

Item: 23

Policy and Resources Committee: 17 June 2025.

Children's Services Plan – Annual Report.

**Joint Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing and
Chief Officer of the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.**

1. Overview

- 1.1. In accordance with Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act), the overall responsibility for children's services planning rests with the Local Authority and its relevant Health Board, working collaboratively with other members of their Community Planning Partnership as well as with children, young people and their families.
- 1.2. Statutory Guidance relating to the planning of Children's Services has been issued by Scottish Ministers under Section 15 of the Act and was revised in 2020.
- 1.3. Children's Services Plans must cover a specified three-year period, currently 2023-26. The planning process for the new plan has begun.
- 1.4. As set out in section 13(1) of the Act, as soon as practicable after the end of each one-year period, the Local Authority and the relevant Health Board must publish a report on the extent to which children's and related services have been provided in accordance with their Children's Services Plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Note the Children's Service Plan Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, which provides an overview of the work completed by Children's Services during 2024/25, and the work of the Children's Services Strategic Group, insofar as it relates to the remit of the Council.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** No financial implications arising directly from the report recommendations, however any actions required by the Council from the Annual Report, attached at Appendix 1, are required to be met from approved budgets.
2. **Legal:** This report is required as outlined in section 13(1) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
3. **Corporate Governance:** Not applicable.
4. **Human Resources:** Not applicable.
5. **Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - ☐ Growing our economy.
 - ☒ Strengthening our Communities.
 - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
 - ☐ Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - ☒ Cost of Living.
 - ☐ Sustainable Development.
 - ☒ Local Equality.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** Not applicable.
10. **Risk:** Not applicable.
11. **Procurement:** Not applicable.
12. **Health and Safety:** Not applicable.
13. **Property and Assets:** Not applicable.
14. **Information Technology:** Not applicable.
15. **Cost of Living:** Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

Children's Services Plan 2024 – 2025

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Children's Services Annual Report 2024 – 2025.



Orkney's Children's Services Plan 2023 - 2026 Annual Report 2024 - 25



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How we Plan and Deliver Children's Services

The Children's Services Strategic Group

The Children's Services Strategic Group (CSSG) is the owner of the *Children's Services Plan 2022 – 2026*, and of the *Children's Services Annual Report*. It is a multi-agency partnership of key stakeholders engaged in the creation and implementation of children's services across Orkney. For the purposes of the Children's Services Plan, the CSSG has two statutory partners: NHS Orkney and Orkney Islands Council (s.13 Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).

Alongside the creation of an Action Plan, *The Children's Services Plan 2022 – 2026* created four distinct short-life working groups to carry out independent projects within the Children's Services remit:

- Corporate Parenting and Keeping the Promise Working Group
- Getting It Right For Every Child Implementation Group
- UNCRC Implementation Group
- Suicide Prevention Taskforce

These working groups were created to work on one-off projects that immediately impact Orkney's children and young people. Over time, some of these groups may enable the work of the Plan's outcomes, but this is a secondary goal. Should any working group complete their remit before June 2026, they will be wound up on completion of a formal report submitted to the CSSG.

These groups are multi-agency, and the diverse membership reflects the collaborative nature of children's services in Orkney, including both statutory partners as well as third-sector partners alike.

The short-life working groups will report to the Children's Services Strategic Group. In this report we include updates from each sub-group.

United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child Implementation Group

The Scottish Parliament's United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 gained Royal Assent in January 2024. This Act places a burden on all public authorities to take proactive steps to ensure the protection of children's rights in their decision-making and service delivery.

In February 2024, the Scottish Government issued statutory guidance to local authorities, which serves as the key driving document for this working group. The UNCRC implementation group will work to embed children's human rights approaches into various aspects of practice, including decision-making, budget

allocation, inclusive communication, awareness raising, participation of children, and child friendly complaints and advocacy. For reference this guidance comprises:

Scottish Government's non-statutory guidance to taking a children's human rights approach: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-taking-childrens-human-rights-approach/>

Scottish Government's statutory guidance to the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill 2024: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-part-2-uncrc-incorporation-scotland-act-2024/pages/4/>

The UNCRC Implementation Group was formed in May 2024 with a two-year remit and the intention to meet every two months. This group has met five times in the past year through Teams, with representatives from Educational Psychology, Health, Community Learning and Development, Educational Attainment, Policy and Schools.

In November 2024, the Improvement Service's UNCRC Implementation Project Manager visited Orkney to hold workshops and improve local understanding of the UNCRC with partners and stakeholders. This included a workshop with members of the Children's Services Strategic Group to discuss statutory obligations, and what we as a partnership could be doing to facilitate implementation of the UNCRC within Orkney.

Looking forward, the group will work on further awareness-raising with partners who may not traditionally see themselves as involved in Children's Services. And in Q3 of 2025 an awareness-raising event will be held online for the UNCRC, with a renewed focus on ensuring stakeholder engagement from all partners.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) Implementation Group

GIRFEC has been mandated in Scotland since 2006, but key steps still need to be undertaken to ensure that GIRFEC is well embedded in Orkney's Children Services. In September 2022, the Scottish Government published updated their [GIRFEC materials](#), which will inform the review of our multi-agency processes that this working group will be carrying out. These materials include a new policy statement and practice guidance, as well as clarification on how the eight well-being indicators (SHANARRI) are to be used in the assessment of well-being of children and young people. Additionally, the UNCRC is foundational to GIRFEC, so with the passing of the UNCRC (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024, GIRFEC has only become further embedded in the national children's services policies.

