



Dumfries and Galloway Children's
Services Plan

Joint Annual Report

Year 1: 2020-2021



1. Contents

1. Contents.....	2
2. Introduction	4
3. Progress against our priorities.....	6
4.1 Priority 1: Children and young people are safe and free from harm.....	6
About this priority	6
Impact of Covid-19 pandemic.....	6
Key successes	7
Other successes	9
Engagement.....	9
Challenges	9
Next steps	11
Action plan and reprioritisation	11
4.2 Priority 2: The life chances and outcomes for care experienced children and young people improve	11
Impact of Covid-19 pandemic.....	12
Key successes	13
Evidence of improved outcomes	15
Engagement.....	16
Areas for further improvement.....	17
Reporting and Performance Information	18
Next steps	18
4.3 Priority 3: The impact of poverty on children and young people is reduced....	18
Background.....	18
Impact of COVID.....	19
Summary of progress against each high-level aim.....	19
Key successes	22
Challenges	23
Next steps	24
4.4 Priority 4: The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people improves	24
Impact of Covid-19 pandemic.....	25
Progress against aims.....	25
Key successes	25

Engagement.....	26
Areas for improvement.....	27
Challenges	27
Next steps	27
4.5 Priority 5: Children and young people with complex needs and disabilities are enabled to reach their potential	28
Impact of Covid-19 pandemic.....	28
Key successes	29
Areas for improvement.....	29
Engagement.....	30
Challenges	30
Next steps	30
4.6 Priority 6: How we support parents and carers to meet the needs of their children and young people improves.	30
Impact of Covid-19 pandemic.....	31
Progress against aims.....	31
Key successes	34
Areas for improvement.....	35
Challenges	36
Action plan and reprioritisation	36
Next steps	36
4. Children’s Rights	36
5. Our partnership arrangements	37
6. Measuring success	38
6.1 Our Indicators.....	38
6.2 Positive trends in our indicators	39
6.3 Areas for improvement in our indicators.....	40
6.4 Monitoring and reporting	40
6.5 Looking ahead.....	40
7. In conclusion	40
8. Appendix	42
Children’s Services Plan 2020-23, Performance Indicators.....	42

2. Introduction

This is our first Joint Annual Report on our 2020 to 2023 Children's Services Plan. The purpose of the report is to demonstrate progress against the aims and objectives in the plan and to identify any areas for improvement and/or re-prioritisation in the year ahead.

The Children's Services Plan is our overarching plan for children's services in Dumfries and Galloway, and sets out our joint vision, approach and ambitions for children and young people, building on progress made in the previous plan.

The central aims of our Children's Services Plan are to

- Safeguard and support the wellbeing of children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway.
- Promote early intervention and prevention to address needs at the earliest opportunity or to prevent them arising.
- Deliver services that appear as integrated as possible to the children, young people and families who use them.
- Make best use of resources.
- Ensure that related services, for example Housing and Alcohol and Drug services are also delivered in a way that as far as possible promotes children's wellbeing.

Our Children's Services Plan is a high-level, strategic plan that sets out the shared joint priorities for Dumfries and Galloway and provides a roadmap for delivery. At the end of our last Children's Services Plan in 2020, our position was that the Community Planning Partnership had delivered an ambitious plan of improvement with many key successes, particularly with regard to child protection. The *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) framework continued to be embedded across partner agencies. A wide range of anti-poverty measures had been resourced, developed and delivered. Significant investment in staff had supported new and creative ways of working more effectively with children and families. Challenges remained, especially with regard to closing the attainment gap; securing improved outcomes for care-experienced young people and improving the way we support children with disabilities. Our ambition was that our 2020-23 Children's Services Plan would continue to deliver improvement across these areas of challenge.

Our six priorities in our 2020-23 plan are that by working together with our children, young people, their families and communities:

1. Children and young people are safe and free from harm
2. The life chances and outcomes for care experienced children and young people improve
3. The impact of poverty on children and young people is reduced
4. The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people improves

5. Children and young people with complex needs and disabilities are enabled to reach their potential
6. How we support parents and carers to meet the needs of their children and young people improves.

The six priorities have more detailed action plans that sit beneath them and are underpinned by our GIRFEC approach.

Prior to the start of the reporting period, as the Covid-19 pandemic was starting to escalate, children's services planning partnerships were given the opportunity to delay submission of their Children's Services Plans, so that plans could be updated to meet the current/future needs of children, young people and children with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a partnership, we considered this offer; but decided that we should move ahead with our plan and its new priorities; whilst further developing the detailed action plans that sat beneath each priority.

The reporting period (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) has been defined by the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts on children, young people, families, communities and staff in Dumfries and Galloway; and also the effects on planning and service delivery. These impacts are described within the report. Other significant factors that have affected the planning process during the reporting period are the findings of the Independent Care Review and the development and publication of The Promise. These led us to review and refresh our Corporate Parenting Plan to ensure the five foundations were at the heart of our Plan.

The development process for our Joint Annual Report has been affected by the pandemic. Our usual approach would involve direct face-to-face engagement with children, young people, families, and staff. This would have presented many challenges both with regard to safety, and also with regard to staff capacity. We have instead taken a pragmatic approach to the report development. We do however, recognise the need to look at innovative ways of engaging in a safe and meaningful way with stakeholders in the development of next report; in the expectation that the particular challenges presented by the pandemic with regard to face-to-face engagement will continue into 2022.

The following sections contain a summary of activity against each priority in the plan, with information on key successes, challenges, and any re-prioritisation that may have been necessary.

3. Progress against our priorities

4.1 Priority 1: Children and young people are safe and free from harm

About this priority

Our Public Protection Committee (PPC) is responsible for our multi-agency approach to child protection. In Dumfries and Galloway, we have historically had relatively high numbers of children on the Child Protection Register. In 2017/18 the local rate of registration per 1000 children was 8.1, compared with a national rate of 4.7. Our rate dropped to 5.3 in 2018/19, however by 2019/20 our rate had dropped further to 1.8, below the National rate of 4.3. In Scotland the most common concerns identified for children at the point of registration in 2018/19 and 2019/20 were Domestic Abuse and Neglect. However, in Dumfries and Galloway our most common concerns were Domestic Abuse and Parental Drug Misuse in 2018-19. In 2019/20 Domestic Abuse and Neglect became our top two concerns, followed by Parental Drug Misuse.

In prioritising the need to keep children safe and free from harm, we agreed five main aims for our 2020-23 plan, with a focus on early identification and response to harm. This included early identification and response to the impacts of domestic abuse and substance misuse. The fifth aim focused on support for young people with offending behaviours through the development of an integrated Youth Justice system. These aims would be delivered through:

- Embedding the Signs of Safety approach in Dumfries and Galloway by improving the quality of planning and direct work with children and families
- Ensuring that staff working across children services and alcohol and drug support services possess the necessary knowledge and skills needed to identify, respond to, and provide support to children and young people affected by parental substance misuse, or their own misuse of substances. A strategic needs assessment on young people and substance misuse would help to inform this work.
- Delivering a programme of awareness-raising and education about domestic abuse with young people, families, and communities.
- Reviewing the way we respond to children and young people affected by domestic abuse, and continually improving this.
- Providing equitable access to diversion and intervention systems across Dumfries and Galloway, and the development and delivery of a restorative justice programme which would be aligned to meet the needs of our 16-25 year-old community.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

We had agreed the above aims and high-level actions, but then at the start of the reporting period, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic required the Public Protection

Committee to refine and rethink its priorities. Chief Officers recognised the need to prioritise public protection activity throughout the pandemic and promptly put revised governance arrangements in place to strengthen their role in the oversight and direction of risk management with regard to vulnerability and public protection. This involved Chief Officers meeting more frequently, and the PPC focused on ensuring that they had regular high-level indicative data that provided visibility of real-time demands and pressures. This allowed leadership decisions to ensure that resources were in the right place to provide capability and capacity to support people.

The PPC, led by an interim Chair, carried out further work to refine its partnership structure to ensure more active connectivity between committees and wider groups, and greater transparency around governance and reporting arrangements. The structure of business planning was revised to be more responsive to the pandemic, resulting in revised strategic aims and immediate priorities. The PPC was also able to quickly move to meeting remotely using Teams, under direction of the interim Independent Chair. The pressure and demand on staff across the partnership was acknowledged, and arrangements made to work around those significant day to day pressures on staff and managers.

During the pandemic, the following leadership arrangements were put in place:

- Weekly discussions between the interim Independent Chair and the Chief Social Work Officer to discuss any emerging issues, and the Independent Chair reporting to the Chief Officers.
- Fortnightly discussion between the PPC Chair and all three Vice Chairs, to ensure oversight of known risks and early discussion around emerging risks.
- The interim Independent Chair had direct access to the Chief Officers to ensure they were aware of arrangements and are sighted on emerging risks and the action taken to mitigate those risks.
- Regular weekly discussions between the interim Independent Chair and the Public Protection Manager.
- Engagement with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Chair was strengthened with regular meeting with Chief Officers given the rise in drug related deaths.
- Both Health and Council staff within public protection were not redeployed during this period in recognition of the significance of maintaining the established level of service.

Key successes

Over the last year, despite all the challenges of the pandemic, we have continued to better protect children and young people by improving our identification of, and response to harm through implementation of the Signs of Safety approach in Dumfries and Galloway.

Signs of Safety uses a strengths-based approach, ensuring risk is weighted with both strengths and safety aspects of parenting. This approach ensures a balanced risk assessment is evident, and that safety plans are individually tailored around the child and family's needs, with clear timeframes. The implementation of Signs of Safety is already having an impact as evidenced by a decrease and levelling-out of Dumfries and Galloway's Child Protection Register figures. This trend was expected given the change in process and the new approach to risk assessment and risk management. This change process is being closely monitored with a number of quality assurance measures having been put in place. This includes both reactive and systemic audits which take place for each stage of the child protection process. Health child protection advisers have been trained in the Signs of Safety approach.

We have successfully reviewed and updated a number of policies and procedures and continue to embed improvements in our quality assurance systems. These include: Public Protection Committee Communication Strategy; Multi-Agency Chronologies Guidance; Child Protection; Underage Sexual Activity Multi-Agency Guidance; and Guidance on Use of Assessment of Care Toolkit.

