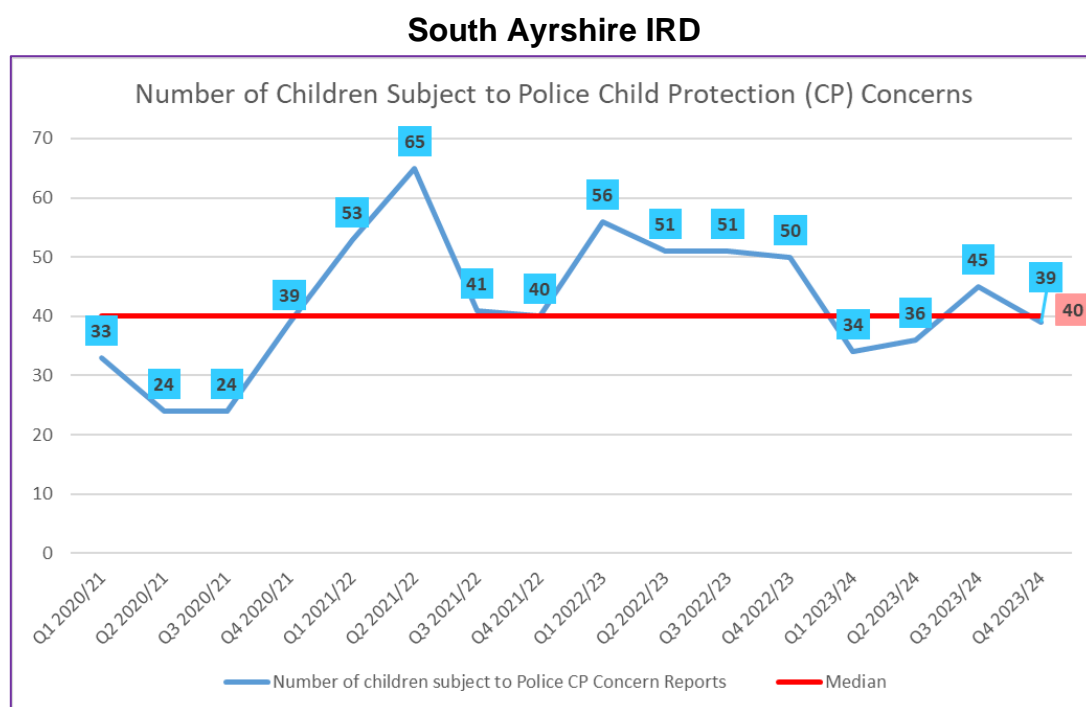


Year 2023/24

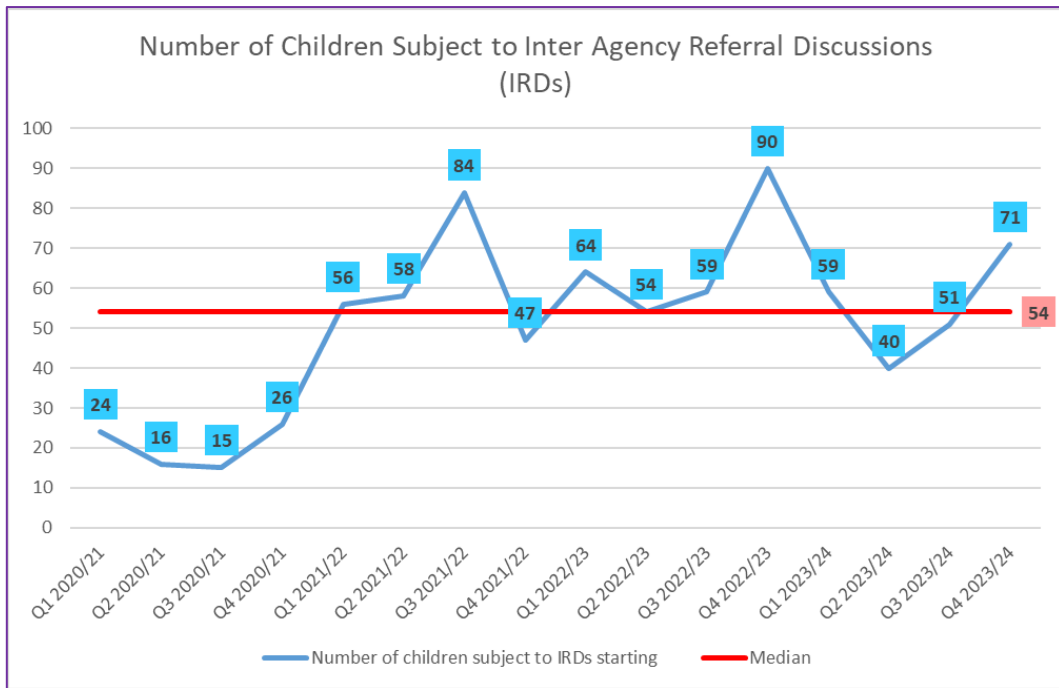
- 278 referrals from police (78% of total).
- 36 referrals from social work.
- 22 referrals from education.
- 7 referrals from court.