The GIRFEC Implementation Group was formed in May 2024 with a two-year remit and the intention to meet every two months. By 2026, the new GIRFEC materials should be understood and, where necessary, current Orcadian policies and procedures should be updated in line with this new understanding. For reference these materials are:

The Scottish Government's updated GIRFEC materials:
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/girfec-resources/>

The Scottish Government's document that explains the UNCRC as the foundation of GIRFEC: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/uncrc-the-foundation-of-getting-it-right-for-every-child/>

Corporate Parenting and Keeping the Promise Programme

Corporate Parenting is “an organisation’s performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of looked after children or care leavers and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted.”

The Orkney Partnership has published a statutory corporate parenting plan, [*Orkney’s Good Parenting Plan 2020 – 2025*](#). In recognition of the feelings and reviews of Care Experienced children and young people as reported in the Independent Care Review in Scotland 2020, the Partnership chose to refer to and identify as ‘good parents’ rather than ‘corporate parents.’ This is a statutory document as outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

[‘The Promise’](#) is the Scottish Parliament’s undertaking that Scotland will be the best place for children and young people to grow up – that every child will grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.

The Promise Board was established in the Summer of 2024, meetings commenced on a bi-monthly basis until December 2024 to support with the establishment of the Board and to gain traction on the priorities within the current Corporate Parenting/ Good Parenting Plan.

The Board has full presentation from the multi-agency partnership and the third sector.

A children and young people’s participation group has been established to ensure the voice, choice and participation of children and young people steer the work of the Board.

In February 2025, an in person Promise development session was facilitated in Orkney by the Northern Promise Lead. This was an opportunity for professionals from the multi-agency partnership to get together to reflect on our implementation of the Promise, celebrate strengths and successes and identify priority areas requiring development for the year ahead and beyond.

In June 2025, Who Cares Scotland are facilitating a training session on the Promise and Corporate Parenting responsibilities with Elected Members and Senior Leaders within the Council.

The current Corporate Parenting/ Good Parenting Plan runs to 2025, therefore the Board is currently reviewing the progress and outcomes achieved in the current plan, and with the participation of children and young people, drafting an updated Good Parenting Plan to take effect from 2026.

Relevant guidance is:

The Scottish Parliament's Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which introduced the definition of 'corporate parenting':

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/schedule/4/enacted>

The Scottish Government's statutory guidance on Corporate Parenting:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-part-9-corporate-parenting-children-young-people-scotland/>

The Scottish Government's non-statutory guidance for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/bairns-guide-community-planning-partnerships-being-good-corporate-parent/>

The Suicide Prevention Taskforce

This task force was established to tackle suicide in the Orkney community. It is not a statutory role, but one created to tackle an immediate and pressing concern for Orcadians. Since the creation of the *Children's Services Plan 2022 - 2026*, this taskforce has met monthly. The work of this group may be broadened to include more general mental health and well-being aims with the understanding that early preventative measures are the most effective tool against suicide.

In the Children's Services Plan, a sub-group of this taskforce has been given the remit of creating the Local Suicide Prevention App. In March 2025, this group launched the web app – Suicide Orkney Support (SOS Orkney). Details of the app are included in the report below on page 16.

Reporting on Children's Services in Orkney

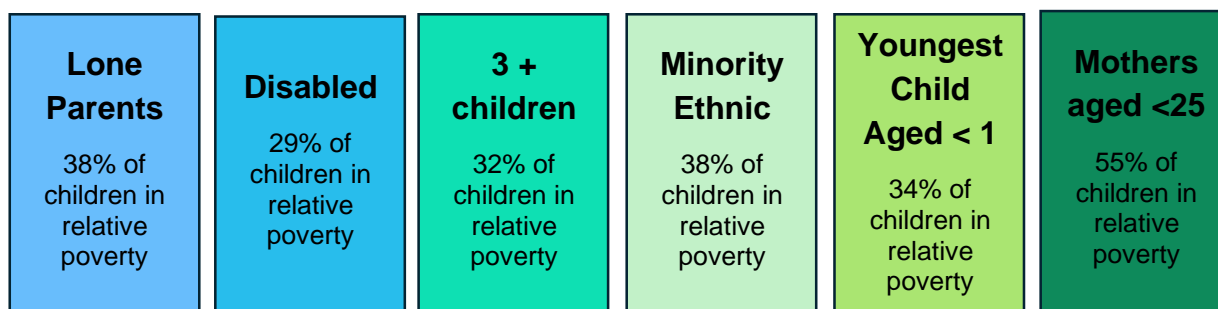
It is difficult to summarise and extrapolate data on Children's Services in Orkney due to the relatively small size of our dataset compared to other local authorities. Orkney is Scotland's smallest local authority, with only 5,367 under 25's living on the island. Due to this, any one individual event in Orkney's children's population can result in significant variation in these graphs. Therefore, while it is useful to track data, it is important to remember how sensitive and reactive it can be.

The *Children's Services Plan 2023 – 2026*, against which this annual report is measured, identified six key performance indicators that will assist with monitoring the Plan's overall success. These indicators are not targets but provide an understanding and context of the environment in which we are working.

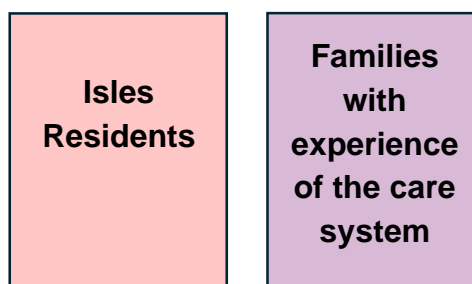
These performance measures are taken from the Improvement Service's Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and help set the Plan's aims and ambitions. We used these measures as they allow us to compare our outcomes to the rest of Scotland. The charts also contain figures for Orkney's 'family group' (FG), a small group of comparable local authorities. In future reports, we may begin to rely on more local data as this is updated more frequently.