Our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has continued to be fully operational, moving quickly to remote-working; and has continued to deliver fast, effective information sharing and decision making. We have successfully reviewed and updated a number of policies and procedures and have continued to embed improvements in our quality assurance systems. MASH has continued to operate efficiently throughout this period, with managers meeting on a weekly basis to oversee any practice issues, monitor volume and nature of referrals and identify any actions needed to address these including links to Public Protection Committee in relation to Policy and Procedure and Learning and Development. Our Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) practice has been constantly under review, informed by the weekly meetings, to ensure that IRD practice is improving and in line with our Signs of Safety approach. Regular IRD audits have taken place for quality assurance purposes.

During the reporting period, there were 715 referrals to Children and Families Social Work relating to children in need of protection. Following initial assessment 989 children were referred to our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Initial Referral Discussions were held for 543 children. A total of 274 Child Protection investigations were conducted, which resulted in 78 Initial Case Conferences. As of 31st March 2021, there were 30 children on the Child Protection Register (CPR), with the most prevalent risk factors being neglect and emotional abuse.

Delivering our multi-agency training has proved challenging during this time however we saw a success with the delivery of awareness-raising sessions on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 online; and this will inform training moving forward in a more blended approach.

Partnership arrangements are governed by the Youth Justice Partnership and strong working relationships are evident in relation to the Whole Systems approach, including diversion. This includes effective communication and joint decision making between police, social work (Youth and Adult Justice services) and SCRA for all levels of concerns from Early and Effective Interventions through to Care and Risk Management arrangements. The Scottish Government's Youth Justice Standards launched this year are in the process of being embedded across all areas of work, as are the Secure Care Standards.

The Youth Justice Service is a region-wide service comprised of skilled staff with specialist training and robust links to [Children and Young People's Centre for Justice](#), who are delivering focused and targeted interventions whilst ensuring assessments and interventions are holistic and rights-based. Diversion has been reviewed and is available and delivered to children and young people across Dumfries and Galloway equally using specific programmes of intervention based on assessed need.

Other successes

We have continued to work on the Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees across Scotland, working in partnership with the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS). Our new method of analysing data with the use of scrutiny questions has proved advantageous, allowing us to identify trends and patterns in child protection and highlight areas we need to investigate further, whether for future improvement activity or to identify best practice.

Engagement

We have looked for better ways to engage children, young people and their families in both individual planning and strategic development and this work will continue as a priority moving forward. The direction of the PPC has also been influenced by the National agenda and the Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP) and we will continue to ensure recommendations are implemented at a local level.

Challenges

Our Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) were developing a new strategy for Dumfries and Galloway; and this strategy would be informed by a young people substance misuse Strategic Needs Assessment. This needs assessment would involve engagement with young people, and would look at substance misuse by young people, and the impact on children and young people of substance misuse by their parents/carers, or other family members. An external, independent research organisation had been commissioned to carry out this needs assessment. This work was in progress when Covid restrictions were established, and it was subsequently delayed. Since the end of this reporting period, a draft has been produced and at the time of writing, is due to be presented to the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

Current data tells us that domestic abuse remains consistently one of the top risk factors when children's names are placed on the Child Protection Register. The inclusion of the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership within the Public Protection Committee structure has allowed for greater strategic alignment with the child protection agenda. Prior to the pandemic there was significant activity planned for awareness-raising of domestic abuse in schools. However, face-to-face input in classes and at larger events, such as Big World, was halted as a result of lockdown. During lockdown social media was used to provide information to children, young people and the wider community on where to access help and support if affected by domestic abuse. Women's Aid and Rape Crisis offered remote support via phone calls to young people to help them make sense of their experiences and gain greater understanding of healthy relationships, but this also brought challenges due to issues including digital poverty and lack of privacy. Since the lifting of lockdown there has been ongoing face-to-face support and input to schools offered by the local organisations but not to the same level as that previously planned.

Information and updates on the impact of domestic abuse during the pandemic; including a 7-Minute Briefing; were disseminated within Health through the Health Child Protection Committee and other routes. Information included links to the Domestic Abuse Awareness Training Tool (DAART); information on considering domestic abuse during video consultations, the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland; the *Ask for ANI* scheme; domestic abuse and recognising trauma; and information on trauma-informed approaches.

Going forward, the need for a coordinated approach to prevention and awareness work was raised at the Violence Against Women Subcommittee and there is a planned meeting to explore how best to progress violence against women prevention work with young people in schools as well as ongoing provision of awareness by organisations such as youth work.

The previously planned programme of face-to-face domestic abuse training was halted as a result of the pandemic. To mitigate this gap, information on e-learning and additional online training/learning resources were circulated to staff through the PPC. The PPC agreed that a bid for Safe and Together should be made to the Delivering Equally Safe Fund to allow a broader programme of domestic abuse training, to include: an overview of the approach; further development of skills to engage with families impacted by domestic abuse; and training for supervisors to support and guide staff working with domestic abuse cases.

The bid was successful and the Safe and Together training will commence early 2022.

Next steps

The Public Protection Committee will continue to manage a phased return to normal business following the Covid-19 pandemic and will work to manage the identified risks and ensure that we harness the many opportunities this challenging situation has offered. 'Normal' in this context does not mean simply returning to the way things were before the pandemic but reaching a 'new normal' which captures the opportunities and lessons learnt from this challenging period, capitalising on those interim working practices that have been effective and using them more fully to deliver better, more efficient public services. This includes understanding more clearly, the impact that working differently has had on children and their families and will ensure their involvement in enhancing our approaches.

Action plan and reprioritisation

The strategic direction and prioritisation for all public protection work is the function of the Public Protection Partnership, which in 2020 agreed the following overarching strategic aims.

1. Through effective public, community and staff engagement and awareness, identify all those at risk of harm in our community
2. Maintain, review, and continue to develop practice and processes to respond efficiently and effectively to protect those experiencing or at risk of harm
3. Fully utilise multi agency collaborations, opportunities, and resources to learn from practice and continuously improve services
4. Work with local partnerships across the public protection agenda to identify, develop and achieve priorities and shared outcomes
5. Continue to develop distinct and robust assurance pathways and processes across the Public Protection Partnership.

As a partnership, staff continue to work fully to reduce harm across the wider public protection agenda, and to work continuously towards our long-term strategic aims as detailed above. However, in addition to these core strategic aims, Chief Officers agreed to set immediate priorities, and to review these on a six-monthly basis, considering the existing demand and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These immediate operational priorities were identified through sound local evidence on threat, risk, and harm.

4.2 Priority 2: The life chances and outcomes for care experienced children and young people improve

This priority is led by the multi-agency Corporate Parenting Group. When our 2020-2023 Children's Services Plan was developed, the Corporate Parenting Group had identified four aims and accompanying high-level actions for this priority. These had been agreed by the Children's Services Executive Group and had been included within our Children's Services Plan. However, the Corporate Parenting Group were

closely following the work of the [Independent Care Review](#), which was carrying out a root and branch review of the care system in Scotland. In 2020, the Care Review published their findings as [The Promise](#). This set out a vision for Scotland with five foundations. The Corporate Parenting Group then reviewed their existing aims and actions against the Promise, and took a decision to refresh these to ensure that the five foundations of The Promise were at the heart of the 2021/2023 Plan. The Corporate Parenting Group also agreed a vision:

'to give all children and young people – who are the experts in their lives – influence and shape the services which are being provided for them to make sure they get the right help at the right time'.

Our revised Corporate Parenting Plan (appendix) now contains a set of pledges under 4 themes, each with an action plan. These are:

- Housing and accommodation
- Interaction with young people
- Raising attainment
- Improving access to health

The Corporate Parenting Plan will be a live document, and it will be revised and refreshed so that it continues to reflect both local needs; and the Promises 2021/2024 Plan and Change Programme; together with the voices of our children, young people and families. This involves looking at the potential for redesign of current services, and the establishment of new services, based fully on meeting the needs of those we serve, rather than the needs of our systems. Service redesign and developments will be underpinned by a focus on early intervention and prevention, and by embedding a practice and culture change programme. To support this work we have contributed to the Promise Design School – The Scottish Approach to Service Design and the Delivery of the Promise.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The role and work of the Corporate Parenting Group continued throughout this period although activity was delivered in a different way.

In response to the COVID pandemic and measures after lockdown, a number of emergency steps were put in place locally. All children and young people involved with Social Work were reviewed using an emergency template, which included assessment of any additional risks associated with the restrictions of Covid-19. These templates were graded Red, Amber or Green, and standards for contact for each grade agreed and implemented. Regular reviewing and reporting on the status of all children and young people was undertaken on a weekly basis to Locality Managers and Senior Managers. In addition, emergency procedures were drawn up for Case Conferences, Looked After Child Reviews and Core Groups. Whilst continuing to maintain visits to those families assessed as being most at risk, staff also engaged with families using a range of technology and digital platforms.

Social Work had a programme in place to engage with our children and families on 'how good is our care and support during the reporting period. This exercise will also be carried out with our staff going forward, through staff focus groups and surveys.

Key successes

Below are some of the positive achievements from our four action plans.

Our young people told us that they wanted someone to recognise that it is their birthday, and to send them a birthday card and a Christmas card. All our young people leaving care will now be contacted, and their birthday will be acknowledged. Further discussions are taking place on what this will look like for our young people at Christmas.

Working in partnership with Aberlour, we have secured suitable accommodation for contact use at the newly refurbished North-West Resource Centre in Dumfries. We had listened to what children and families told us about the places that family contact took place, and we responded by deciding to secure accommodation that was much less 'official' and provided a more pleasant, family-friendly environment. Going forward, work is planned to ensure this is available throughout the region.

The proportion of our care-experienced children and young people moving into a positive destination increased by 17% from 2019 to 2020 to a 3-year high of 84%.

The overall exclusion rate for Looked After children and young people reduced by 1.2% in 2020/21 from 6.1% to 4.9%. This compared to an overall reduction in the exclusion rate for all children and young people of 0.3%, from 1.4% to 1.1%.

Looked-after young people in our schools improved in 11 out of 12 measures in Attainment of Senior Phase, in the 2019-20 session.

Working in partnership, Education and Social Work created and implemented bespoke support arrangements during lockdowns matched to the needs of the individuals. This included accessibility to hubs across the region for our most vulnerable children and young people, and the children and young people of our key workers. They ensured that devices were provided to ensure access to curriculum and pastoral support, worked with other agencies and facilitated links with Skills Development Scotland. In addition, they provided input at Child's Planning Meetings, provided Activity packs for younger pupils and identified links with Youth Workers for older pupils. Wellbeing and achievement in Literacy and Numeracy were the priorities. Support from the Scottish Government's Connecting Scotland Programme was immensely appreciated and welcomed. Moving forward, the Team is prioritising the inclusion of pupil voice in line with The Promise.