South Ayrshire sees the majority of the increase in offence referrals has been in males (rather than the national trend towards females), though there is a fairly significant jump in offending for both genders.

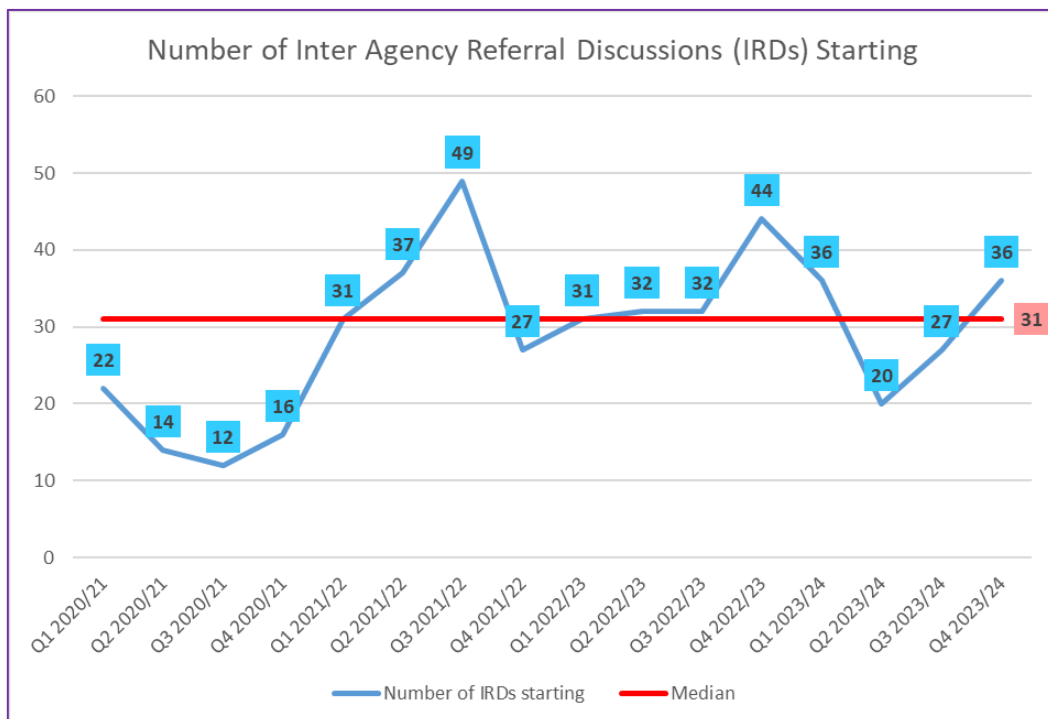
Similar to the national trend the vast majority of young people referred for offending are committing between 1 and 5 offences with only a few responsible for the 6+.



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

The number of children subject to Police Child Protection concern reports has increased year on year between 2020/21 and 2022/23 however in 2023/24 we see a reduction of 26% of children subject to Police Child Protection concern reports from 208 in 2022/23 to 154 in 2023/24. Between Q3 and Q4 of 2023/24 there was a decrease in children subject to CP concern reports from 45 to 39 which equates to a 13% decrease. South Ayrshire has a median of 40 and sits with a rate of 2.0 per 1,000 0-17 population.