Proportion of Looked After Children being cared for in the community (CHN09)

The Scottish Government has identified six minority groups at high risk of experiencing hardship:

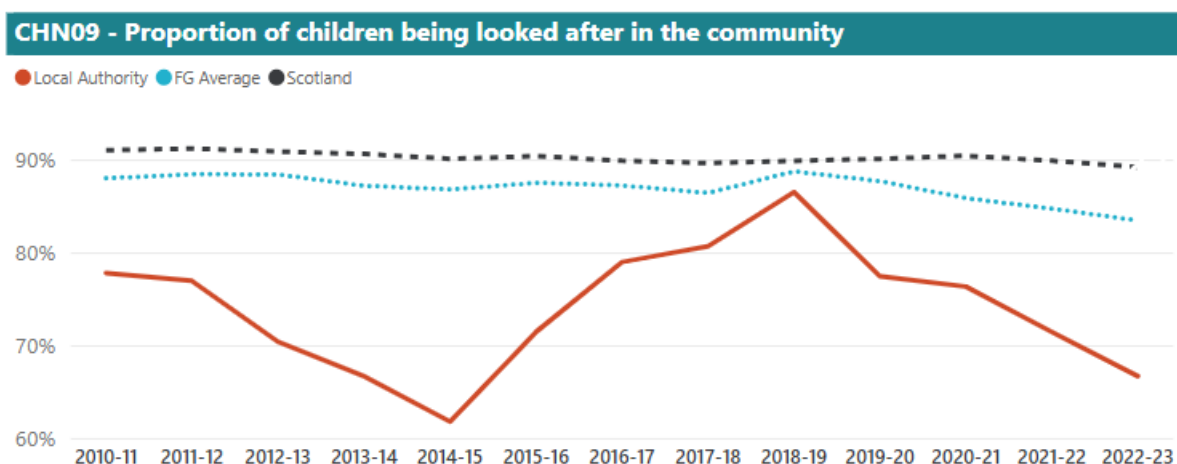


The Orkney Partnership added two groups of families with particular local significance in the *Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022 – 2026* that we believe are also at greater risk of hardship:



The term care-experienced refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked after. By monitoring the proportion of children being looked after in the community, we can gain a better understanding of the scale of the challenge, and the resources needed to achieve our goals. Due to the definition of a looked after children, we do not expect to see large changes in these figures year-on-year as that would require children to ‘age out’ of the statistics or move away from Orkney.

Orkney has a consistently lower than average proportion of look after children who are being cared for in the community, and this has been trending increasingly downward since 2018 – 2019.

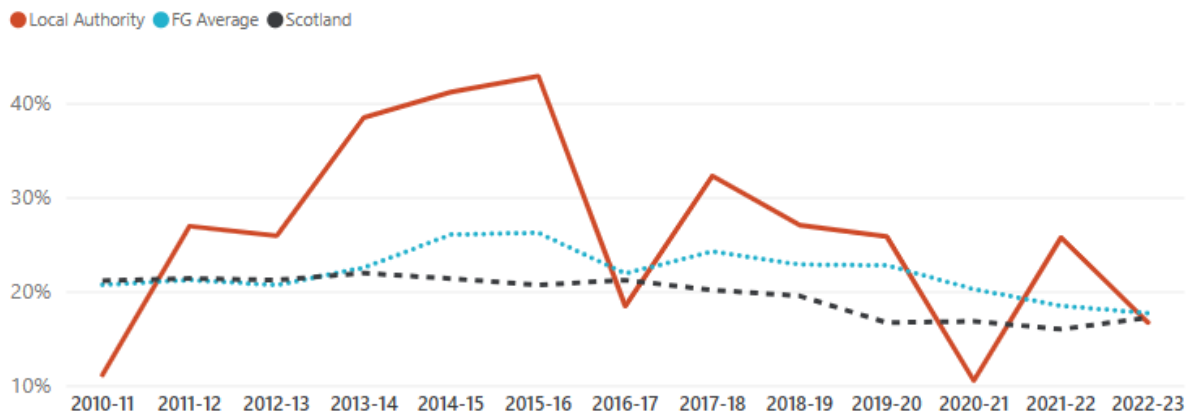


Proportion of Looked After Children with more than one placement in the last year (CHN23)

A continuation of the above commitment to families with experience of the care system, the *Children's Services Plan 2023 – 2026* tracks the proportion of Looked After Children who have had more than one placement in the last year. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 defines a Looked After Child as those in the care of their local authority. This does not necessarily mean that the child is looked after away from home, as looked after children also includes children who have been through the Children's Hearings system and are subject to a Supervision Requirement with no condition of residence.

Since the *Children Services Annual Report 2023 – 2024*, Orkney's numbers have improved and are now in-line with the Scottish average. From the 2021/22 reporting period to the 2022/23 reporting period, Orkney's rank compared to other local authorities improved from a poor 28 out of 32 to a midrange 16 out of 32.

