

Meeting of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board	
Held on:	8th October 2025	
Agenda Item:	9	
Title:	Connect South Ayrshire Implementation and Evaluation	
Summary:		
To update the IJB on the progress of the Connect South Ayrshire model, with particular reference to the evaluation of the physical hub in Ayr.		
Author:	Lesley Reid and Steven Kelly	
Action required:		
To note the contents of report.		
Route to meeting:		
South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Directorate Management Team Transformation Group.		
Directions:		Implications:
1. No Directions Required	x	Financial <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Directions to NHS Ayrshire & Arran	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Directions to South Ayrshire Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Directions to both SAC & NHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equalities <input type="checkbox"/>
		Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/>
		Policy <input type="checkbox"/>
		ICT <input type="checkbox"/>

CONNECT SOUTH AYRSHIRE IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the IJB on the progress of the Connect South Ayrshire model, with particular reference to the evaluation of the physical hub in Ayr.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The IJB are asked to note the content of this report.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2023, the HSCP restructured adult services to introduce a locality model that was supported by the Community Planning Partnership. Three localities were formed covering North, Central and South areas of South Ayrshire. Over the course of the year following this new structure being implemented, intensive engagement and consultation took place within our local communities.
- 3.2 This approach was framed as Team Around the Locality (TATL) model and was used to gather feedback and understanding of what communities need in relation to accessing local information and advice around health and social care services. The process culminated in an event that reflected on the outputs of engagement and aimed to agree steps for moving forward. It was clear from local service users that they wanted access to good quality, up to date information from a variety of three methods – via physical hubs, a single telephone number and a website.
- 3.3 There were examples of physical hubs across South Ayrshire that were operating for specific community purposes (for example around food provisions). Having access to services at a single point was felt beneficial, with community members perceiving they build trust with providers, and the approach would make access to local services easier.
- 3.4 The ambition for physical hubs was welcome and the benefits as a HSCP this could bring, with opportunities for higher visibility and closer working with colleagues in the third sector, local authority and other providers.
- 3.5 In a bid to see this progress timeously, a Senior Manager was allocated as lead for each element of the model. Telephony was overseen by Lisa McAlpine, Website by Stewart Marshall and the Physical Hubs by Lesley Reid.
- 3.6 A Connect Implementation Group has been established which includes the Senior Managers for Localities named above, colleagues from VASA, colleagues from South Ayrshire Council, and wider HSCP staff.

4. REPORT

- 4.1.1 This report captures progress and feedback in relation to telephony, website and physical hubs, and in particular to work in Ayr that is being seen as the initial test of change for this model, with learning from this development being considered and applied to the development of the remaining Locality Hubs.
- 4.1.2 Connect South Ayrshire provides a free 0800 number available on weekdays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM with an answering machine covering out of hours. In line with the ethos behind Connect, the phone line provides support and guidance to the public who prefer not to or cannot navigate the website.
- 4.1.3 The telephony aspect of the Connect covers the whole of South Ayrshire with the 0800 number being advertised on leaflets/website etc. This approach is now firmly established with all calls handled by VASA staff and referral pathways are in place to manage and transfer calls that require statutory input. Moving forward we shall continue gather both quantitative and qualitative information around calls, but no further development is required in this area.

4.2 WEBSITE

- 4.2.1 The Connect South Ayrshire website was launched in tandem with the physical hub in November 2024. The fundamentals of the site transferred over from South Ayrshire Life, a website developed and delivered by VASA, which had been established for seven years, hosting activities, events and support services available in South Ayrshire.
- 4.2.2 VASA, as part of their contractual agreement with the HSCP, are responsible for updating the website on a daily basis, adding new activities and making any changes to existing entries.
- 4.2.3 Currently the Connect site hosts around 1000 activities (established groups or clubs offering learning/social opportunities) and over 300 events (one off or recurring events in SA), 24 themed support guides (local information and advice on services/topics such as bereavement, dementia etc) and also direct links and contact details to public services, local contacts and consultations.
- 4.2.4 Progress is being made in the second phase of the website development, which will see the introduction of additional buttons covering 'start well', 'live well', 'age well'. The plan is to have key topics behind the start, live and age well buttons around health and wellbeing all in the one place.
- 4.2.5 In addition, a subscription and user feedback sections have been created and are live on the site to enable individuals to get updates via e-mail on things that they are interested in.