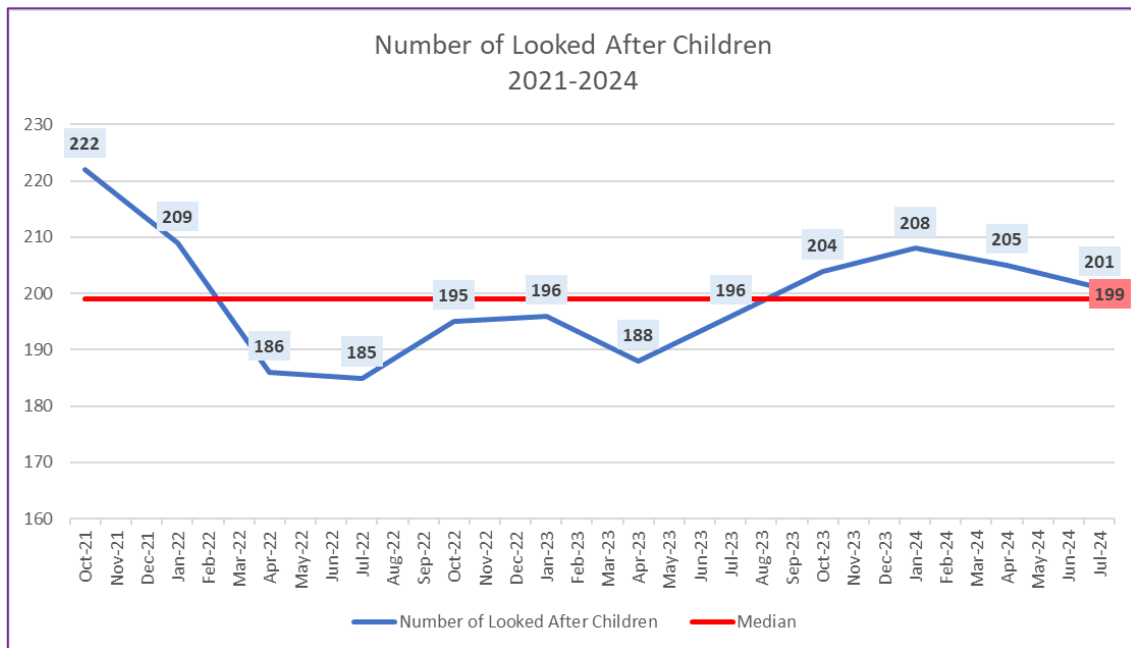
The number of children subject to IRDs has increased year on year between 2019/20 and 2022/23 however in 2023/24 we see a reduction of 17% of children subject to IRDs starting from 267 in 2022/23 to 221 in 2023/24. However, we do see an increase of 20 children subject to IRDs starting between Q3 (n=51) and Q4 (n=71) which equates to a 39% increase. South Ayrshire has a median of 54 and sits with a rate of 3.7 per 1,000 0-17 population.

We can see a decrease in number of IRDs starting between 2020/21 and 2022/23. This continues in 2023/24 with a reduction of 14% from the previous year. We do however, see an increase in Q4 of 9 with 36 IRDs starting. This equates to an increase of 33%. South Ayrshire has a median of 31 and a rate of 1.9 per 1,000 0-17 population.

It is interesting to note that although the Child Protection referrals from police have decreased over the past year, but there is still an increase in IRD activity. This suggests that Child Protection referrals from other agencies are likely to have increased, and also likely corresponds with police feeling more comfortable with social work making the decision about whether a referral meets the threshold for child protection.

Overall, the IRD activity over the past year 23/34 has remained around the median line of 36 this reassures us that there is no dramatic change in our levels of IRD activity over the year.