CHN23 - Proportion of LAC with more than 1 placement in the last year

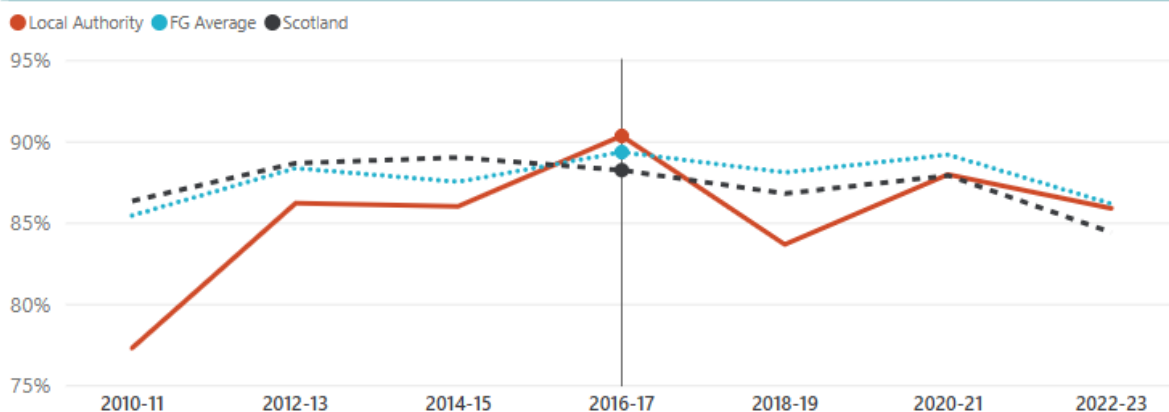


School attendance rates (per 100 'looked after pupils') (CHN19b)

School attendance is highly correlated with academic attainment and evidence shows that students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school attain the best exam results. Outside of academic attainment, school attendance helps build social ties and helps children to meet developmental milestones.

Orkney has remained largely in-line with the Scottish average, with attendance for looked after children rates slightly dipping in 2022 – 23.

CHN19b - School attendance rates (per 100 'looked after pupils')



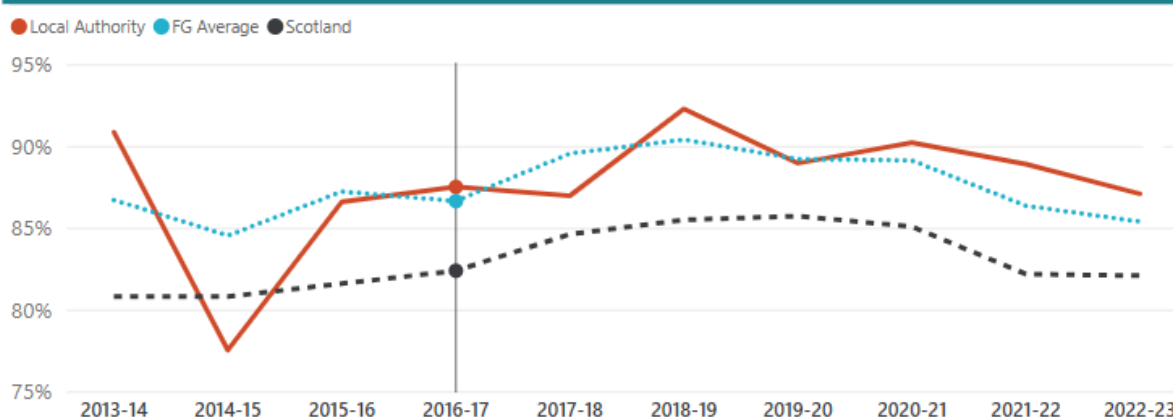
Proportion of children meeting development milestones

Problems with early child development are important as they are strongly associated with long-term health, educational, and wider social difficulties. Detecting developmental problems early provides the best opportunity to support children and

families to improve outcomes. This indicator measures the proportion (%) of all children receiving a 27 – 30 month review that had no concerns.

Here Orkney is consistently doing better than the Scottish average ranking six out of the 32 Scottish local authorities, excepting an anomaly in 2014 – 15. In 2022 – 23, 87.1% of Orkney's children were meeting their developmental milestones compared to the Scottish average of 82.1%.

CHN17 - Proportion of Children meeting developmental milestones

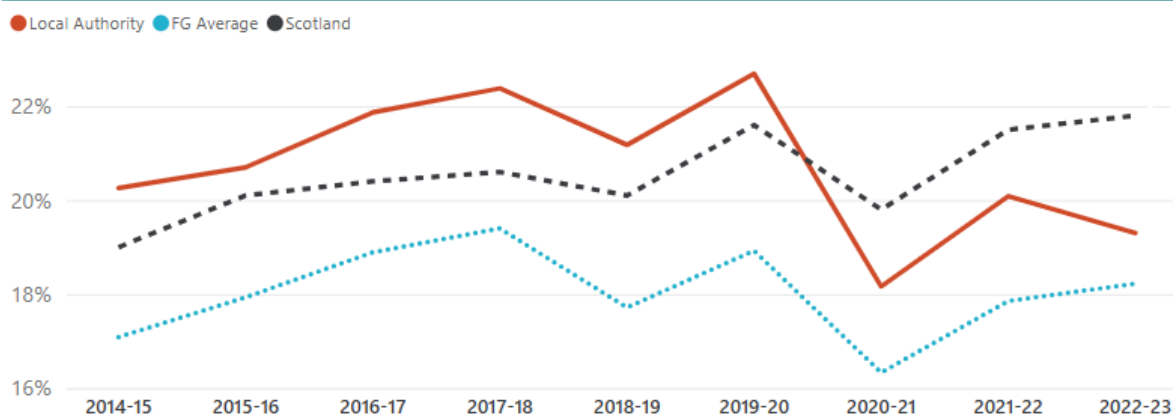


Proportion of children living in poverty (after housing costs)

The impacts of poverty on children's health, wellbeing, and educational attainment are described in the Scottish Government's first delivery plan for tackling child poverty, 2018 – 22 *Every Child, Every Chance*. Hardships early on in a child's life can have a lasting impact on children and young people's growth and development, making it harder to learn and study reducing their attainment.

Since 2020/21, Orkney has had significantly less children living in poverty than the Scottish average. Orkney ranks six out of the 32 local authorities.

CHN24 - Proportion of children living in poverty (after housing costs)



Children's Services Plan 2023 - 2026: Progress report

In this section we report on how we are doing in progressing the actions we planned to undertake in our Children's Services Plan for 2022 – 2026. Where necessary we have updated and extended these actions to reflect changes in the children's services landscape.

