

Meeting of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board	
Held on:	12th October 2022	
Agenda Item:	7	
Title:	Children's Services Transformational Activity	
Summary:		
<p>To inform the IJB on the progress made with Children's Services transformational activity, namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Belmont Family First model - The implementation of the Signs of Safety - The extension to the Cunninghame house and supported living 		
Author:	Mark Inglis, Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice	
Recommendations:		
<p>It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board notes the transformational activity that Children's Services have engaged in over the past year and the outcomes which have resulted and change in the balance of care.</p>		
Route to meeting:		
Directions:		
1. No Directions Required	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Directions to NHS Ayrshire & Arran	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Directions to South Ayrshire Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Directions to both SAC & NHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implications:		
	Financial	<input type="checkbox"/>
	HR	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Equalities	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	ICT	<input type="checkbox"/>

CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSFORMATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the IJB on the progress made with Children's Services transformational activity, namely;

- The Belmont Family First model
- The implementation of the Signs of Safety
- The extension to the Cunninghame House and supported living models of care

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board notes the transformational activity that Children's Services have engaged in over the past year and the outcomes which have resulted and change in the balance of care.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Children's Health Care and Justice Service deliver a range of supports to Children and Families throughout South Ayrshire. These services are delivered in fulfilling the statutory function of Social Work Services, including the protection of children and improving wellbeing through addressing assessed vulnerabilities.
- 3.2 The delivery of Children and Families services is a complex matter. It has been acknowledged by the Integrated Joint Board that there have been significant challenges in how the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership have historically delivered Children's services.
- 3.3 As an example the Care Inspectorate report in 2016 highlighted that South Ayrshire had a disproportionate number of children in costly external care placements and that there was a lack of early intervention services. Budgets were also overspent on expensive external providers.
- 3.4 In particular, and for the purposes of this report, it was identified that there were 53 children and young people from one school cluster who over three years cost the Partnership £3,704,382 in external care provision.
- 3.5 With significant investment in the management structure of Children's Service management and the wider Health and Social Care Partnership infrastructure, namely the creation of an independent Chief Social Work Officer, a Chief Finance Officer and a dedicated Commissioning Officer for Children's Services. The conditions were created which enabled an innovative approach to cultural transformation as well as efficiency and improved outcomes for children and young people. With the vision being ***"to keep South Ayrshire's children in South Ayrshire and in families or family type care arrangements"***.

- 3.6 On 7 February 2020, a report was presented to Leadership Panel by the Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services. The report sought the approval for the funding of three specific transformational projects.

The following was agreed at the Leadership Panel:

- the creation of a team of five, within the Belmont Family First model
- the implementation of the Signs of Safety, driving culture change; and
- development at Cunninghame Place enhancing local provision;

It was agreed that any savings accrued from these proposals be put back into the reserves of the Health and Social Care Partnership budget and used for further transformational change.

3.7 COVID19

While the pace of implementing all transformational projects has been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic, the following report reflects that significant progress has been made towards a changed culture, efficiencies and improved outcomes for Children and families.

The learning and cost avoidance from these transformational projects enables not only re-investment in a change in the balance of care for the future, but improved outcomes for Children and young people and their families and South Ayrshire as a whole community.

4. REPORT

- 4.1 The implementation of these projects was significantly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. However, progress was made nonetheless and the Belmont Family First project started in July 2021, the implementation of the Signs of Safety in August 2021 and the work at Cunninghame Place has begun as of August 2022.

4.2 Belmont Family First

The Belmont Family First team were established within the Belmont cluster in July 2021 and referrals taken to support children and families at risk of becoming accommodated from that moment. The initial ambition of the project was to reduce the spend in external care provision by 30% to then enable the project to become self-funding and mainstream provision.

As of April 2022, there were 31 children from 24 families referred to the Belmont Family First project.

To date the outcomes from this approach have been;

- No external placements from Belmont Cluster
- No Child moved to external or internal foster care

- No child placed within secure care
- No child became Looked After and Accommodated from this cluster
- No child was placed on the Child Protection Register from this cluster.

It should be acknowledged that, overall, in this same timeframe, children were accommodated and looked after from other school cluster areas;

Placement Type	Number
At Home with Parents	16
Fostering provided by LA	3
LA Childrens Home	1
Residential School	2
With Friends/Relatives	1
Total	23

While COVID19 may have impacted upon the overall numbers of referrals as children were not in school, the comparison with other school clusters in South Ayrshire over the same period give us a good benchmark for measuring effectiveness of the approach.