Looked After Children in South Ayrshire



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

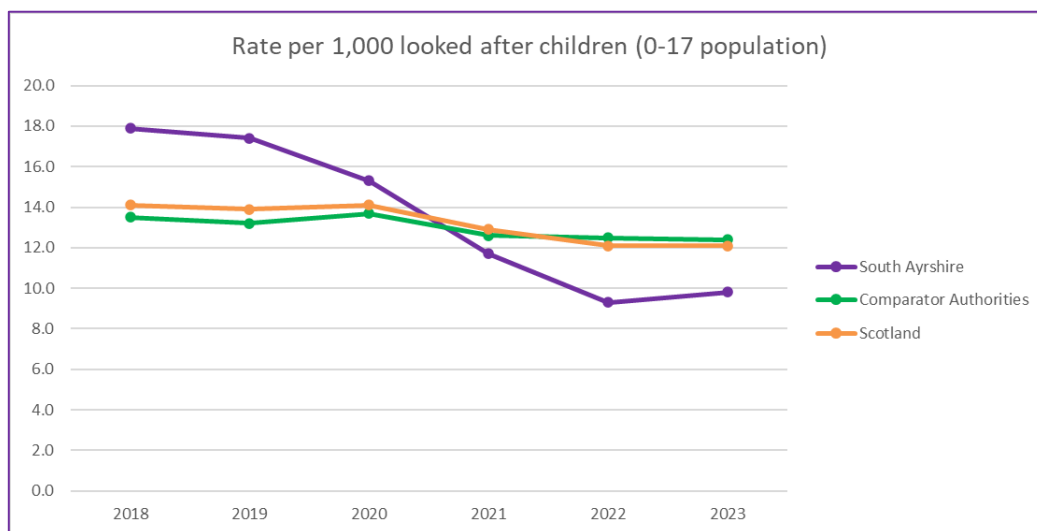
As of 31 July 2024, South Ayrshire has **201** children who are looked after and accommodated and a total of **1,047** open cases of all kinds. Keeping more children at home with families while not being subject to statutory orders, reflects the “No Order Principle” of the Children Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, and is key in South Ayrshire’s approach to Prevention and Early Intervention.

The number of children looked after in South Ayrshire in 2023 was 189 (an increase of 3.3% from 183 in 2022).

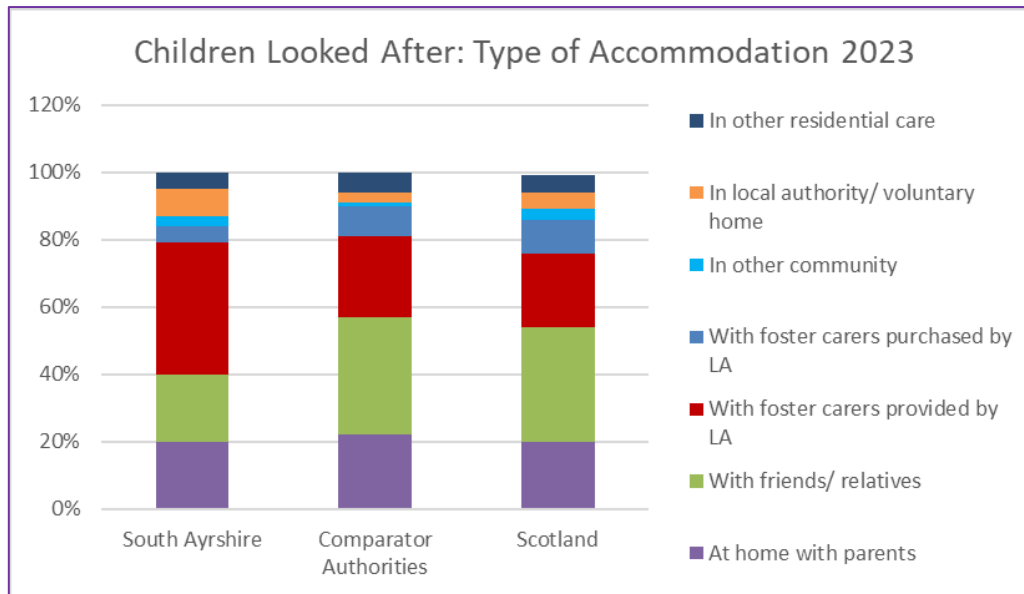
The comparator authorities show a decrease of 2.5%, while Scotland figures show a decrease of 1.9%.