Our priorities	Short term actions 2023-24	Medium 2023-25	Long term 2023-26
Child protection	Ensure that all professionals and support staff working with young people are alert to issues of neglect		
	Raise awareness of sexual exploitation amongst young people		
	Review all policies and procedures in line with the National Child Protection Guidance		
Mental health and wellbeing	Improved mental health support in schools		
	Improve the speed of access to CAMHS		
	Create and launch a local suicide prevention app	Extended	
	Increase awareness and support for young people to promote and sustain positive health and wellbeing		
	Expand and develop an array of opportunities and experience to support young people's health and wellbeing		
Involving young people	Establish a Care Experienced Young People's Group		
	Improve Youth Voice opportunities and representation across Orkney		
Reducing poverty and disadvantage	Raise awareness of entitlements and maximise family incomes		
	Upskill education staff's knowledge of benefits and money support so they can signpost services for families		
	Increase access to support and opportunities for priority groups		
	Ensure equity of access to all school activities		
	Improve access to support and services	Extended	
	Reduce the attainment gap for children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals		

Child Protection

Ensuring that children and young people are safe and protected from harm.

Every child has a right to protection from harm. Child protection is about ensuring that young people and children are safe from people who might pose a risk to them. Supporting staff and young people to spot the signs early helps to reduce the negative outcomes of abuse.

Ensure that all professionals and support staff working with young people are alert to issues of neglect and know what to do

Who is doing it?	Public Protection Learning and Development Officer
How will we do it?	Embed specific neglect training into the Public Protection Calendar
Timescale	March 2024
Outcome measure	New multi-agency child protection procedure available
How did we do?	<p>Over 800 staff have been provided with Child Protection Training which supported staff and partners' awareness of neglect. An integral part of the training involved ensuring staff are aware of how to raise concerns.</p> <p>General and Specific Child Protection training has been ongoing, facilitated by the Learning and Development Co-ordinator, and has recently been enhanced by the Improvement and Reviewing Officer also co-delivering the training. Over the coming months this will progress to the involvement of health, police and education colleagues. The child protection intensive training course is in the planning stages and will be rolled out shortly. In addition, updated training will be provided in 2025 with a focus on the Neglect toolkit to support practitioners to holistically assess neglect concerns, using a nationally recognised evidenced base tool. This will be further supported by the recent update to social work and multi-agency chronologies, with chronologies becoming impact chronologies, enhancing the ability to identify themes and patterns and evidence neglect at the earliest opportunity.</p>

Raise awareness of sexual exploitation amongst young people

Who is doing it?	Police Scotland and Community Learning, Development and Employability
How will we do it?	Provide training and increase publicity around sexual exploitation of young people.
Timescale	June 2024
Outcome measure	Training sessions on the issue of neglect delivered to practitioners across organisations
How did we do?	<p>Lots of work has already been completed on raising awareness of sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Child Exploitation Awareness training was delivered alongside Police Scotland and Barnardos on 22 and 23 January 2025, the training was run over the course of two days and was well received by participants with positive feedback provided. Two-hour training input is introduction to child exploitation and the full day training is recognition and response training input. Plans to repeat this training have been agreed with further sessions being offered to partners on 17 and 18 June 2025, with a specific session being offered to parents and foster carers. It is hoped these sessions will become available at regular intervals over the year based upon the availability of our Police and Barnardos' colleagues.</p> <p>Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service (ORSAS) also provide Comet + sessions which directly link in with schools and pupils. ORSAS advised in the most recent Child Exploitation sub committee that 53 sessions were ran across KGS and Stromness Academy from October to March as a mixture of wider group sessions and where required 1 to 1, including sessions with care experienced children and young people and those with learning difficulties who may miss mainstream sessions. These sessions are repeated at intervals of 6 months to a year to ensure as many children and staff are captured as possible.</p> <p>CLDE Youth Services have delivered the Police online safety presentation in the three Junior High Schools and the Senior phase pupils in Stromness Academy.</p> <p>ORSAS work includes the extensive delivery of sexual violence prevention education in schools and support to vulnerable young people.</p>

	The i-Learn Child Protection module continues to be mandatory, annually for staff working with children.
Review all policies and procedures in line with the National Child Protection Guidance	
Who is doing it?	The Quality Assurance Sub-Group of the Public Protection Committee
How will we do it?	All agencies will work together to bring our procedures in line with the National Guidance, ensuring that these can be delivered to meet the needs of Orkney.
Timescale	September 2024
Outcome measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training schedule created; • Sessions delivered; • Media posts created and viewed; • Evaluation and feedback
How are we doing?	Updated multi agency child protection procedures were ratified by the Public Protection Committee and Chief Officers Group in December 2024. An updated IRD Protocol will be ratified by June 2025. This will be supported by updated granular specific child protection practice guidance on areas such a child sexual exploitation, children missing, and Care and Risk Management (CARM).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Supporting and engaging with children and young people improve their mental health and wellbeing

Our engagement with young people tells us that mental health and wellbeing is the single most important issue for them. By working with our partners, we aim to support young people with mental health issues, and to create a community with a better understanding and awareness of children and young people's mental health.

Create and launch a local suicide prevention app

Who is doing it?	A short-life working sub-group of the Suicide Prevention Task Force
How will we do it?	We will work with young people to create a Suicide Orkney Support App
Timescale	December 2023 (extended to December 2024)
Outcome measure	An app will be developed, promoted, and engagement numbers monitored

How are we doing?

Suicide Orkney Support (SOS) is a progressive web-app launched in March 2025 that can be found here:

<https://suicideorkneysupport.co.uk/>.