Development within Social Work of our personalised relationship-based approach for all workers when supporting our children and families. Our operating practices have been refreshed to embed Signs of Safety. We have adopted a relationship and strength-based approach to the work we undertake to support families, enabling them to come up with their own solutions to the issues and barriers they face with the aim of creating and developing more sustainable plans for children and young people to remain, where possible, with their families and siblings.

In March 2020, a decision was taken to temporarily close Cairnryan House, a children's residential home in Stranraer, following issues around fitness for purpose of both the building and its location. Following a comprehensive Service Redesign, Cairnryan House was closed permanently. Following the temporary closure, staff delivered an outreach service helping children and families in the community. This outreach work brought a new focus on strength-based approaches and family work which was in line with the Signs of Safety approach.

The new outreach service aims and objectives are to help the most vulnerable children and young people and their families in the West of the region to fulfil their potential and enhance their lifetime opportunities despite poverty, deprivation, inequality and injustice. In order to achieve these aims and objectives, a family centre approach is being rolled out in the West of the region. This involves close working between the Corporate Parenting Group and the Priority 6 Working Group to achieve shared objectives.

An on-line training hub was developed during the reporting period, and this has allowed foster carers to complete training as and when this has suited their availability. A more formal training plan is available and delivered via MS Teams and covers topics such as signs of safety, child protection, paediatric first aid, introduction to therapeutic parenting, de-escalation wellbeing, safer caring and allegations.

Evidence tells us that some young people leaving care can find it difficult to sustain a tenancy and can find themselves at risk of homelessness. We have worked with Registered Social Landlords and private sector landlords to look at ways that we can identify and implement early intervention initiatives to improve tenancy sustainment and prevent homelessness. Examples of this activity include the development of homeless prevention protocols which address the needs of particular groups including: young people; prisoners; care-leavers; individuals discharged from hospital; armed forces personnel; and persons with no recourse to public money. Protocols are now in place, with effectiveness/impact to be measured after a period of time. In addition to this we successfully recruited additional officers to support this work.

We carried out a review for the implementation of the Compliance with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and review of the existing use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation in accordance with new legislation. This review was completed in September 2020, and resulted in compliance with the Order across our Region.

We set ourselves a challenge to recruit long term foster carers to offer permanent family options for young people who cannot return home to live, but where adoption is not an option. A recruitment drive was undertaken throughout October 2020 to May 2021, coinciding with Foster Carers Fortnight, and focusing on sibling groups, emergency carers, teenagers, supported lodgings providers and accommodations for unaccompanied asylum-seekers. This drive did not generate the level of response that we had hoped for, but we will continue to seek innovative ways of attracting new foster carers.

The partnership has continued to provide support for 15 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people who have spontaneously arrived in Dumfries and Galloway. Seven of these young people are under 18 years of age and are deemed to be Looked After Children, and 8 are receiving after care support from the team. These young people may have escaped torture in their country of origin and are seeking refuge. Many young people just wish for a safe place to live, to go to school and do well. We have supported several accompanied asylum-seeking young people over the years and as a result we have young people who are in higher education, training or employment, and are doing exceptionally well. A number of our young people have been supported via the Scottish Guardianship Service and have been granted asylum or have obtained their right to remain in the UK.

We had a high rate (20% during the reporting period) of non-attendances at initial health assessment appointments for looked-after children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway, so we sought to identify ways of improving this by engaging with children and young people about their experience of health assessment. As a result of this engagement, we made some changes to our notification form - this is the form that we use to invite children and young people to have a health assessment. This form now includes information about the different ways that children and young people can take part in the health assessment - for example they can choose to have a virtual appointment or a face-to-face appointment – whichever they feel most comfortable with. We are closely monitoring our appointment attendance rates; and will continue to engage with children and young people to look at how better to support them to attend appointments.

Evidence of improved outcomes

- All our leaving care young people are and will be contacted on their birthday and at Christmas.

- Monitoring and tracking by the Care-Experienced Education Team has shown improved attendance evident at an individual level. Targeted work by the Team, with individual children and young people has resulted in positive impacts (using pre and post-intervention measures).
- The number of Residence Orders we have applied for in the last year is evidence to us of the impact on our work to support children and young people to remain living within their family network wherever possible, together with the increase of 7% in the number of children in kinship care and reduction in the percentage in foster care over the past three years.
- As part of our early intervention work to improve tenancy sustainment and prevent homelessness, funding was available for those struggling financially due to Covid-19 at an early stage and agreement with our Register Social Landlord and Public Sector Landlords to mitigate actions to prevent eviction action. Thirty-four households with children have had assistance through our programme to a value of £24,861.

Engagement

The implementation of Signs of Safety in Dumfries and Galloway has enabled improvement in the way that the views of children and families are sought. During the initial stages of Signs of Safety implementation, a baseline of current engagement practice in Social Work in Dumfries and Galloway was established. There are plans to repeat this exercise in early 2022 and this will provide evidence and greater understanding of how Signs of Safety has improved practice. However, while the implementation of Signs of Safety has allowed Social Work to evidence the way that children and families' views are integral to their care-planning, as a partnership we still need to find different ways of ensuring that the views of children and families inform the planning of services, and to develop a co-productive approach to this.

In schools, groupwork sessions with looked-after children have been delivered from S1, and one-to-one engagements from S3.

At the start of every engagement, Skills Development Scotland advisers develop a contract with the individual to establish and agree the young person's needs and the outcomes to be achieved from engaging with the service.

Through the Champions Board, Listen2Us have delivered a consultation and presented actions they feel would improve the experiences of care experienced young people across Dumfries and Galloway. This activity shaped the Interaction with Young People Action Plan.

The next steps for the Corporate Parenting Group are to develop a multi-agency communication and engagement plan with children and young people, that brings

together all the partnership engagement activity and takes a co-ordinated approach to this. It is important that as a partnership, we work together to engage with our children and young people in a joined-up way, with services co-ordinating and complementing their engagement activities, and mapping activity is planned for this.

Areas for further improvement

Our young people have told us they do not like a lot of the words that are used to describe themselves, their families and their homes. Examples are words and phrases like 'looked after', 'contact', and 'placements'. We need to listen to our children and young people and make universal changes. This is something we are now progressing as a partnership. In Education, a decision was taken to end use of the 'LAC Champion' title in schools. This was in recognition of changing approaches to language, and the need to better reflect roles and responsibilities. Going forward, the title of 'LAC Champion' will be replaced with a Designated Senior Manager role in schools.

Although significant progress has been made to place large sibling groups of children together to maintain and sustain their relationship, further progress needs to continue.

There is a need to improve communication about looked-after/care experienced definitions and categories and to raise awareness of the corporate parenting responsibilities of all workers and the roles of different workers. This is not in the current plan but has been identified as a significant gap to be addressed in Year 2 of the plan. Work in partnership with Who Cares Scotland around this agenda will commence early January 2022.

School attendance rates of children looked after at home remain lower than those of children who are looked after away from home. This remains a focus of improvement activity.

Looked after children attainment remains considerably below overall attainment levels. This remains a focus of improvement activity.

There is a need to improve communication about looked-after and care-experienced definitions and categories across educational settings; and to raise awareness of the corporate parenting responsibilities of all workers and the roles of different workers. This has been identified as a need for inclusion in the Education Action Plan within the Corporate Parenting Plan.

During 2020-21, work has continued to try to recruit, assess, and approve Supported Lodging Providers across Dumfries and Galloway. Supported Lodgings offer a transitional service for some young people who prefer to remain living within a family setting until they are ready to move on. Feedback from young people is that "The

benefit of supported lodgings is there is always someone there who looks out for you, help with meal preparation and someone to talk to but at the same time you have much more independence and are treated like an adult". This year has been very challenging and the response to the recruitment campaign has been very limited, but this will continue to be an ongoing action of the Corporate Parenting action plan moving forward. We have recently submitted an application for funding through the Promise Partnership to support us on this agenda.

A further recruitment campaign was carried out to identify and develop accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. Again, interest was very low and further work on this is needed.

Reporting and Performance Information

The Corporate Parenting Group receives two reports each year: an annual report in July and a 6-month interim report in January. The annual report contains a range of indicators that allow us to compare progress on key indicators over time against our comparator authorities and Scotland as a whole.

Next steps

We have been successfully accepted to be one of three local authorities in Scotland for the Scottish pilot of the Bright Spots Programme. We are joining over 50 local authorities from England and Wales who have the *Your Life, Your Care and Your Life Beyond Care* surveys to gain insight into the lives and experiences of looked after children and care-experienced young people based on the things that are important to them. The Bright Spots surveys explore care experienced children and young people's subjective wellbeing, an issue that has become ever more important in recent times. Through the Bright Spots Programme, we will listen to what our children and young people tell us about the things that are important to them, and use this to influence our service development, future direction and refresh of our Corporate Parent Plan; and to direct our work going forward in Delivering on Our Promise to #Keep the Promise. Who Cares Scotland will be supporting us together with our children and young people on the refresh of our Corporate Parent Plan.

4.3 Priority 3: The impact of poverty on children and young people is reduced

Background

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced an annual requirement for Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) which notes progress and reflects on the work undertaken over the preceding year, and also sets out an action plan for the year ahead. Responsibility for the LCPAR sits with our Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership, and our ambitions for Child Poverty are reflected within the Children's Services Plan.

Within the 2017-20 Children's Service Plan, Poverty was one of the high-level aims under a previous wider priority about addressing barriers. In our current plan Child Poverty is now a priority in its own right, with the key aims linking to the three key drivers of child poverty.

The Tackling Poverty Co-Ordination Group in conjunction with public and third sector partners across Dumfries and Galloway were assigned responsibility for delivery of Priority 3 in the plan, however this has now been superseded by new arrangements which are detailed in the summary of progress.

Impact of COVID

Some families have experienced poverty for the first time as a result of the pandemic, whilst for other families, their financial wellbeing has deteriorated further. In particular, the pandemic impacted on our children and young people through the closure of all Primary and Secondary Schools within our Region. This immediately deprived those most in need of a safe space who live in vulnerable households. Also immediately affected were the children and young people who rely on the many Breakfast Clubs running throughout our Region and their Free School Meals which may be their only form of meal and nutrition each day. As with all emergency situations, it is always those who are already experiencing hardship who are directly affected the most.