The rate (per 1,000 pop 0-17) is 9.8. This is less than the comparator average rate of 12.4, and less than Scotland average rate of 12.1.

In South Ayrshire we have **20%** of our Looked After Children looked after at home, which is lower than the Scottish average. However, due to our approach of working with families without the necessity of a Statutory Supervision Order from the Children’s Hearing (when appropriate), we have far more children “living at home with parents” than ever with support from Social Work and partners. This is done through assessment process which is mindful of Children’s Rights, The Promise and Whole Family Wellbeing, and our application of the Signs of Safety.



**Source: Population figures source: NRS mid-year population estimates for 2016-2022
 Scottish Government CLAS Returns
 Looked after children statistics 2023: local authority benchmarking tool**



Source: Population figures source: NRS mid-year population estimates for 2016-2022
 Scottish Government CLAS Returns
 Looked after children statistics 2023: local authority benchmarking tool

Rate per 1,000 of Children who are Looked after and accommodated:

Local Authority Benchmark Comparators	Rate per 1,000 children
South Ayrshire	9.8
Clackmannanshire	22.7
Dumfries and Galloway	12.9
Falkirk	11.4
Fife	10.6
Renfrewshire	19.0
South Lanarkshire	11.7
West Lothian	8.6
Scotland	12.1
East Ayrshire (for local context)	17.1
North Ayrshire (for local context)	16.9

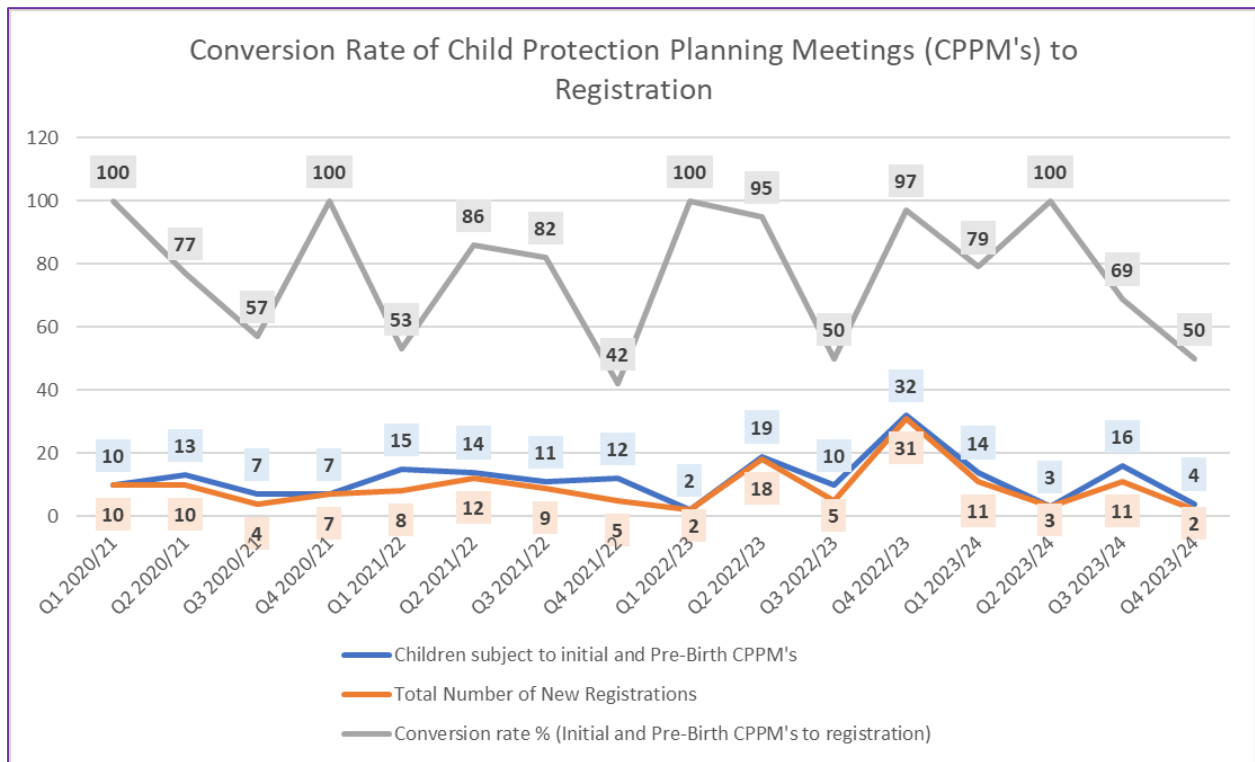
Source: Population figures source: NRS mid-year population estimates for 2016-2022
 Scottish Government CLAS Returns
 Looked after children statistics 2023: local authority benchmarking tool