The developments have been supported mainly by Police Scotland Officers and the Public Protection team.



The app 'aims to help those in need to manage and put in place helpful strategies to cope in times of crisis.' SOS Orkney can be used at any time, giving options of self-help for those who need it.

Personal safety plans and other individualised information can be added to the app for the user, which can help identify warning signs, coping strategies, distractions such as highlighting good memories, thoughts, feelings or places, families to call on, professional contacts and a 'keeping myself safe' checklist.

The app was launched with a press release containing quotes from those involved in the creation of the app, as well as the mother of a young person who passed away to suicide who shared her story.

Looking forward, the Suicide Prevention Task Force will be prioritising practitioner-led awareness-raising and engagement, to fully embed SOS Orkney in Children's Services.

Improved support in schools

Who is doing it?

Service Manager Support for Learning and Inclusion and Educational Psychology.

How will we do it?

Conduct a needs analysis in relation to mental health and wellbeing support needs in schools.

Create a menu of training to support the implementation of the Mental Health Guidance for Orkney Education staff.

Share Save a Life training across Education staff.

Create 'See Me See Change' implementation plans in secondary schools and junior high schools.

Establish a strategy for Support for Learning and Inclusion which further develops relationship-based approaches (nurture, restorative practice, etc).

Timescale

December 2023

Outcome measure

- Needs analysis available.
- Strategy agreed by Council and implemented by the service

How are we doing?

Increased support for mental health and wellbeing has been rolled out across schools.

The Educational Psychology Service has created a needs assessment on potential development sessions, but it needs further stakeholder engagement to push this forward.

Educational Psychology has created a mental health guidance document that outlines the different approaches to mental health intervention: universal, targeted, and intensive. Some training has already been delivered on this menu of training including: emotion coaching, zones of regulation, empathic communication and social media, and stress control. These training sessions were well attended and held at schools and other children's services establishments (Papdale Halls of Residence, Aurrida House etc).

CLDE Youth Services offered the 'See Me' sessions to young people and parents as part of the Active Schools Summer programme (2024) in the 3 islands with Junior Highs. CLDE Youth Services delivered one-off sessions in Stronsay Junior High (April 2025) and Stromness Academy to senior phase pupils (Sept 2024). 'See Me' awareness sessions were also run to upskill CLDE sessional youth work staff.

Improve the speed of access to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Who is doing it?

Clinical Director, CAMHS

How will we do it?

We will grow the service in line with the Scottish Government funding and improve response times for assessment and treatment

Timescale

March 2024

Outcome measure

Referral to treatment times will have improved from 80% of children and young people commencing their treatment within 18 weeks of referral to CAMHS, to the Scottish Government standard of 90%.

How did we do?	<p>This outcome has been achieved and we have succeeded the original goal.</p> <p>The number of CAMHS practitioners on Orkney has been expanded from two to 14 since 2022. This increased capacity allowed practitioners to work through the backlog and has resulted in increased rapidity to responses that exceed the Scottish Government standard.</p> <p>Since July 2023, NHS Orkney has exceeded our target and has consistently met the maximum of 100% of children and young people commencing their treatment within 18 weeks of referral to CAMHS (compared to the Scottish Government Standard of 90%, and the Scottish real average of 80%). This is a substantial increase from June 2023, when 20.5% of patients on the wait list had waited 19 – 35 weeks, and 2.6% had waited 36 – 52 weeks.</p> <p>Looking forward, multi-agency conversations are being held to create and sustain a shared neuro-developmental pathway to better support children and young people in Orkney, and further reduce the burden of the wait list.</p>
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Increase awareness and support for young people to promote and sustain positive health and wellbeing

Who is doing it?	Community Learning, Development and Employability, NHS Orkney and Voluntary Action Orkney
How will we do it?	Co-ordinate mental health awareness training to upskill people, reduce stigma and promote an understanding of mental wellbeing.
Timescale	September 2024
Outcome measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of training developed • Number of sessions delivered • Number of participants • Participant feedback

How are we doing?

Through increased work with partner agencies, we have been able to achieve this outcome ahead of schedule.

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership has developed a programme of training that includes a suite of Mental Health and Wellbeing training. The CLD Partnership arranged for 14 people from a range of organisations to complete Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training. Working with NHS Orkney, the CLD Partnership has become trained to deliver Save a Life training. NHS staff deliver it online with CLD Partnership delivering the face-to-face option.

Vaping, gambling and gaming training has been delivered to six parents, 832 young people, and 60 staff and volunteers.

'Imagine a man' training, a programme that aims to create a space where boys and young men can learn about empathy, caring, humour and strength in a supportive environment, has been delivered to 14 people.

CLDE Youth Services offered the 'See Me' sessions to young people and parents as part of the Active Schools Summer programme (2024) in the 3 islands with Junior Highs. CLDE Youth Services delivered one-off sessions in Stronsay Junior High (April 2025) and Stromness Academy to senior phase pupils (Sept 2024). 'See Me' awareness sessions were also run to upskill CLDE sessional youth work staff.

Cruse Scotland (Bereavement Support), in collaboration with Soma's Light, has now trained two Children and Young People (CYP) supporters based in Orkney. They have also supported schools and communities following bereavement by suicide.

Expand and develop an array of opportunities and experience to support young people's health and wellbeing

Who is doing it?

Community Learning, Development and Employability and Educational Psychology

How will we do it?

Work with partners to co-ordinate and develop health and wellbeing programmes and activities.

Timescale

March 2026

Outcome
measure

- Programmes developed
- Opportunities offered
- Sessions delivered
- Participants attendance
- Participant feedback
- Partner Feedback

How are we
doing?

Much of this work has already been completed, creating increased opportunities for young people. This work is rolling and ongoing as demographics change and a near constant level of support and training must be offered to young people as they age into new demographics.