A large number of households have experienced financial hardship due to redundancy or furlough; others have been made unemployed or worked in precarious, low paid jobs. The Furlough Scheme in particular was very welcome to those who would otherwise have lost their jobs but losing 20% of a household's income when families were already struggling to live on the 100% has had a huge impact on within our region. Due to changes in income and employment, some households are struggling to meet their living costs with the burden of rent, mortgage and subsequent threat of eviction. Within Dumfries and Galloway our Food Bank providers in each of our 12 Ward Areas also reported that they have experienced significant rises in request for support from the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic onwards.

Services across the statutory and third sector were hugely impacted by the pandemic with many staff deployed to focus on the immediate response, however we continued to progress as much of our planned Child Poverty actions as possible, while also delivering additional activity developed in response to increased demand for help and crisis support as a direct result of the pandemic.

Summary of progress against each high-level aim

As part of the development of our Local Child Poverty Action Report 2019-20 we agreed a Child Poverty Action Plan for 2020-23, which was intended to support the delivery of the high-level actions within Priority 3 of the Children's Services Plan.

During the reporting period we completed two actions from our 2020-23 Child Poverty Action Plan, with a further nine in progress, and the other four to be reviewed.

Action 3.1: Increase income from employment (availability of jobs, hours and level or earnings, barriers to taking up work)

This high level action was more challenging than normal due to the Covid 19 Pandemic but our Employability and Skills Team continued to offer additional support mechanisms throughout the Reporting period which ensured that there has been increased income from employment especially in relation to reducing the barriers to accessing employment.

As well as all of the mainline Services which are offered by our Council, we are also delivering all of the following projects which specifically support those most in need within our Region:

- Kickstart Scheme
- Parent Employability Support Fund
- Fair Work Scheme

We have also greatly increased our partnership working with Skills Development Scotland. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is Scotland's national skills body. They contribute to Scotland's sustainable economic growth by supporting people and businesses to develop and apply their skills. They work with partners throughout our Region to provide services that deliver the very best outcomes for Scotland's people, businesses and the economy.

Action 3.2: Reduce costs of living (including housing, food, fuel, poverty premium, cost of the school day, unavoidable costs of disability, living in a rural area)

The majority of the actions which we have taken to reduce the costs of living are all highlighted within the Key Successes Section below but the main projects which have all helped to reduce the costs of living within our Region are all noted below:

- Increasing the funding of the School Uniform Grant to £134 per pupil (the Scottish Government support Local Authorities to pay up to £100 per pupil and our Council provides the additional funding to top up this grant
- Introducing the Direct Payment Option for Free School Meals during the Covid 19 Pandemic School Closures which was then developed further to cover All Holiday Food Fund Payments

- Energy Top Up's Funding which was made available to all Registered Social Landlords within the Region to ease fuel poverty for households who were struggling with fuel costs.
- Introduction of our Free Period Dignity Project which offers online ordering of products delivered to the home address of families in need.
- Payment of the Membership and Delivery Costs of the Fareshare Membership and Delivery Fees for 15 Food Providers within our Region. The annual figures and levels of support provided to Dumfries and Galloway during 2020-2021 are as follows:

Fareshare Food Provided from 1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021

- Value of Food Provided = £872,874.60
- Tonnes of Food provided = 244,402
- Equivalent Number of Meal Portions = 581,916
- This level of support is exceptional especially when compared to the contracted level of supply which is detailed below:
 - Minimum Tonnes of Food to be provided = 91.8 Tonnes
 - Minimum No of Meal Portions to be provided = 218,565

Action 3.3: Maximise income from social security (design and generosity of benefits, benefit sanctions, barriers to accessing financial support).

Within Dumfries and Galloway Council we continue to deliver dedicated services to all residents in need with specific support delivering dedicated support and guidance on Income and Benefit Maximisation, Debt Advice and Guidance, and the specialist Housing Options and Homeless Service which provides detailed advice and guidance for families and individuals in complex need to ultimately avoid the loss of a tenancy or the family home.

The Scottish Child Payment was introduced for parents and carers on low incomes who have a child under 6. It is intended to provide additional financial support for families already in receipt of qualifying benefits to assist with the costs of caring for a child. It's a payment of £10 a week for each child under 6 and is paid every 4 weeks. The table below illustrates the number of applications made by parents and carers in Dumfries and Galloway between November 2020 and June 2021.

Number of applications received	3225
Number of payments made	9614
Value of payments made	£480,130

In addition, Dumfries and Galloway Council have also commissioned an Advice and Information Services (AIS) Commission with Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service to provide a complimentary range of financial advice and information services and support throughout our Region. This includes a range of income

maximisation services including Benefit Maximisation and Debt Advice and Guidance. The resulting figures on the levels of support provided for an element of the service provision (Financial Gain) for 2020 – 2021 are detailed in the following table:

Financial Advice and Information

Service	Amount of Financial Gain for Client
Dumfries and Galloway Council Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Services	£4,275,000
Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service	£7,206,753 (103% of AIS Commission Target)
Total	£11,481,753

The majority of this additional funding which has been received in from Dumfries and Galloway residents will be spent within the local Region which significantly increases our local economy in every ward of our Region.

Key successes

As well as our planned work to tackle child poverty and mitigate its impacts, we also achieved a number of other key actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although our work throughout 2020-21 has been dominated by the immediate need to respond to the pandemic, there have been significant achievements in ensuring that families hit the hardest have received help and support to meet their basic needs and respect their human rights. Key successes included:

- The provision of food and other essential supplies to individuals and families in need of support particularly during periods of local and national lock-down during the pandemic.
- During school closures, we moved from providing food packages for families entitled to free school meals, to instead providing direct payment to enable them to purchase preferred items and reduce waste. We also increased the number of children registered to receive free school meals.
- Building on the success of our period poverty work, in summer 2020 we launched our home delivery service for sanitary products to all households across the region.
- Extensive work with partners to provide over 1,600 digital devices to children and families. This enabled access to support services, participation in home and family learning as well as communication with family and friends during lockdown.
- We worked with Registered Social Landlords to supply energy top-up payments and provide additional support with energy bills. We also worked with local and national partners to promote the availability of additional

benefits during the winter period, to signpost to sources of advice for energy efficiency and to promote smart meters.

- Parents and carers were referred directly from health services for advice and support with income maximisation and benefit applications.
- Roll-out of the Family Nurse Partnership to first-time mothers under age 19.
- Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare provision to fully implement 1140 hours for all children.
- Pupil Equity Funding was used to reduce inequality of educational outcomes and improve experiences for identified children and young people.
- Through our locally developed approach to Counselling in Schools, all our secondary schools now have an identified Youth Information Worker to provide support to young people experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health challenges.
- The creation of 12 childcare hubs during the first lockdown to ensure that our key workers could continue in their critical roles.
- Youth Work Services continued to be delivered throughout and provided 4,000 isolation packs to young people across the region.
- We worked collaboratively to support our Food Banks and to support partners to become FoodShare members.
- Free school uniforms and warm winter clothing were provided to children and families in need.

In March 2021 our Community Planning Partnership agreed the first Poverty and Inequalities Strategy and to implement that Strategy, a new Partnership was established. Four new Sub-Groups have also been established, one of which being 'Developing our approach to Child Poverty'. It is planned that this new group will support us to re-focus and progress our partnership approach to tackling child poverty through enhanced collaboration across the whole system, and by increasing the voice of those with lived experience of poverty.

Across Dumfries and Galloway, local partners continue to be committed to and united in our determination to improve the lives of children and families living in or at risk of poverty. Though our work throughout the reporting period has been dominated by the immediate need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant achievements in ensuring that families hit the hardest have received help and support to meet their basic needs and respect their human rights.

Challenges

The key drivers of Child Poverty continue to be the cost of living, income from employment, and income from social security and benefits. Although progress is being made, the most recent statistics show that the rates of Child Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway continue to increase with 26.7% of children living in poverty in 2019/20, rising 1.7% on the previous year. Earnings in Dumfries and Galloway

were lower than the national average in 2019 at £480.80 per week compared with £577.70 nationally, with in-work poverty a particular challenge for our region. As a rural authority, many people need to travel in order to work, and may depend on a car. People face the challenge of spending more money to get to jobs where they earn a low wage.

With a projected rise in poverty rates, child poverty targets will be even more challenging to achieve. Our realistic expectation is that Dumfries and Galloway will be dealing with the fallout from COVID-19 for many years, with a recent assessment of economic vulnerability indicating that Dumfries and Galloway is particularly vulnerable due to the sectors - hospitality and tourism in particular - on which it relies.

Next steps

We will progress our ambitious plans for the new Developing our Approach to Child Poverty Sub-Group of the Poverty and Inequalities Partnership to ensure a more robust and action focused plan of activities for 2022 and beyond, focusing our comprehensive support packages on priority family groups. To support this work, we will engage with colleagues in the Improvement Service, and undertake self-evaluation activity to inform our future activity.

4.4 Priority 4: The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people improves

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increase in demand for mental health services in Dumfries and Galloway. However, prior to the advent of the pandemic, mental health and wellbeing had already been identified as an important priority from a range of sources including the school wellbeing surveys that took place as part of our involvement in the Realigning Children's Services programme.

This priority is led by the multi-agency Mental Health Strategy Group which contains representation from Health, Education, Youth Services and the Third Sector. The action plan has main aims:

- To ensure that all children and young people have access to the mental health and wellbeing support that they need when they need it. This includes a breadth of access, close to home and in a timely manner, matched to the needs expressed. This involves the development of a wellbeing hub model and the development of youth counselling in schools.
- To ensure recognition of, and early intervention for perinatal mental health issues and to improve access to psychological and mental health services. This involves the development of clearer and more efficient pathways for referral in line with national direction, and multi-agency specialist clinics for those at risk.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

Within the given timeframe, services were focusing on front-facing services and targeting support to the most vulnerable in need of their care. Covid-19 resulted in a significant increase in demand for mental health services across the age range and at all levels. This increase in demand from mid-2020 has yet to settle and at the end of March 2021, services were still seeing significant and chronic elevated demand and increased acuity with intensive, specialist services required at crisis level to meet the needs presented to services.

During this time period, confidence to achieve high level actions and make progress was low, however since this time, progress has been made and this will be detailed in future progress reports.