Families have also told us what their experience of the approach has been;

“Belmont First has made a huge different in the communication with my daughter and implementing a safety plan. I’m learning how to map things out differently with mind maps and my workers help”

“Non-judgemental, positive support for the whole family”

Getting out of class to be able to talk to someone

“Safe and supporting place to talk about family challenges. Having the support for all the family and bringing us together”

“Having the support of someone my kids could go to chat where they felt safe and comfortable

4.3 Implementation of the Signs of Safety

The Signs of Safety is a strengths-based model that has contributed to the overall cultural change evidenced within Children’s Health Care Services in South Ayrshire. The access to training has enabled the Partnership to address historical factors which have contributed to an overly ‘interventionist approach’ with Children and Families.

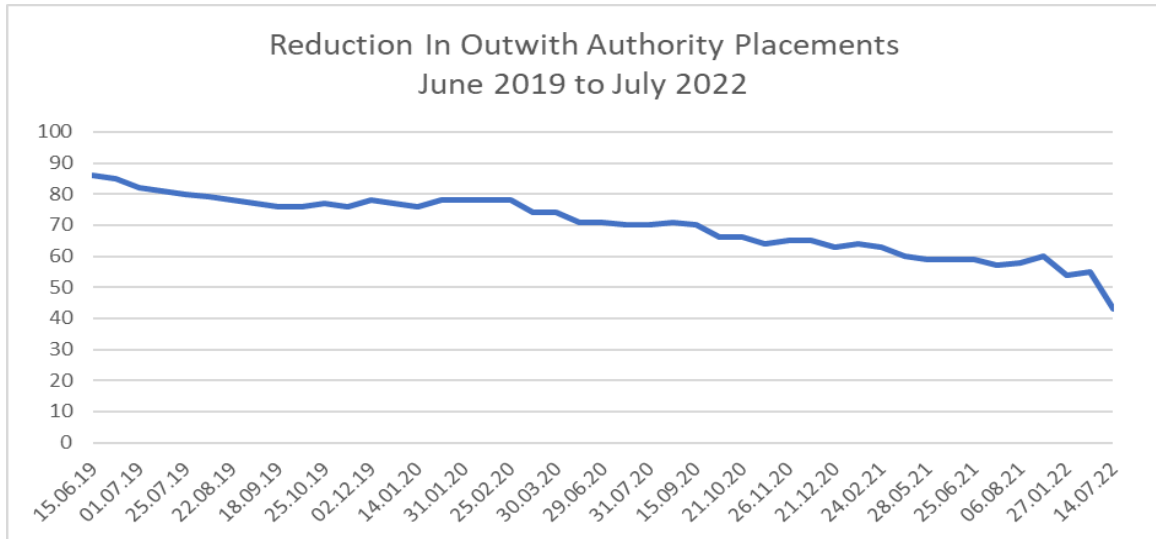
The Signs of Safety (SoS) model has followed a project management approach, with an Implementation Board being established. This consists of key partners within Health, Education and Police who provide oversight to the implementation of the model. The implementation action plan is below:

- Practice casework study commenced to pilot and test the SoS model with selected staff involved. This highlighted challenges to the current culture from the new approach but also reflected that there would be significant benefits to the model of practice being implemented across the whole system.
- A baseline audit of 120 HSCP case files has been completed, which reflects the strengths and weaknesses in our current approaches and where there are gaps and inconsistencies.
- There has been a survey for selected parents and children completed which provides a base rate of service users current experience of supports from Children services.
- A staff survey has also been completed reflecting a base rate for how connected front line staff feel to Senior Managers, Heads of Service and Elected members. The report was made available in December 2021 and reported to the Child Protection Committee.
- The whole system change has resulted in process mapping of process enabling the streamlining of processes, including Carefirst.
- New paperwork, language and templates have been developed by a subgroup to ensure we have a consistency of language and they are family friendly
- A wide range of stakeholder events have taken place to ensure that there is the widest understanding and “buy in” on the culture change required.
- Full training for staff has also taken place, for all social work staff along with key partner agencies. This will be followed by a 4 day specific training for social work staff and separate day sessions have been completed for other staff groups such as: Children’s Hearing Panel Members, Headteachers, Admin staff etc,