Multiple upskilling programmes have been delivered by CLDE in the last year, including (but not limited to): Fireskills, Confidence to Cook, street-work, Youth Work Offer programmes, and Get ready to volunteer (a programme planned and delivered with VAO). The Pupil Equity Fund and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund supported the CLDE Pupil Engagement and Family Engagement Teams to deliver group sessions in school, 1-1 work and family work, holiday clubs and transition support.

Events to combat youth loneliness and increase youth participation in social activities have also been successful. There are multiple youth clubs across Orkney with Friday afternoon activity sessions and Youth Achievement sessions. There are also more targeted groups such as the weekly Blide Groups for Care Experienced Young People and their friends, the Young parents group with Youth Services and Health Colleagues, and the Jedi Council. Youth participation has also been encouraged through programmes like Cosy Community Cafes, Sunday Funday.

Drop-in activities for young people have been successful, with Prom Pop Up Events in Stromness and Kirkwall, a Summer Roadshow on Hoy, Rousay and Shapinsay, and an Inclusive Picky Event run by the Youth Forum. There are also weekly Wellbeing Wednesdays held at the Pickaquoy Centre and Bubble Tea Cafés run by the YoungScot Loneliness Project.

Last year we said that our next steps would include engaging further with the wider community of parents and carers. This has been achieved through the Solihull course for parents, Young Parents Group, Eday Family Learning event, Step back to school support, and outreach to the Burray Parent Council.

6.3 Involving Children and Young People

Strengthening even further the role and voice of children and young people in developing services and supports that best meet their needs.

We will establish a Care Experienced Young People's Group

Who will do it?	Team Manager Fostering and Adoption
How will we do it?	We will work with young people to establish a group that has a more powerful voice in the newly established Children's Services structure.
Timescale	September 2023
Outcome Measure	A Care Experienced Young People's Group will be in place and linking with the Good/Corporate Parenting Board. This group will have a clear purpose and terms of reference.
How did we do?	<p>In collaboration with the Blide Trust, the CLDE team delivered a weekly youth drop-in for care experienced young people and their friends. Up to 10 young people attend and engaged with the group each week, with a range of different activities on offer: craft making; sports and leisure activities; cooking and teamwork activities.</p> <p>Whole Family Wellbeing Fund funding has supported part of the Care Experienced Attainment Co-ordinator post for the local authority.</p>

Improve Youth Voice opportunities and representation across Orkney

Who will do it?	Community Learning, Development and Employability
How will we do it?	We will develop a relevant, co-ordinated and representative youth voice structure
Timescale	June 2024 (Extended to be a running action)
Outcome measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth voice structure created• Number of participants engaged with• Organisations represented• Young Peoples feedback• Training events• Input into decision making
How did we do?	CLDE's Youth Services supports 'Youth Voice' in multiple ways, including providing support to Orkney's two Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament .

There are some changes within Scottish Youth Parliament (nationally) but the MSYPs are planning an engagement event for later in the year. We have sourced funding to support MSYP attendance at sitting and other MSYP activity and have extended this until at least November 2025.

There is a Youth Chamber debate due to take place in June 2025.

CLDE also supports our local [Young Islander Network](#) champions. The Young Islander Network works in partnership with the Scottish Government and the National Islands Plan, to understand what it is like to live and grow up in our island communities.

CLDE provides support and administration for the [Orkney Youth Forum](#). The Orkney Youth Forum is open to young people aged 12 – 25 in Orkney who have an interest in making sure that young people's voices are heard locally by regularly discussing the issues affecting them and providing them with an opportunity for meaningful discussion with elected members and relevant public bodies and organisations.

Similar to last year, CLDE is working with the Youth Forum to develop the skills of the young people involved. Via a roadshow and lots of engagement activity (such as being part of the Stronsay Youth Summit), the membership has increased slightly. They meet at least once a month and Elected Members are being invited along to be a part of this process. Schools have also been asked for representatives through their pupil voice structures. The Youth Forum is currently working with peers from across the North of Scotland to develop better resources on youth voice.

The Jedi Council, which is a service user panel for the Local Employability Partnership, has a number of young members, who feed in directly to the work, planning and decision making of the Partnership.

6.4 Reducing Poverty and Disadvantage

Helping to alleviate disadvantage through increased support and signposting to services that may help.

The current cost of living crisis is immediately affecting Orcadians, including children and young people. Reducing the number of young people living in poverty means supporting services and programmes that will put money in the pocket of parents.

Disadvantages are not just financial, and we aim to also meet the needs of care experienced young people and those waiting for access to ASN services.

Improve access to support and services

Who will do it?	Lead AHP/Service Manager, Children's Health Principal Educational Psychologist CAMHS, and Pediatricians
How will we do it?	We will work with key professional groups to develop plans and improvement trajectories on waiting times for Neurodevelopmental assessments and pediatric AHP waiting times. We will create a Neurodevelopmental Strategy and Diagnostic pathway ensuring that children and families receive the right support at the right time.
Timescale	September 2023 (extended to June 2026)
Outcome measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder engagement• Plan and improvement trajectories for both areas of service will be available

How did we do?

A working group has been created that is looking at how we develop a single-entry route into a neuro-developmental pathway and address waiting times for current Autism and ADHS assessments. It is still in its formative stages, in the discover and define stage.

Orkney's Neuro-developmental Strategy is being developed to ensure that children and families receive the right support at the right time. The consensus is that current work from Inclusive Orkney and individual schemes like the Autism Friendly screenings at the Pickaquoy Centre are helpful, but a larger multi-disciplinary over-arching strategy is needed.