Progress against aims

A Mental Health in Schools group is leading the actions to achieve the first aim. The group now has clear priorities, and a clear line of reporting, with work being led by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) service lead and the Principal Educational Psychologist.

The Mental Health in Schools group plan has been updated to include building capacity of school staff and development of a whole school framework. National materials have been produced and shared.

The Youth Work counselling in schools project has completed its first school session.

Social Work have commissioned a number of community mental health projects and these are now underway. Social Work are now represented on Mental Health in Schools Group to ensure these projects are embedded in the wider mental health in schools approaches.

An Elected Member seminar took place on how the Council, in partnership with Health, is supporting the mental health of young people.

Peri-natal funding has been agreed for nursing and consultant clinical psychologist/clinical lead posts. A Perinatal Infant Mental Health Service (PNIMHS) Steering group including individuals with lived experience meets bimonthly with additional short life working groups to support the development of the Perinatal and Infant Mental Service.

Key successes

Counselling in schools project - A report produced in September 2021 highlights the success of this project. This report covers the period between August 2020 and June 2021, and while this extends past 31 March 2021, much of the reported activity took place within the reporting period of April 2020 to the end of March 2021. A total of

350 young people received one-to-one interventions between August 2020 and June 2021. Pre and post intervention data shows a 91% positive impact of the intervention. Five per cent of referrals were redirected to other, more appropriate, services. The data is feeding back into our planning and highlighting gaps in our offer. For example, during the second lockdown, there was a significant increase in young people identifying as young carers – this information led to Youth Work linking in with Young Carers service and creating targeted group sessions.

The Counselling in Schools project in Dumfries and Galloway has been highlighted by the Scottish Education Secretary as an example of good practice. Educational Psychology and Youth Work have presented at national conferences on the collaborative advantage of the two services (and two directorates) working together to implement this project. Factors which have contributed to the success of the project include: using a clear implementation plan (Fixen's model), identifying clear roles, planning for evaluation from the outset, engaging with young people and school staff, bi-monthly data gathering and analysis, ongoing training and supervision of Youth Work counsellors.

Engagement

The Mental Health Strategy group commissioned the Youth Council to undertake a survey of young people and their perceptions of CAMHS. The survey was undertaken after this reporting period and the results will be shared in the next progress report when actions will be co-produced with young people based on this survey.

The Counselling in Schools project has been developed in partnership with young people and is shaped by their ongoing views. National training materials have been developed in partnership with young people. Local approaches to building capacity will include the views of young people on what they need from staff in schools. The Mental Health in Schools group is informed by Time for Inclusive Education steering group priorities.

Reports and further information on youth counselling in schools are available here. The reports contain evidence of engagement with young people. [YouthWork - Dumfries and Galloway Council - LOW LEVEL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/youthwork-reports)

As part of the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service (PNIMHS), the Steering group includes a mother with lived experience. On a Participation/Third Sector working group, there are several women with lived experience contributing to service development. The service is seeking to involve fathers and partners in addition to those with Protected characteristics in a Lived Experience reference group. The Senior Perinatal Mental Health Nurse has met with a number of women who have experienced the Perinatal pathway to gather feedback on their journey through

services. The Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service has also been in contact with the Partnership's Equality lead, with a representative from the local LGBTQ service and also with the Participation lead for the Perinatal Managed Clinical Network/ Maternal Mental Health Scotland.

Areas for improvement

The Participation/Third Sector working group are currently looking at developing a survey for the general public's view on local Perinatal and Infant Mental Health services. The service is mindful of looking at ways to capture the perspective of the infant.

Challenges

The second lockdown in January 2021 meant that one-to-one sessions in person in the Counselling in Schools project were put on hold. All young people then involved with the Youth Workers were offered virtual one-to-one sessions instead. Whilst some took up this offer, the majority preferred to wait until in-person sessions were possible again. During the second lockdown the youth workers made contact with all young people who had been engaged in the project from its outset to "check-in" on them. In-person sessions resumed in March 2021.

Within the Mental Health in Schools group, the redirection of some staff to alternative duties related to Covid, reduced the momentum of the group but has led to clearer, SMARTER, priorities.

Whilst national guidance and additional funding related to Covid has been welcome, it has been challenging to create a framework within which individual projects can be embedded within our local offer. This has necessitated the updating of the Mental Health in Schools group plan.

Covid-19 increased demand for secondary care mental health services and the majority of therapeutic work from CAMHS and Clinical Psychology was offered remotely to good effect. Those clients who needed to be seen face to face continued to be offered this throughout the pandemic. The impact of both increased demand and increased acuity of those coming to services for help, presented challenges for service development, improvement work and progress with the plan.

Staff sickness, vacancies and absence due to self-isolation had a significant impact on service delivery. Services had to implement business continuity plans, offering limited, urgent-only business at time to maintain essential service cover. Staff wellbeing has been a priority for services and continues to be so as workloads continue to be high, and demand remains at significant levels.

Next steps

The Perinatal Infant Mental Health Service are mindful of the MBBRACE-UK Rapid Response to COVID Report and the potential impact of Covid 19 on maternal mental

health deaths. We are providing face to face contact when assessed as appropriate and also Near Me to women at times that are suitable to them. The Perinatal Infant Mental Health Service have mapped out what the needs are for this area, but needs-mapping will be ongoing given the impact of Covid 19 on maternal mental health.

Previously wider mental health and the Health and Wellbeing curriculum have been separated out in Dumfries and Galloway, and had different reporting requirements. Structures are currently being aligned to bring Mental Health and Health and Wellbeing curriculum under one umbrella. The draft mental health pathway produced by the Mental Health in Schools group highlights that the universal Health and Wellbeing curriculum offer is a key part of our Tier 1 offer locally.

4.5 Priority 5: Children and young people with complex needs and disabilities are enabled to reach their potential

This priority is led by the multi-agency Children's Disability Strategy Group. The priority has four aims:

- Children with neurodevelopmental disorders (for example Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) will be diagnosed at the earliest possible opportunity. This involves the development and implementation of a new Neurodevelopmental Assessment and Diagnostic Service to provide appropriate support and interventions
- Educational pathways and the range of options for children with complex needs (including Autism Spectrum Disorders and social communication disorders) will be strengthened in order to improve outcomes. This involves reconfiguring resource provision for children with complex needs across Dumfries and Galloway; and reconfiguration of services and approaches within Education to more effectively target those with complex needs.
- Young people with disabilities will experience a smooth transition to adulthood. This involves reviewing transition processes to identify gaps and areas for improvement and address these.
- Families with children and young people with disabilities will have access to range of support options to meet individual needs and improve outcomes. This involves an independent review of short breaks provision; and a mapping of wider available supports and any gaps in provision for families which will inform planning of provision.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

Progress against the actions was significantly inhibited by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdowns. The impact on children and young people with disabilities was significant due to the reduced access to education, health and well-being support, social experiences and opportunities, and respite and short breaks.

During lockdowns, the work of the Neuro-developmental Assessment and Diagnostic Service mostly stopped because of the inability to carry out face-to-face assessment. Staff tried to do as much as possibly virtually, but assessment through face-to-face appointments is core work, and a backlog of cases built up. The service received special permission to re-start face-to-face appointments sooner than many other services, with rigorous safety measures in place, although these measures made assessment challenging. At the end of the reporting period, the service was on track to develop further with funding from Scottish Government, and planning to recruit to posts.

The pressure on families during the lockdowns with limited access to support and respite was also significantly increased.

In April 2020 the Children With Disability Strategy Group made the decision to put its action plan on hold, and focus on the immediacy of addressing these gaps in provision and pressure for families. The group moved to a monthly meeting so that partners were able to regularly provide updates and jointly plan responses to issues as they arose, both strategically and operationally.

Key successes

The swift pivot to a more operational focus resulted in quick response times and adjustments across the partnership.

Examples include accessing childcare facilities, opening up specialist education provision, enhancing respite, developing remote engagement systems for families and planning for reopening of services in the context of many of our children having elevated health risks.

With regard to the Neuro-developmental Assessment and Diagnostic Service, the assessment element of the service is now working well. The next step for the service is to develop an approach to multi-agency intervention.

The Disability Strategy Group worked well together as a multi-agency team, including third sector colleagues, to ensure real time intelligence on issues, pressures and challenges were shared and that short and mid-term planning was based around the emerging needs of a community of interest.

Areas for improvement

The group continues to work on the development of relevant and purposeful outcome indicators for this cohort of children and young people. In particular, indicators are needed that go beyond proxy and/or whole population measures. It is anticipated that the publication of the ASN Outcome Framework will help in this endeavour.

Engagement

The Parents Inclusion Network, which works with and represents the views of families with children with social communication needs across the region have a seat at the table of the Strategy Group and their input proved invaluable during the lockdown to provide an immediate voice for many of our families.

Services also used remote technology to continually engage with our families to listen, support and adjust provision as necessary. Efforts to reassure families about engagement with services have also been a vital part of the recovery process.

Challenges

Experience to date is that some of our children and young people with disabilities have been most impacted by COVID and the lockdown both in terms of access to provision support, but also families living with the fear of Covid-19.

Next steps

The current action plan in part reflects an historic perspective on how we can collectively improve the lives of outcomes for children and young people with disabilities in Dumfries and Galloway. COVID recovery planning has highlighted a degree of disconnect between the historic plan and the immediate needs in relation to recovery. As such, the Strategy Group has been working on two key areas from the plan that are most relevant for our mid-term recovery. These areas of improvement are the renewal of our Autism Strategy and Transition Planning for young people with disabilities moving into the adult world.

While the Disability Strategy Group continues to work on these actions, an updated action plan will be submitted for consideration at an early opportunity. The Disability Strategy Group believes that by simplifying their planning priorities against these two high-level actions, the group can more effectively target the current capacity for improvement that is available across the partnership.

4.6 Priority 6: How we support parents and carers to meet the needs of their children and young people improves.

This priority is about building the capacity of parents and carers. The priority has the following aims; and is led by a multi-agency Priority 6 Working Group. The aims are that:

- Women will experience improved continuity of care and carer, across the whole maternity journey, with vulnerable families being offered any additional tailored support they may require.
- Within our areas of greatest need, families, service providers and members of the community make a positive difference to all children, families and the community, strengthening and building the capability of the local community to meet the changing needs of children and families.