The approach to Prevention and Early Intervention means that **81%** of South Ayrshire Social Work caseloads are supported on a non-statutory basis and **19%** are Looked After and Accommodated.

It is important to place the above changes alongside the Care Inspectorate Report of a joint inspection 2016 which reflects; *“Reducing referral rates to the children’s reporter*

as a percentage of the population of young people aged 8-16 years provides a helpful indicator of the effectiveness of early intervention. In South Ayrshire, referral rates while also reducing, were significantly higher suggesting that more needed to be done at an earlier stage to prevent difficulties from arising or getting worse”.

Conversion Rate of CPPM's to Registration Quarterly Trends



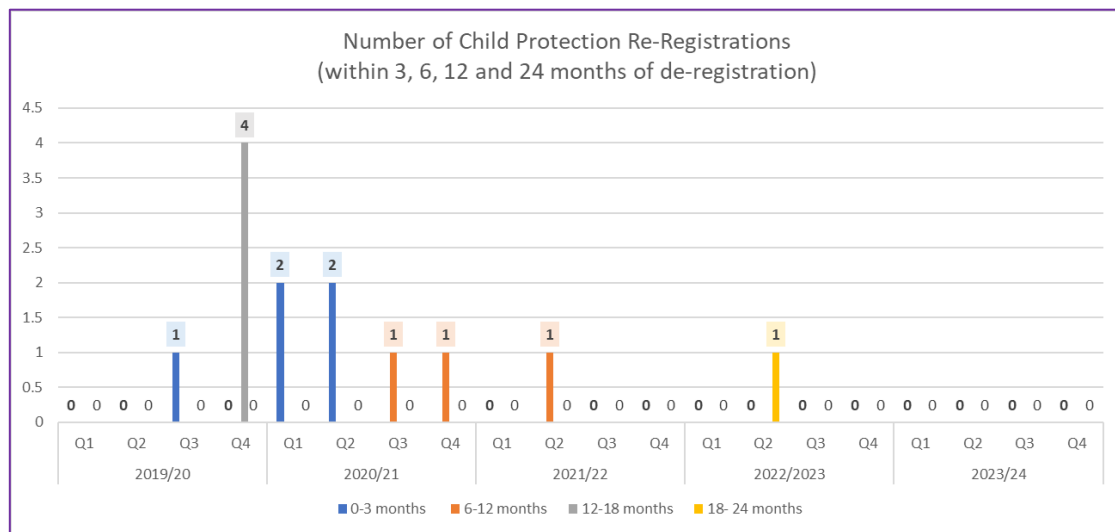
Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

The conversion rate of children being taken to Child Protection Planning Meetings and who then become registered is 50% for as at Q4 23/24 or 75% for the averaged year. This reflects that the vast majority of children who were taken to Case Conference were children requiring the need of care and protection due to being at risk of significant harm.

This is important as it means that children and families not requiring this intrusive level of support or response are not being unnecessarily drawn into statutory interventions if more proportionate and strengths-based approaches can be used instead.

This aligns very much with the Christie Commission where there is a focus on People, Prevention, Partnership and Performance. The current data indicates a preventative approach is now evident in South Ayrshire, applying the “risk sensible” approach enabling more positive work with families and children in partnership with improved outcomes for children and families. The application of the findings of The Promise has also enabled this approach, with the views of children and families continually informing how we deliver care and supports.

Timescales for Re-registration



Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

It is of note, that over the last two reporting years, only one child has been subject to re-registration after a 12-month period, suggesting that families are receiving the correct support and interventions in the most part, enabling and empowering them to improve their family's wellbeing and safety without the need for further interventions.