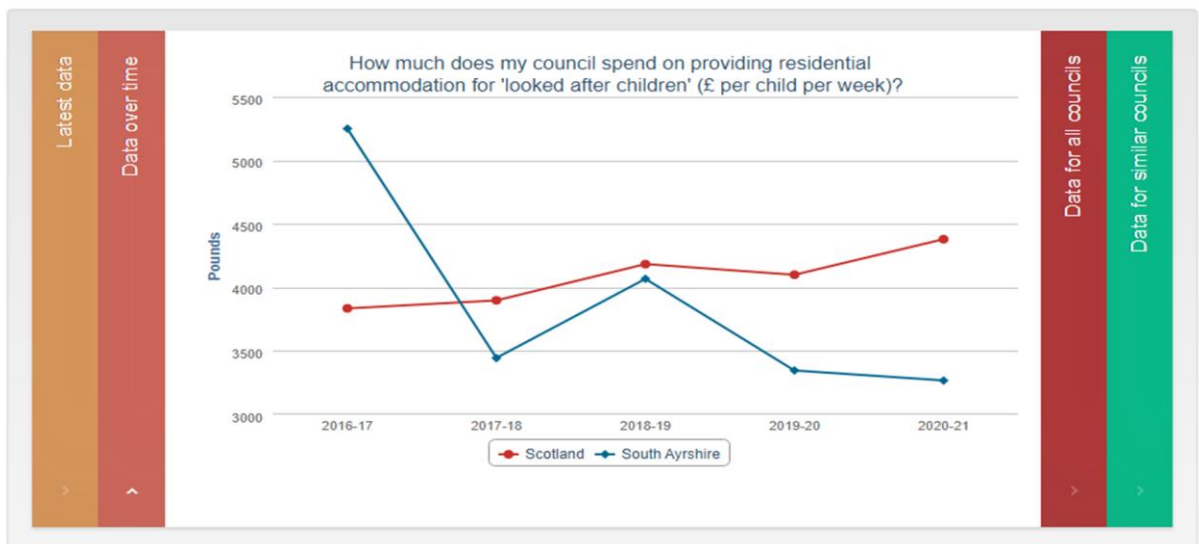
Signs of Safety is now fully understood and evident in daily practice across Children Health and Care services. Further audit activity will be undertaken in the later part of 2022 and into 2023 with a comparator report reflecting staff and service users experience produced to reflect the change in practice. It is anticipated that this report will be available in March 2023.

4.4 Outcomes and Evidence of the Signs of Safety

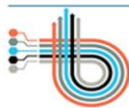
Reduced spend in Outwith Authority Placements



- This reduction is from 86 Outwith authority placements to 41. The cost avoidance of this is £2.5 Million pounds
- Enabling the investment in early intervention and prevention approaches, while **“Keeping South Ayrshires Children in South Ayrshire and in Families or Family type care”**



Other data available in this theme Other councils



Local Government Benchmarking Framework

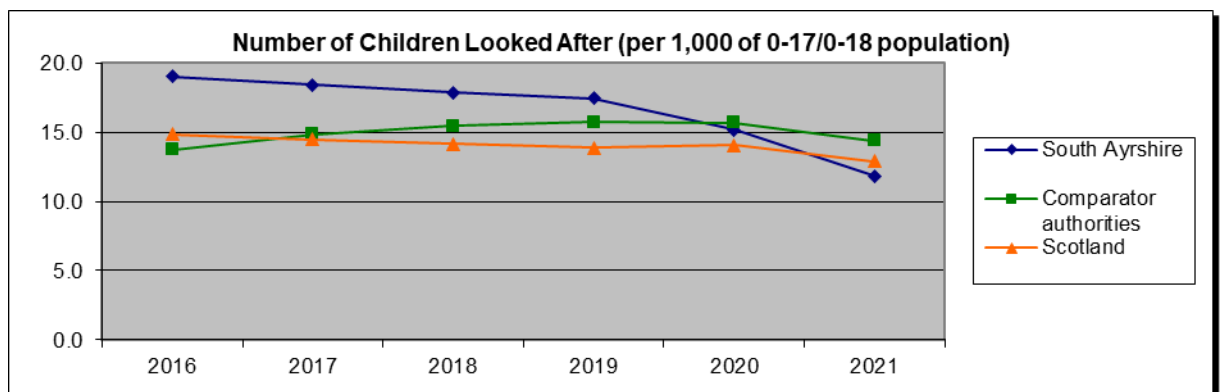


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Change in the balance of care