- Parents and Carers have access to a continuum of structured and coordinated parenting support which empowers them to meet the needs of their child.
- Parents and Carers have access to learning opportunities which enable them to improve their life chances and be better placed to meet the needs of their child.
- Parents and carers are able to have their voices heard with regard to meeting the needs of their child

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

A number of impacts have been apparent and these are being monitored through the inclusion of a 'Covid Impacts' section within the Priority 6 Action Plan. It is recognised that impacts will be fluid, but those identified include:

- Some children experiencing language delays in the early years.
- Social and emotional development has been impacted and some children have required support when transitioning into Early Learning and Childcare.
- Both parental and child mental health has been affected
- Parent literacy and numeracy
- Parents/carers have experienced financial and employment pressures.
- Staff have reported feeling anxiety. There are a number of reasons for this including additional/different duties; adherence to Covid Safe Practice and staff absences.

Progress against aims

Aim 1: The WINGS (Women Individually Nurtured Grow Strength) team of midwives are now a region wide team and have achieved good outcomes in both patient satisfaction, multi-agency feedback and clinical outcomes. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, pathways were reduced however these have now been reinstated. The team has been made permanent and continues to use quality improvement methods to shape maternity care for these women. Caseload sizes are continually monitored.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic there was significant difficulty in facilitating face to face groups. Options were discussed in terms of virtual groups moving forward although there were concerns about confidentiality issues. Plans to reinstate face to face groups are pending, a meeting with managers of facilitators is planned with an agreed plan to push Mellow Bumps moving forward with funding from both Health and Social Work.

Aim 2: Family Hub75 West (formerly Park Children's Services Centre) is an edge of care service designed to put families in the driving seat of creating loving and safe homes for children on the edge of care. This service is provided in the West of the Region only. The service builds resilience to empower families to sustain change now and in the future. The service will provide early intervention and prevention;

outreach service; crisis intervention, and access to a wide range of services and supports for families. The Priority 6 Working Group are working closely with the Corporate Parenting Group on development of this service, with the shared aim of supporting families through an early intervention and preventative approach.

Aim 3: Three Young Parents Groups are operational for young parents under 25 in Kelloholm, Dumfries and Annan. The programmes and activities that run within these groups are unique to the area and what the parents want to do within each different group.

The Family Nurse Partnership approach is fully embedded and operational across the whole region offering intensive home visiting support to teenage mothers antenatally to the child's second birthday. A Family Nurse Partnership local operational group is in place and is monitoring and evaluating progress.

Solihull training for Early Learning and Childcare practitioners is ongoing to support a consistent approach to engagement with children and families.

Aim 4:

The Parents Early Education Programme (PEEP), delivered by the Lifelong Learning Team in partnership with nurseries, continued throughout the reporting period in the form of virtual classes utilising a newsletter to enable children and families to continue learning at home. This continued through the two periods of school closure. Reaching over 1300 families, this family-learning-based programme tackled all areas of development and learning, in particular literacy, numeracy, and speech development, helping with attainment levels. Partnership work with Dumfries and Galloway College and the Employability and Skills service helped 11 parents who were unemployed or in receipt of the national minimum wage to access a College course to train to become Learning Assistants. This was funded through the Parent Employability Fund and was rolled out for antenatal delivery as well as early learning from pre-nursery and nursery age.

The Lifelong Learning team also delivered free Family Learning opportunities for 60 families across the region which enabled parents and carers to support their children in curriculum learning, for example in STEM and Literacy. The programmes aimed to reduce the attainment gap through the delivery of virtual after school Family Learning classes with all resources posted out to families prior to the classes commencing.

In advance of the provision of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare becoming a statutory duty in August 2021, Dumfries and Galloway was one of sixteen councils already delivering 1140 hours in full from August 2020. As of May 2021 (just after the relevant reporting period), 92% of children were taking over 600 hours with 55% taking the full 1140 hours.

Aim 5:

The voices of parents and carers are heard through:

- Involvement in the life of the school
- Engagement in learning
- Parent and carer engagement and involvement in the life of the Early Learning and Childcare setting
- Partnership in their Child's Plan
- Parent evaluation of parenting programmes

In social work there has been a formularisation of support given to our foster and adoptive parents. This has been in the form of monthly supervision sessions throughout March 2020 to April 2021. This has allowed for a more structured support plan in place for both young people and their carers, identifying any improvements, behaviour changes and management and requirement of additional support.

An on-line training hub was developed, and this has allowed foster and adoptive carers to complete training. Each carer has a formal training plan. The following training was provided over the period of March 2020 to April 2021: Signs of Safety, child protection, paediatric first aid, introduction to therapeutic parenting, de-escalation wellbeing, safer caring and allegations.

Support to adoptive carers offers the same level as outlined above with the addition of streamlined contact to the adoptive carer's personal preference and this is agreed in each post-adoption support plan. There are plans to develop a webpage for our foster and adoptive carers with the intention of launching this by the end of 2021.

Throughout March 2020 to April 2021 kinship carers were contacted with support sessions every 4 to 6 weeks dependant on the level of support required. Additionally, each Kinship carer participated in a 6 monthly kinship carer review to establish how the child/young person is progressing in the placement, reflect on accomplishments/difficulties, how they are staying connected to their family and wider community and any health or education issues.

Within Education, throughout March 2020 to April 2021; Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) was embedded at a strategic and senior management level with representation of the Dumfries and Galloway Parent Council Forum (DGPCF) on the Education and Learning Directorate Committee. Key issues consulted on at this level throughout the reporting period have been –

- Headteacher Empowerment; Response to the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act 2006 Statutory Guidance Consultation. The recent Headteacher Empowerment Review did identify the need of more engagement of the parental forum at school level, therefore, moving forward

this will be further supported by the officer with responsibility for parental involvement and engagement.

- Additional Support for Learning (ASL) review and the authorities own Transformational change programme.
- The Directorate have continued to embed parental voice in their strategic reflection of the National Improvement Framework, which is supported through activity such as the programme of School Collaborative Reviews involving parents and school community partners.
- To ensure Early Learning and Childcare services are meeting Criteria 5 of the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare there has been monthly communication with parents and carers about the work of the setting. This has involved stakeholders in evaluating and contributing to the improvement agenda.
- Parents and carers are supported to engage in their child's learning and development. All children have a Personal Plan which is created in consultation with parents and carers to ensure the service is best placed to meet the child's needs. Settings have used a variety of ways to engage parents in children's learning through sharing and contributing to children's learning journals and supporting opportunities for family learning through virtual means such as 'SWAYS' to support language and communication and learning through play, online events (e.g., PEEP) and are beginning to re-introduce face to face opportunities outside to support parental engagement.
- A short-term working group was also set up throughout the reporting period to engage practitioners and parents in reviewing family learning. This has resulted in several key recommendations for change. The priority for 2022 will be the establishment of a family learning regional network with a principal outcome of developing a Family Learning strategy.

Within priority 6 there has been an established group set up to begin collating relevant data to enable the implementation of a digital roadmap in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector. Their key aims identified have been to establish a central database where practitioners and parents can gain information of support services available to families from pre-birth to early years education.

Key successes

Despite the pandemic, we have continued to build on several key areas to improve how we support parents and carers to meet the needs of their children and young people. These key areas have involved the development of links between key services to ensure that there is a consistency in terms of progression of learning for many parents. Linking in with Education, Lifelong Learning, Employability, and Dumfries and Galloway College, parents have been able to start their supportive and learning journey with their children in nursery to then develop SQA qualifications. This has then led onto a college course with the opportunities for local employment

thereafter. This has been facilitated by key funding from the Parents Employability fund.

Throughout the pandemic, 1225 devices have been distributed, and 153 pupils with no access to wifi at home have been provided with either a cellular ipad, mifi unit or dongle. Over 60 devices have also been distributed to Parents and Carers to enable them to have access to learning opportunities. This in turn enables them to improve their life chances and be better placed to meet the needs of their child.

Family Hub 75 in the west (formerly Park Children's Services Centre) has seen key changes, as described in section 6.2, and is currently co-designing a service to meet the needs of local parents. This will involve the training of key staff in NES Psychology of Parenting Programme (POPP) and key Family Learning Initiatives such as Peep. This is already being developed through joint holiday programmes with partner agencies.

The WINGS (Women Individually Nurtured Grow Strength) team are now a region-wide team targeting intervention for vulnerable women. The Family Nurse Partnership service has been fully implemented across the whole region and offers intensive home visiting support to teenage mothers antenatally to the child's second birthday.

There is a clear plan of intervention to support parents through family learning from pre-birth to Primary 3. This is re-enforced with a clear pathway to adult learning to increase parental capacity to learning and employment.

The local authority continues to build formal and informal networks of support for parents through several mechanisms. These include:

- support for individual parents/families to engage with schools
- complaints and concern processes
- parent councils
- online training resources
- information sharing of local and national changes to education policies and practice.

Areas for improvement

Dumfries and Galloway was an early implementer of the statutory 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare. However, based on a figure of 30% of the two-year old population being eligible for funded Early Learning and Childcare, around 45% are currently accessing their entitlement. Officers are exploring the reasons and potential barriers to families taking up their place with a view to improving the uptake of eligible children.

A Headteacher Empowerment Review identified the need for more engagement of the parental forum at school level, therefore, moving forward, schools will be offered more support with this by Education.

Challenges

There have been funding challenges with NES Psychology of Parenting Programme (POPP) following the ending of contract with Early Years Scotland. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, services had to stop due to staff being diverted to other duties, the inability to provide face-to-face contact and the lack of an online equivalent. Funding was not secured to restart the programme, which meant that colleagues in Early Years Scotland were no longer available to provide coordination. Many of the team who provided the facilitated programme moved into new roles or were diverted into other roles in response to COVID. Consequently, the programme came to an end. However, in developments following the end of this reporting period, Children and Families Social Work are considering the opportunity to engage with POPP to look at what they have on offer in terms of the intensive family support service.

Action plan and reprioritisation

The Priority 6 Working Group considered: the work carried out to date; the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; the introduction of The Promise; and information from the National Children's Services Strategic Leads Network; and decided that a shift in focus was required. It was recognised that in order to fully implement the actions of The Promise Plan with regard to ensuring effective and realistic implementation of early intervention and preventative work, the Group needed to take a more holistic approach in terms of broader 'Family Support' rather than specifically 'Parenting'.

Next steps

Going forward, the Group needs to identify and clearly define the scope of 'whole family support'. This involves linking with other priority workstreams in order to take a cohesive, coordinated approach to action-planning in which duplication is avoided and activities are embedded into other priority action plans where appropriate.