4.3 PHYSICAL HUBS

- 4.3.1 The model for delivering Connect South Ayrshire included integrated and accessible physical locations in all localities.
- 4.3.2 The Connect South Ayrshire Hub opened on 4 November 2024 at 53 Sandgate, Ayr. Opening hours are from 9am-12.30pm and 1pm-4pm, with a shop front location, the hub provides advice, information and signposting to a range of services including benefit enquiries, employment support, wellbeing information and more.
- 4.3.3 The hub also has a calendar of wider partnership services utilising space and providing a drop in and appointment-based services daily. The purpose of the hub is to provide a physical space that individuals can walk in and access a wide range of information and advice around what is available in their local communities, with a range of local services working in partnership in the same space.
- 4.3.4 Throughout 2025 the Ayr hub has seen an increase in enquiries for services such as benefit support and Volunteering opportunities. All enquiries span over 35 enquiry categories. The highest enquiry categories include volunteering opportunities, benefits advice and the Footcare service that is a stand alone service and has been established for some time.
- 4.3.5 The Ayr Hub has a timetable of services who utilise the space. The Hub itself has staff from VASA working on the site on a full-time basis. The timetable relates to the two closed office spaces, which provide confidential opportunities for engagement with the public. The service providers are a mix of HSCP, wider Community Planning Partners and some third sector agencies.
- 4.3.6 There has been a mixed response from services using the space within the Ayr Hub. It is felt that the central locality of the Hub is a positive, but there has been a lack of footfall for some services.
- 4.3.7 An evaluation of the initial 6-month period of the Hub was undertaken and is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.3.8 The evaluation shows the increasing number of people accessing the space, the age range of those most likely to walk in, the range of services that are most requested and the distance that people have travelled to utilise the Hub. Also included within the evaluation are some case studies, one relating to income maximisation and one to supporting steps to a more independent life.
- 4.3.9 Data continues to be collated from the Ayr Hub and is shared and discussed via the Connect Implementation Group.
- 4.3.10 Discussions have progressed within the Locality areas in the South of the HSCP, with sites being scoped within the Girvan areas with initial hopes that

there might be a suitable space within Girvan to progress a physical hub. The thought was that Glendoune Community Hub had potential to be best placed for this. However, with space at a premium currently in this building, this has not progressed as hoped.

- 4.3.11 Within Maybole, however, there has been positive progress. Following discussions with colleagues within South Ayrshire Council the HSCP has managed to secure space within the High Street, in premises that will allow the Connect model to be incorporated into a co-located space for HSCP and other CPP colleagues. This is currently being developed, with an anticipated opening date of November 2025. Services such as social work will be available within this space 1-2 days a week. With further potential for use of the space extended to colleagues for half day sessions from Compass, the Recovery College and proposed Integrated Neighbourhood Team. Space will also be available to progress wellbeing programmes and opportunities for a demonstrator digital/ technology site.
- 4.3.12 In the Carrick area, a number of roadshows have taken place during September 2025 – with a focus on highlighting the Connect model and discussing plans for how the model could be deliver moving forward, with thought give to the spokes that will reach out to rural areas.
- 4.3.13 In the North Locality, there has been consideration to both hub and spoke opportunities for Connect. Space is at a premium in Troon town and the Locality team continue to scope opportunities within the area. It may be in this locality that some spokes are established before a central hub area identified, for example within local community groups.
- 4.3.14 Plans within Prestwick have been to co-locate a number of disciplines from within the Locality Team and incorporate the Connect model within the Freeman’s Hall. This will be the main single point of contact for citizens of Prestwick and outlying villages to access not just Health and Social Care Partnership disciplines, but to have the opportunity to have appointment-based visits calls, with colleagues from the Council, i.e Customer Services, Thriving Communities.
- 4.3.15 Like the Ayr model, Freemans Hall will have the Connect hub which will provide advice, information, and signposting to a range of services including benefit enquiries, employment support, etc. It is proposed Connect in Prestwick will also have a calendar of wider partnership services utilising space and providing a drop in and appointment-based service on a weekly basis.
- 4.3.16 The first tranche of establishing services/disciplines in Freemans Hall is well underway, with social work colleagues established in the space. Community Nursing Colleagues will follow soon. Vasa and Customer Services have committed to supporting the Connect site opening 3 days per week and further discussions are being progressed with the Partnership’s Business Support Senior Manager as to how our own Business Support teams can contribute.

- 4.3.17 A short-life working group with Council and Vasa colleagues has been established to start to develop the Connect hub. This will include the upgrade of the “office” area to mirror the Connect signage and colours in order to identify and promote Connect within the Prestwick locality.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1.1 It has been recognised that a more consistent approach to communication and marketing of the Connect model is required. A subgroup has been created to focus on this to ensure a joined-up approach across our CPP partners when promoting this work.
- 5.1.2 Work continues to explore opportunities for both hub and spoke locations across South Ayrshire. There is also thought to how the partnership work can capitalise on already established opportunities within our communities, working closely, for example, with libraries, and with community sites in our villages and rural areas.
- 5.1.3 The ongoing development of the website will focus on building links with other websites of key partners to promote and market Connect. We will also continue to develop the Start, Live and Age Well buttons and this will also involve a wide range of partners including Education and Children’s Services.

6. Strategic context

6.1 Strategic objective 6 – we are transparent and listen to you

7. Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

- 7.1.1 The HSCP, VASA and SAC have committed support to the implementation of Connect South Ayrshire within 2025/26 budget envelope.

7.2 Human Resource Implications

- 7.2.1 None

7.3 Legal Implications

- 7.3.1 None

7.4 Equalities implications

- 7.4.1 None

7.5 Sustainability implications

- 7.5.1 None

7.6 Clinical/professional assessment

- 7.6.1 None

8. CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 8.1 Local consultation, engagement and partnership working is the ethos of Locality Planning and continues on an ongoing basis.
- 8.2 Consultation and engagement in relation to both Team Around the Locality and Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) was focussed across an 18 month period between 2023 and 2024 and provided the evidence for the development of this approach.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Low risk

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