Year	Number of Children	Rate per 100,000	Reduction in LAC from 2016
2017	370	18.4	-4%
2018	355	17.9	-8%
2019	345	17.4	-10%
2020	300	15.2	-22%
2021	233	11.9	-39%

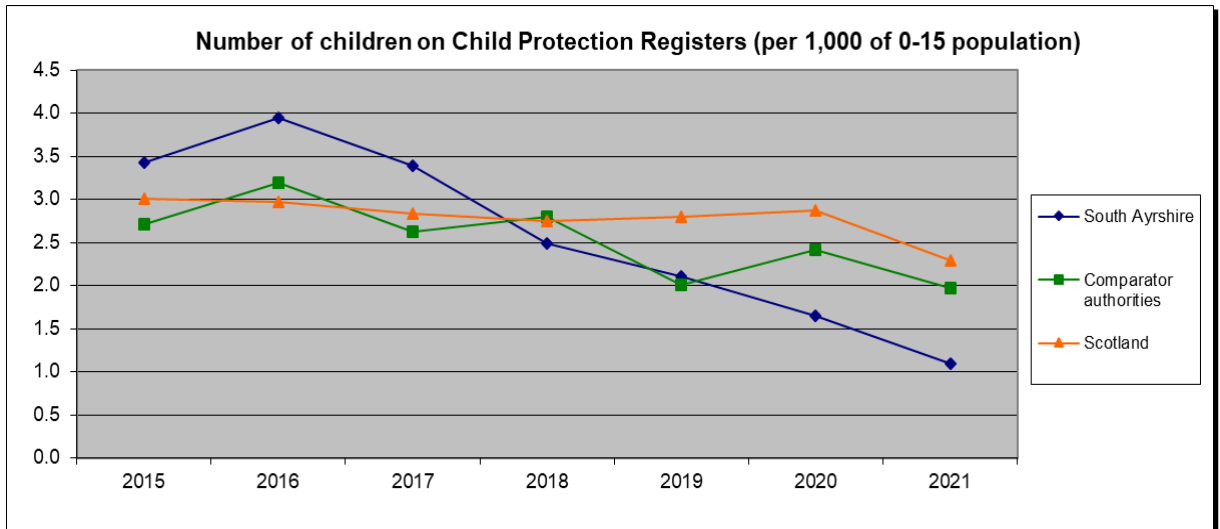
Looked After Children bench marking comparison



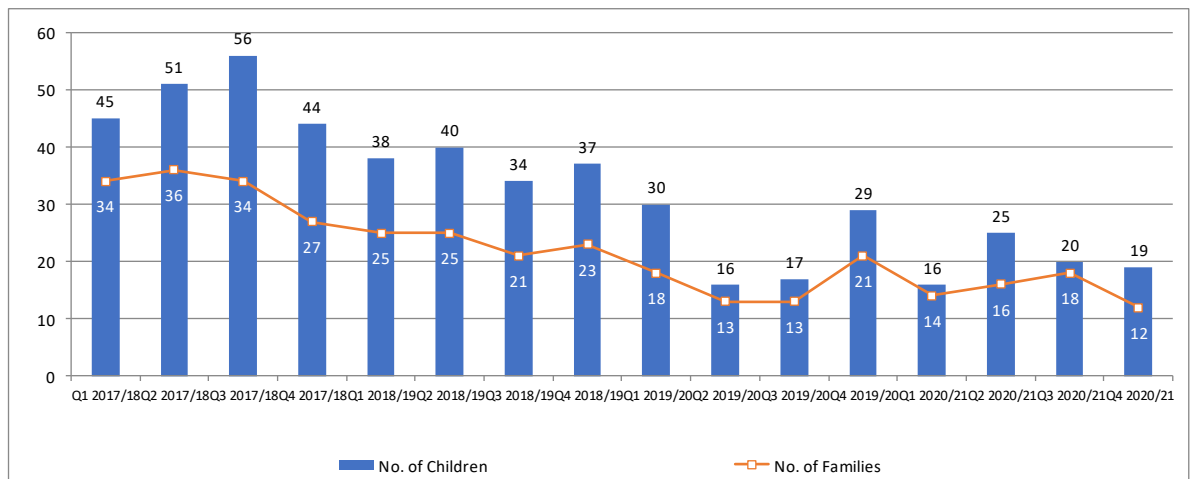
Early intervention reflected in the data