4. Children's Rights

Publication of our 2017-20 Children's Rights Report was delayed due to the pandemic, but was published in 2021 and is available [online](#).

Our position in our 2017-20 Children's Rights Report, was that as a partnership, we were able to provide evidence of compliance with articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), but that we needed to develop a joint strategic approach to children's rights. The development of the report led to a decision to establish a Member-Officer Working Group, to include members of Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council. This Working Group will lead on the

development of an action plan, and arrangements for future reporting on children's rights.

5. Our partnership arrangements

Responsibility for the Children's Services Plan during the reporting period sat with the Children's Services Executive Group (CSEG). CSEG had the following membership:

- Head of Education (Quality and Curriculum) – (Chair from January 2021)
- Director Skills Education and Learning (Chair to January 2021)
- Locality Reporter Manager
- Chief Executive Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway
- Chief Social Work Officer/Head of Children, Families and Criminal Justice Services
- Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and Chair of Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group
- Head of Speech and Language Therapy/Allied Health Professional Lead, Women, Children and Sexual Health Directorate, and Chair of Child Disability Strategy Group
- Superintendent Operations, Police Scotland, and Chair of Youth Justice Partnership
- Lifelong Learning Manager
- Acting Independent Convenor: Public Protection Committee
- Senior Manager Children and Families Social Work, and Chair of Corporate Parenting Group
- General Manager, Women and Children's Health Services
- Nurse Director

During the reporting period, the group quickly moved to virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams and continued to meet every two months to oversee progress with the development of detailed action plans. Chairs of the strategic groups were required to provide progress updates for scrutiny. The strategic groups had been tasked with carrying out further development of their detailed action plans during the first year of the plan; and were required to provide information to CSEG on the development of these plans, and to seek approval from CSEG on any proposed re-prioritisation. In February 2021, it was agreed that a review of CSEG membership and terms of reference would take place, and (following the reporting period) members of CSEG carried out a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their partnership working.

CSEG considered the findings of their self-evaluation, and agreed changes to their terms of reference, membership and meeting frequency. CSEG was replaced by the Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership (CSSaPP). A core executive

group of CSSaPP has an oversight and scrutiny role, and meets monthly to facilitate rapid decision-making. A CSSaPP planning group has broader membership that includes the Chairs of the strategic groups that are leading the six priorities.

The partnership evaluation included a focus on the Care Inspectorate's 10 steps to successful children's services planning, and CSSaPP agreed that ongoing evaluation of these 10 steps should be central to the group's agenda going forward.

CSEG reported directly to the Chief Officers Group, as does CSSaPP now.

6. Measuring success

6.1 Our Indicators

We have 30 indicators grouped around 'SHANARRI' (Appendix) that taken together, give a global picture of children and young people's wellbeing in Dumfries and Galloway. We have also linked these indicators with relevant priorities in the plan. This is a reduction on the number in the previous plan, as we have sought to use those with more of a focus on vulnerability. Most of the indicators allow us to compare our performance over time with Scotland and with other comparable local authorities. *(Note that while these indicators are numbered 1 to 30, there are 35 actual statistics. This is because indicator number 4, about childhood immunisations, is broken down with the figures for 5 separate immunisations.)*

Many of the indicators are published nationally within statistical publications by [Scottish Government](#) and [Public Health Scotland](#). Some of the statistics are collected over the course of the academic year and others over a financial year. Publication schedules also vary, with many of the statistics being published in the year following the reporting period. This means that at the time of reporting, we have some data for 2019-20 and some for 2020-21; however, some education data is not available because of the effect of school closures and use of teacher-evaluated grading in 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic has posed particular challenges in measuring performance as the impacts on services have skewed the baseline of what would be 'normal'. This means that we need to be cautious this year – and also next year when more data for 2020-21 is available – in interpreting data on our indicators. We are following developments in the work being led by Scottish Government to develop a set of key indicators to support Children's Services Planning, and we welcome this work.

Of the 35 statistics in our indicators:

- 1 indicator needs to be revised as the way the indicator is measured has now changed. (This is indicator 4b. Primary immunisation rate by 12 months of age – MeningitisC. This is now only delivered at 12-13 months).
- 9 indicators (education) do not have comparable data because of the absence of external assessment information, and the Ministerial direction to award estimated grades.
- 19 indicators are showing either positive improvement, or existing performance has been maintained.
- 2 indicators are showing a slight negative turn, but we have analysed the reasons for this, and are confident that this reduction is temporary/will be addressed by existing improvement activity.
- 4 indicators are showing a reduction in performance and will be closely monitored as more data becomes available.

6.2 Positive trends in our indicators

- Both the number of attendances at Emergency Department and the number of emergency hospital admissions for children aged under 17 reduced in 2020.
- We continue to have high levels of take-up of childhood immunisations by the age of 12 months.
- In 2019-20, we had the highest level of coverage across all Scottish Health Boards for the percentage of 27-30 months reviews completed. This was 95.2% in Dumfries and Galloway compared with the Scotland average of 88.2%.
- At 85% in the worst performing SIMD quintile, we continue to have a high percentage of pregnant women booked for antenatal care by the 12th week of gestation.
- The percentage of our looked-after young people entering a positive destination increased in 2019/20.
- The percentage of all young adults (16-19 year-olds) in Dumfries and Galloway participating in education, training or employment was maintained.
- The proportion of looked-after school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or above increased in 2019/20 to 72%. This is an increase from 62% the previous year. This is still lower than that for all pupils (96%), and remains a focus of our improvement work.
- We continue to maintain a high proportion (93.4%) of our looked-after children and young people in a community setting.
- The percentage of looked-after children who had more than one placement in 2019/20 reduced.
- The number and percentage of young people referred to the Children's Reporter on offending grounds fell.

6.3 Areas for improvement in our indicators

- At the end of September 2020, across Dumfries and Galloway, 93.3% of young people referred to CAMHS commenced treatment within 18 weeks of referral. However, more [recent data](#) (at the end of September 2021) shows that across Dumfries and Galloway, 31.3% of young people referred to CAMHS commenced treatment within 18 weeks of referral. This is due to the large increase in demand for services that has resulted from the pandemic.
- In 2021, our perinatal mortality rate (the rate of stillbirths per 1000 births) was 4.42 per 1000 births.
- The percentage of children meeting developmental milestones was 74% in 2019/20
- While there was a fall in 2020/21 in the number and percentage of children referred to the Reporter on offending grounds; there was an increase in both the number and percentage of those referred on care and protection grounds – 538 children (91.6%) out of a total of 587 children referred.

6.4 Monitoring and reporting

CSSaPP continues to report directly to Chief Officers Group. Regular progress updates on the Children's Services Plan are submitted to the Community Planning Board; and Annual Reports on the Children's Services Plan are presented to Dumfries and Galloway Council and the Integration Joint Board Clinical and Care Governance Committee.

6.5 Looking ahead

The Getting it Right for Every Child approach underpins our Children's Services Plan. During the reporting period our multi-agency learning and development programme for GIRFEC was put on hold. This was partly due to the pandemic and also because we needed to review our learning and development programme and were awaiting refreshed guidance from Scottish Government. Representatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway have participated in working groups developing this guidance. With statutory and non-statutory guidance expected in early 2022, we are looking ahead to the implications for our systems and processes and for multi-agency learning and development.

At the time of reporting, a consultation has been taking place on the development of a National Care Service and we are sighted on developments in this, and potential implications for children's services.

7. In conclusion

Our region has a strong network of partners who work with children and young people bringing together the key organisations delivering services in our region. We acknowledge that there has never been a more important time for partners to work together to support our region's young people and in particular, the most vulnerable.

Despite working through the extraordinary challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, working together as a partnership we ensured that we continued to prioritise children's needs and services, with a focus on our most vulnerable children and families. This included: prioritising child protection; taking decisions to halt some development work in order to focus on operational imperatives; and the flexible temporary deployment of staff into areas of priority need. This approach, developed in regular dialogue with our key stakeholders, has enabled us to support the most vulnerable members of our communities – maximising the use of our staffing resource, and the effectiveness of our partnership working.

An example of our prioritisation of child protection, is that during the reporting period, all children on the Child Protection Register had a minimum of one weekly face-to-face visit by a professional from our children's services partnership. In all cases, this visit was by a Social Worker, and in many cases, there was also contact with a Teacher, Health Visitor, Family Support Worker, or Third Sector worker/s.

While some of our developmental work had to be paused, in order to focus on operational imperatives, we have been able to continue the development and implementation of our early intervention and preventative approach through the embedding of Signs of Safety, and our support for parents and families. The GIRFEC Leadership Group has continued to have oversight of our current GIRFEC approach in Dumfries and Galloway while awaiting the planned Scottish Government GIRFEC refresh. We are committed to #Keeping the Promise, and we will continue on our transformational journey to achieve this.

We will follow this report with the publication of our revised Children's Services Plan which will reflect the changes to our Corporate Parenting Plan in light of The Promise, and any revised timescales for actions.