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

The Child Protection Committee and Chief Officers Group should be assured that there have been very few re-registrations following a child/children being de-registered and that peer review of registration is in place as a check and balance of the decision making.

De-registrations are also likely to increase with the impact of Signs of Safety practice. That said, it is important that the CPC understand the reasons for re-registration within an 18-month time frame and that learning and improvement activity is implemented as a result.

From Registration to De-registration to Registration again – A Reflection on the Effectiveness of Interventions

Annual Stats Years	Duration between previous De-Registration and Re-Registration									
	Children	Family Groups	Children	Family Groups	Children	Family Groups	Children	Family Groups	Children	Family Groups
	Under 12 Months		12-18 Months		19-24 Months		Transfer In		TOTALS	
01/08/2023-31/07/2024									0	0
01/08/2022-31/07/2023					1	1			1	1
01/08/2021-31/07/2022	1	1							1	1
01/08/2020-31/07/2021	4	3					2	1	6	4
01/08/2019-31/07/2020			4	1			1	1	5	2

Source: Carefirst (case management system, South Ayrshire Council)

The above chart on re-registration following de-registration over the past four years reflects an improving picture of a significant reduction in the number of children and family groups who are re-registered following previously being de-registered.

This has gone from 1 child in the reporting period 2022/23 to 0 children in the reporting year 2023/24.

This could indicate that with the use of the Signs of Safety approach, that child protection interventions are more effective at enabling and empowering families and family networks at managing the identified risk factors. With families being more enabled to manage risk and promote child wellbeing, there are less children being identified as requiring to be placed on the Child Protection register for a further period within two years.

Appendix 1: Child Protection Committee Members and Participants 2023-2024

Title	Organisation
Independent Chair	South Ayrshire CPC
Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services	South Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Chief Social Work Officer	South Ayrshire HSCP
Lead Officer, Child Protection	South Ayrshire HSCP
Associate Nurse Director for Public Protection	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Detective Superintendent	Police Scotland, Ayrshire Division
Assistant Director	South Ayrshire Educational Services
Link Inspector	Care Inspectorate
CPC Minute Taker	South Ayrshire HSCP
Third sector Coordinator	Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA)
Assistant Director	Aberlour Trust
Senior Policy Officer	South Ayrshire Housing
Co-ordinator, Legal & Licensing Services	South Ayrshire Council
Trauma Informed Practice Officer	South Ayrshire Council
Senior Manager. Planning, Performance and Commissioning	South Ayrshire HSCP
Lead Officer for Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP)	South Ayrshire HSCP
Corporate Parenting Lead Officer (Champions Board)	South Ayrshire HSCP
Service Manager, Practice Development	South Ayrshire HSCP
Public Protection Practice Development Officer	South Ayrshire HSCP

Lead Officer - Children's Services Planning and Performance	South Ayrshire Educational Services
Child Protection & Wellbeing Officer	South Ayrshire Educational Services
Trading Standards Officer	South Ayrshire Council
Senior Manager, Children's, and Justice Localities Services	South Ayrshire HSCP
Adult Support & Protection Lead Officer	South Ayrshire HSCP
Senior Manager, Children's Health	South Ayrshire HSCP
Associate Nurse Director	South Ayrshire HSCP
Child Protection Advisor	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Service Lead	South Ayrshire Thriving Communities
Clinical Midwifery Manager for integrated care	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Locality Reporter Manager	SCRA
Child Health Commissioner	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Detective Chief Inspector – Public Protection	Police Scotland Ayrshire Division
Public Protection Policy and Implementation Officer	South Ayrshire HSCP
Lead for Safeguarding Midwives	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Senior Manager Childrens Services	South Ayrshire HSCP
Nurse Consultant for Public Protection	NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Service Manager Young Peoples Support & Transitions (YPST)	South Ayrshire HSCP
Team Leader, Community Learning & Development	South Ayrshire Council
Public Health Project Manager for Infants & Young People	NHS Ayrshire & Arran.
Ayrshire Missing Person Co-ordinator	Police Scotland Ayrshire Division
Service Lead, Performance, Policy & Community Planning	South Ayrshire Council