- In 2020/21 SAC had 11.9 Children per 1,000 who were Looked After. SAC figures are more in line with the Scottish average of 12.9 per 1,000 and South Ayrshire notably lower than SAC comparator Local Authorities which 14.4 per 1,000.
- 19% of caseloads statutory cases, = 233 of the total 1233 (Christie commission, ***“one of the pillars of Christie was to shift focus in budgets to more prevention activities”***)
- No secure placements in 24 months
- 53% reduction in use of Out with Authority placements, cost avoidance of £2.5 m
- 45% reduction in children referred to SCRA on Offence grounds 18/19 to 19/20

Sensible approach to risk



- Reduced numbers of Children subject to Child Protection Registration



- Ensuring that only those children who are “*at risk of significant harm*” are brought onto the Child Protection register.
- Enabling families to work with Health and Social Care Partnerships to address concerns in a more relational and child centred manner.

4.5 Cunningham House Extension

The initial ambition for this project was to build in capacity within our own Children’s houses which enabled short breaks for children and young people whose families were in crisis.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic this project has been severely restricted in progressing, as well as having to be adapted due to significant rising costs.

The Project of works has now commenced and it is anticipated that these will be completed by the end of March 2023. This will create an additional independent flat for a young person to get support for a short period of time, to prevent the need for them to be accommodated out with of South Ayrshire.

As stated above this reflects the strategic direction of Children Services as well as the Promise and will avoid costs for accommodation from external providers.

5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

5.1 The work of Children's Health, Care and Justice is driven by the strategic priorities of the Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2021-31.

This can be seen in particular reference to the approach of locality planning, where the work within School clusters, specifically the Belmont Family First model. Enables families and children to get access to support at the point of need from services who know the locality and can ensure that the child and family get the right support from the right person, as part of a team around the family approach.

5.2 The approach to Children services also reflects the IJB strategic 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"***.

5.3 There is also commitment within the approach to children services which reflects the IJB strategic plans to promote positive Mental Health and Wellbeing through a nurturing, strength based approach children and families are involved in their own plans and enabled and empowered to take control of their own life circumstances.

5.4 The work described above also reflects the strategic commitment to early intervention and prevention and to tackling inequalities. Where there is commitment from the IJB that ***"Our children have the best possible start in life"*** and ***"our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens"***

5.5 South Ayrshire are committed to implementing the findings of the Care Review and, in particular, The Promise. This is evident in the commitment to support families and support families to live together, applying the ten principles of family support. It is also evident in our commitment to ***"love and support for our care experienced young people and young carers"***.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The above report reflects a changing culture in how children services serve and support Children, young people and their families. The implementation of the Signs of Safety and investment in the Belmont Family First model, reflects that when investment is made within a community setting (in this case a school cluster) and is targeted to support those who require support at the point of need, through relational, strength based practice. Then there is strong evidence that this leads to not only improved efficiency of existing resources, but also children being loved and nurtured in families, with all the benefits that research tells us this brings.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.1.1 There will be further reports brought to the IJB Budget Working Group and subsequently to the IJB itself, with further proposals for how we build on this approach and implement the Promise, delivering on Children Services and IJB strategic priorities.

6.2 Human Resource Implications

6.2.1 There are none noted within this report.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 There are none noted in this report.

6.4 Equalities implications

6.4.1 None noted beyond the initial equalities impact assessments completed at the initiation of these projects.

6.5 Sustainability implications

6.5.1 The Belmont Family First project is now funded through Core Budgets, the model is extended through the Covid recovery money which created the Small Steps to positive change project which delivers similar approaches across four further secondary Schools. There is a requirement to consider the evidence of this extension and sustainability of the approach.

6.6 Clinical/professional assessment

6.6.1 The Chief Social Work Officer has been fully supportive and engaged in the approach to the work with Children and young people.

7. CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

7.1 Consultation with the staff group, Children and Families and wider partners has been conducted throughout the project and Portfolio Holders. All support the

approach and believe that the above reflects a positive change in direction towards Early Intervention.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1. There are no risks identified in considering the implications of this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date: **1 September 2022.**