8. Appendix

Children's Services Plan 2020-23, Performance Indicators

Indicators are sorted by 'SHANARRI', and linked with relevant priorities

SAFE

Indicator	Link with Priority	Target (if applicable) or direction of travel	Previous data	Baseline	Year 1 figure - 2021	Comment – analysis
1. Number of children on the Child Protection Register as rate per 1000 population aged 0-15 years CSSaPP_01	Priority 1	No target.	Rate was 4.0 in 2017/18	Rate was 0.8 in 18/2019	Rate was 1.1 in 2019/20	
2. % Child Protection Re-Registrations within 18 months CSSaPP_02	Priority 1	Aim to decrease	7.3% in 2017 to 2018	5.6% in 2018/19	4.8% in 2019/20	
3a. Number of attendances at Emergency Department	Priority 1 Priority 5 Priority 6	No target - aim to reduce	,	From Jan to Nov 2019, - 9,334 attendances at ED	2019 – 10,510 2020 – 6,365	We continue to aim to reduce this indicator
3b. Number of emergency admissions for children aged under 17	Priority 1 Priority 5 Priority 6	No target - aim to reduce		From Jan to Nov 2019 2,523 emergency hosp. admissions.	2019 – 3,882 2020 – 2,435	We continue to aim to reduce this indicator

HEALTHY

Indicator	Link with Priority	Target (if applicable) or direction of travel	Previous data	Baseline (latest available data) in 2020	Year 1 figure (2021)	Comment - analysis
4a. Primary immunisation rate by 12 months of age – 5-in-1/6-in-1	Priority 6	Aim to increase	2018 – 97.4%	2018-19- 97.7%	2019-20- 97.4% 2020-21- 97.0%	Our aim is to maintain our levels.
4b. Primary immunisation rate by 12 months of age – MenC	Priority 6	Aim to increase				The Hib/MenC is only now delivered at 12-13 months, with Men ACWY at around 14 years of age. We will revise this indicator to reflect this.
4c. Primary immunisation rate by 12 months of age - PVC	Priority 6	Aim to increase	2017-18- 97.6%	2018-19- 97.9%	2019-20- 97.9% 2020-21- 97.8%	We aim to maintain this
4d. Primary immunisation rate by 12 months of age – Rotavirus	Priority 6	Aim to increase	2017-18- 95%	2018-19- 95.3%	2019-20- 94.9% 2020-21- 94.2%	Work will be undertaken during 2021/22 to increase uptake
4e. Primary immunisation rate by 12 months of age - MenB	Priority 6	Aim to increase	2017-18 – 97.2%	2018-19- 97.6%	2019-20- 97.4% 2020-21- 97.3%	We aim to maintain this
5. The percentage of 27-30 months reviews completed	Priority 5 Priority 6	Aim to increase	2017-18- 94.6%	2018-19- 93.6%	2019-20- 95.2% 2020-21 -	D&G have the highest level of coverage across all Scottish Health Boards; the Scotland average is 88.2%.
6. The percentage of children in Primary 1 at risk of being overweight and/or obese	Priority 3 Priority 6	Aim to reduce	DG rate was 24.4% in 2017/18	DG rate was 25.7% in 2018/19,	DG rate was 24.2% in 2019/20 but	No local or national data was captured for primary 1 weight for 2020/21 due to school

			National rate was 22.5% in 2017/18	National rate was 22.4%.	National reviews are incomplete.	closures during CoVID19. From September 2021, the current P1 cohort measurements are taking place.
7. CAMHS completed waiting times (Percentage of those who commence treatment for specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) within 18 weeks of referral).	Priority 4	LDP Standard: 90 per cent of young people to commence treatment for specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health services within 18 weeks of referral.		At end of Sept 2020, across DG 93.3% of young people referred to CAMHS commenced treatment within 18 weeks of referral.	At end Sept 2021, across DG 31.3% of young people referred to CAMHS commenced treatment within 18 weeks of referral.	This is the lowest number of people ever seen by the service. Demand for CAMHS is completely outweighing capacity. Investment from the Scottish Government - provided the service can recruit - will improve waiting times. CAMHS has a number of service redesign projects underway to address the issue. Waiting times are expected to improve by September 2022.
8. LAC completed waiting times for health assessment (Percentage of those LAC who receive a health assessment within 28 days of referral).	Priority 2	The standard is that 90% of children who become looked after will have a new health assessment within 4 weeks of the service receiving notification		Between January and December 2020 The percentage of referrals completed within 28 days was 78%	As of May 2021, the percentage of CEL16 (LAC Health Assessment) referrals completed within 28 days is 70%.	The LAC health care team and school nurses are undertaking some improvement work in schools to improve the engagement of young people at LAC health assessments. The aim is to achieve the 90% target by the end of 2022.
9. Perinatal mortality (Rate of stillbirths per 1,000 births by year).	Priority 1 Priority 6	Aim to reduce		In DG, the rate of neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births was 0.85 at December 2018	In DG, the rate of Perinatal mortality:- 2019 – a rate of 2.68 per 1000 births	Aim to reduce These rates equate to low numbers (<6) of stillbirths. The aim is to reduce this.

					2020 - a rate of 2.62 per 1000 births 2021 - a rate of 4.42 per 1000 births	
10. The percentage of pregnant women in the worst performing Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivations (SIMD) quintile booked for antenatal care by the 12th week of gestation.	Priority 1 Priority 3 Priority 6	LDP Standard At least 80% of pregnant women in each SIMD quintile will have booked for antenatal care by the 12th week of gestation.	2017-18- 85.3%	2019-20- 85.8%	2019-20- 85%	In Dumfries and Galloway, our lowest-performing figure was 85% compared with a standard of 80%.

ACHIEVING

Indicator		Target (if applicable) or direction of travel	Previous data	Baseline (latest available data) in 2020	Year 1 figure (2021)	Comment – analysis
11. Percentage of LAC School Leavers who enter a positive Destination P2C3M05Q&C_PI03	Priority 2	87.2%	2017/18 – 82.9%	66.7% in 2018/19	84% in 2019/20	This was a significant improvement on the previous year.

12. The percentage of children meeting developmental milestones P2C3M01Q&C_PI19	Priority 5 Priority 6	80%	2017/18 - 81%	81% in 2018/19	74% in 2019/20	
13. Percentage of young adults (16-19 year olds) participating in education, training or employment. (Annual Participation Measure – Local Government Benchmarking Framework) CSSaPP_13	All priorities	91.6%		2018/19 – 91.2%	92% in 2019/20	This is a universal indicator rather than one targeted on vulnerability. These indicators allow us to compare performance for our more vulnerable children and young people with those for all children and young people. All priorities are relevant, because successful delivery of all our priorities should have an overall impact on our population of children and young people.
14. Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in all three Literacy organisers P2C3M01Q&C_PI12	All priorities		2017-18 69%	2018/19 - 69%		We do not have data for these indicators as a result of the pandemic. For 2020 the absence of external assessment information, and the Ministerial direction to award estimated grades, have led to a different pattern of attainment than we have seen in previous years. The results for 2020 should not be directly compared to those in previous years or future years
15. Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in all three Literacy organisers P2C3M07Q&C_PI13	All priorities		2017/18 – 88%	2018/19 - 83%		
16. Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy P2C3M01Q&C_PI14	All priorities		2017/18 – 77%	2018/19 - 77%		

17. Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy P2C3M07Q&C_PI15	All priorities		2017/18 – 79%	2018/19 - 80%		
18. Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more award at SCQF Level 4 or above P2C3M01Q&C_PI16	All priorities	96%	2017/18 – 97%	97% in 2018/19	96% in 2019/20	This allows us to compare attainment of all school leavers with those who are looked-after.
19. Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in all three Literacy organisers (LAC) P2C3CYPLL12d	Priority 2	68%		2018/19 - 31%		Education CfE PIs were not recorded in 2020 and most were not recorded in 2021. The exception is number 23 below where publication is expected in December 2021
20. Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in all three Literacy organisers (LAC) P2C3CYPLL13d	Priority 2	84%		2018/19 - 40%		
21. Proportion of Primary pupils achieving expected levels in Numeracy (LAC) P2C3CYPLL14d	Priority 2	75%		2018/19 - 41%		
22. Proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better in Numeracy (LAC) P2C3CYPLL15d	Priority 2	84%		2018/19 - 80%		
23. Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more	Priority 2	86%	2017/18 - 71%	2018/19 – 62%	2019/20 – 72%	This was a significant improvement on the previous year.

award at SCQF Level 4 or above (LAC) P2C3M05Q&C_PI04						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

NURTURED

Indicator		Target (if applicable) or direction of travel	Previous data	Baseline (latest available data) in 2020	Year 1 figure (2021)	Comment – analysis
24. Number and percentage of children being referred to the Children's Reporter on care & protection grounds.	Priority 1 Priority 6	Aim to reduce	2017-18 509 (of total 611) 83.3%	484 (of total 588) Children referred in 2018-19. 82.3%	2019-20- 456 (of total 534), 85.4% 2020-21- 538 (of total 587). 91.6%	This is one of the indicators where statistics for 2020-21 are already published, and show an increase in both children referred, and the percentage referred on care and protection grounds.
25. Balance of care for Looked After Children: % of children being looked after in the community (Local Benchmarking Framework) P2C1M8SW_PI03	Priority 2	Aim to increase		94.2% in 2018/19	93.4% in 2019/20	In Dumfries and Galloway we continue to have a proportion of children looked-after in the community. This means that children are looked-after at home with parents/carers; with other family members or friends; or with foster carers or prospective adopters.
26. Percentage of Looked After Children with more than one placement within the last year. P2C1M5SW_P102	Priority 2	Aim to reduce		18.7% in 2018/19	18.1% in 2019/20	Placement moves are not necessarily negative when planned and agreed. Following this reporting period, the Corporate Parenting Group decided to carry out an analysis of the reasons for placement

						moves in Dumfries and Galloway.
--	--	--	--	--	--	---------------------------------

RESPONSIBLE

Indicator		Target (if applicable) or direction of travel	Previous data	Baseline (latest available data) in 2020	Year 1 figure (2021)	Comment – analysis
27. Number and percentage of children being referred to the Children's Reporter on offence grounds, Section 67 j grounds. CSSaPP_27	Priority 1 Priority 4	No target – aim to reduce	2017-18- 159 (of 611). 26%	2018-19- 148 (of 588). 25.17%	2019/20- 139 (of 534) 26% 2020/21- 107 (of 587) 18.2%.	More young people were referred to the Children's Reporter in total in 2021, but fewer of these were referred on offending grounds than in 2019/20.

INCLUDED

Indicator		Target (if applicable) or direction of travel	Previous data	Baseline (latest available data) in 2020	Year 1 figure (2021)	Comment – analysis
28. Attendance Rate, Primary School, Dumfries and Galloway for Looked after Children. P2C3CYPLL22	Priority 2	94.1%		95.7% in 2018/19	93.58 in 2020/21 94.53% in 2020/21	We have a Care-Experienced Team in Education who track and monitor attendance (and exclusions) of children and young people on a monthly basis.
29. Attendance Rate, Secondary School, Dumfries and Galloway for Looked after Children. P2C3CYPLL23	Priority 2	85.4%		84.87% in 2018/19	83.23% in 2019/20 87.75% in 2020/21	

<p>30. Number of homelessness applications from applicants who were looked after as a child by the local authority within the last 5 years.</p> <p>P3C1M1NS_PI01</p>	Priority 2	20		20 in 2018/19	20 in 2019/20 28 in 2020/21	<p>Accommodation is one of the 4 priority action plans within our Corporate Parenting Plan. Reasons for homelessness applications are complex. Legislation was in place to prevent evictions during the pandemic, however there was an increase in homelessness applications due to the breakdown of family relationships. The Corporate Parenting Group are monitoring this, and (following the reporting period) a mediation service was being implemented with the aim of resolving these situations.</p>
--	------------	----	--	---------------	--------------------------------	--