Pre-, during and post-diagnosis, support for children and families is required and efforts are being made to develop these areas. For example, six practitioners from CAMHS, Educational Psychology and Speech and Language Therapy have undertaken the Cygnet training programme, and a suite of six sessions of workshops have been developed. The practitioners will work together in pairs to offer these training sessions to the parents of children with autism to help them better understand and support their children. The hope is that the first of these workshops will be rolled out by August 2024.

The timescale for this outcome has been extended to June 2026, although certain elements may be completed in advance. Due to the significant multi-agency partnership work and stakeholder engagement needed, timelines can be difficult to establish.

Raise awareness of entitlements and maximise family incomes

Who will do it?

Quality Improvement Officer, Achievement and Attainment with Let's Talk Money Orkney team.

How will we do it?

Regular media and communications through OIC and school's channels

Timescale

Monthly from August 2023 – July 2024

Outcome measure:

Agencies will report an increase in uptake of their services.

How are we doing?

Some headway has been made on this action, with a new communication strategy released and key stakeholders engaged. However, there is an issue with capacity which has resulted in the monthly goal not always being met.

The aim is to produce a new campaign every month to raise awareness of the help available to young people. The OIC Comms team have been essential in this work and have produced a lot of materials

The team looks to extend the deadline of this work, making it a rolling project that will extend up until the end of the Children's Services Plan in 2026.

Increase access to support and opportunities for priority groups to achieve positive outcomes

Who will do it?

Community Learning, Development and Employability

How will we do it?

Deliver life skills courses and free learning opportunities to help people most impacted by the Cost of Living crisis.

Timescale

September 2024

Outcome measure

- Number of life skills courses delivered
- Number of free learning courses
- Number of participants
- Participant feedback

How are we doing?

CLDE has delivered a vast number of life skills courses and free learning opportunities to help people most impacted by the Cost of Living crisis.

Over this time a range of one-to-one and group work support has been delivered across adult learning, youth work and employability with the number of free training opportunities increasing from 9 in 2022-23 to 23 in 2023-24. Free learning opportunities included: Mybank training sessions, Confidence to Cook, Funday Sunday, Summer Roadshow, the Innovation Fund, outreach courses in partnership with UHI Orkney, Sector based academy with UHI Orkney, Cooking on a budget, Young Persons Guarantee programme, budget and finance classes, digital skills courses and much more.

CLDE also delivers an array of bespoke courses with many partner organisations including The Blide Trust, St Colms and Age Scotland, to name just a few, that are focused on increasing confidence, improving life skills and ensuring positive outcomes. The number of poverty alleviation opportunities offered through CLDE grew from 7 in 2022-23 up to 15 in 2023-24.

Upskill education staff's knowledge of benefits and money support so that they can provide signposting to services for families

Who will do it?	Quality Improvement Officer, Achievement and Attainment with Let's talk money Orkney team
How will we do it?	Deliver poverty awareness training Signpost schools to the Child Poverty Action Group
Timescale	September 2024 (completed early)
Outcome measure	Number of participants on course Increased referrals to support agencies
How are we doing?	<p>Last year, the Quality Improvement Officer carried out a Scottish Attainment Challenge Roadshow – visiting all but one school in Orkney to raise awareness on child poverty and attainment with all teaching staff and headteachers.</p> <p>A successful book group was run which gathered multiple headteachers, education psychologists and Council staff members to talk about child poverty in a new light. The group concluded with a visit from the author, Morag Treanor.</p> <p>Increased awareness has been achieved with all schools now knowing of the Poverty Strategy, the Cost of the School Day Toolkit, and there is increased knowledge of the benefits that students and parents may be entitled to.</p>

Ensure equity of access to all school activities.

Who will do it?	Quality Improvement Officer, Achievement and Attainment with Let's Talk Money Orkney team and Headteachers.
How will we do it?	Encourage schools to participate in the Cost of the School Day toolkit resulting in considered cost implications for all families.
Timescale	Rolling deadline, as this aim needs continuous work.
Outcome measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of schools using the Cost of the School day toolkit Increased creative examples of equity of access being created

<p>How are we doing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted children and young people participating in all activities <p>More schools have engaged with the Cost of the School Day Toolkit, and wider conversations are taking place in schools across Orkney. All schools now have knowledge of the Cost of the School Day Toolkit and some schools have even created Cost of the School Day Action Groups.</p> <p>Modelled on Papdale Primary School's Parent Council and Orkney Charitable Trust's successful creation of an activity fund, a wider School Participation Fund has been rolled out across the islands. The fund is a non-means tested fund for students who may be struggling with the costs of participating in school activities. This includes the cost of clothing, holiday clubs, trips, swim goggles and sporting equipment. In June 2023, Education Scotland inspected Papdale Primary School and reported: "The Parent Council provide a well-considered participation fund. This offers funding to ensure all children can access learning experiences and opportunities without families incurring additional financial costs."</p> <p>There has also been a wider perspective change in schools, with teachers and parents now more likely to move away from traditional fundraising to look towards grant funding. A culture of sustainability and re-using has been fostered, with more schools now keeping their lost property and creating swap shops for school uniforms and school equipment.</p>
<p>Reduce the attainment gap for children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM)</p>	
<p>Who will do it?</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Officer, Achievement and Attainment with Let's Talk Money Orkney Team partnership.</p>
<p>How will we do it?</p>	<p>Work in partnership with schools ensuring impactful spending of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)</p>
<p>Timescale</p>	<p>August 2026</p>
<p>Outcome measure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase attainment in literacy/numeracy reaching local authority stretch aims.
<p>How are we doing?</p>	<p>This data will not be reported for this year until the end of June 2025.</p> <p>However, estimates put the current spend of the Pupil Equity Fund at least 98% from an annual budget allocation of £249,805.</p>

