



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership



Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Children's Service Plan 2023 – 2026

Plana Sheirbheisean Chloinne Amalaichte na Gàidhealtachd 2023 -2026

Annual Report 2023/24



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Integrated Children's Service Planning Board

Since the Integrated Children's service plan was launched in August 2023, the Integrated Children's Service Board and delivery groups have made significant headway in progressing the priorities and change ideas detailed within the Highland Children's Service plan 2023-26. [here](#)

The Plan articulates how partners work together to provide services which are organised, equipped to deliver high-quality, joined-up, trauma-informed, responsive and preventative support to children and families.

The priorities articulated within the plan were underpinned by the findings or the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken during 2023. [here](#)

In responding to the need for pace and urgency within the workstreams required to meet our priorities, the frequency of Board meetings has increased from quarterly to two monthly into 2024.

This annual report highlights the progress that has been made. It should be noted that the new delivery infrastructure has only been in place for five months and consequently many of the priorities and change ideas are only recently developed. This work has been strengthened through strong partnership across services and in all sectors.

Partnership



In August 2023, the Highland partnership of children's services came together to formally launch the Highland Children's Plan 2023-26 at our **Vision 26** event. The success of the event was attended by over 500 people with 76 local services and community groups coming together to highlight the range of support on offer to children and families across Highland. All partners and services demonstrated a strong shared vision to provide better outcomes for children and families across Highland. This was an opportunity to build on our partnership working and through feedback from attendees, future events are planned to ensure effective delivery of the commitments and priorities outlined within the plan.



Our Commitment



Keeping the Promise

We will ensure that all Highland's Children and Young People are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Loved, Respected and Included.



We will support Highland's families with respect, care and compassion, ensuring their voices are integral to all we do.



We will enable and empower families to thrive and to stay together wherever possible



We will tackle poverty and inequalities and will support and enable families to live and thrive together in their communities



Our partnership will reflect our commitment in our:

- Physical settings
- Policies and procedures
- Contact with people who access our services
- Activities and interventions
- Workforce experience

Our partnership is committed to developing a trauma informed and responsive approach to supporting children, young people and their families.

We will develop services that are informed and shaped by people with lived experience and place the voice of infants, children, young people and families at the heart of service improvement.

Our Partnership is committed to upholding the rights of infants, children and young people in ensuring they are protected from prejudice and that every child has the opportunity to grow up to maximise their full potential.

We will strive to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is the global “gold standard” for children’s rights. It sets out the rights that all children have to help them to “be all they can be”. They include rights relating to health, education, leisure, play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard. This is strengthened by The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was unanimously passed in Scottish Parliament on the 7th of December 2023

GIRFEC – Getting it Right for Every Child

In reviewing the latest National GIRFEC and Child Protection procedures and practice guidance, we have completed the alignment of local procedures and guidance. From April 2024 the ICSP board will deliver a series of local workshop sessions to launch the updated guidance and begin the process of engaging with partners across Highland.

GIRFEC Implementation Flowchart



Whole Family Wellbeing Programme

Following the recruitment process and setting up of the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme Team between May 2023 and September 2023, the Programme entered the Evaluation Phase on 30th September 2023. This phase is designed to ensure that the framework of the Programme remains within the above four Programme Pillars, and that it remains evidence-based and needs-led, at a locality level. To ensure this, the following approach has been developed.

Data Gathering

Recognising that no single source of data will be sufficient to provide robust evidence of need, a mix of evidence from a range of sources is being gathered, namely;

- Performance Data** in the form of the Integrated Children’s Services Planning Board Performance Management Framework and the Highland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Stakeholder Views in the form of:**
 - Practitioner Participation Sessions**, providing the voice of practitioners within Statutory and Third Sector organisations in Highland, who deliver support services to families. Gathered between October 2023 - January 2024. A summary of which can be seen here
 - Children and Families Participation**, providing the voice of families from across Highland about support provision and access to support – utilising the Integrated Children’s Service Board Participation Strategy and gathering wider community-based consultation data. This will be commencing in March 2024.
- Whole Family Wellbeing Funding** - National Self-Assessment Toolkit to be undertaken by Statutory and Third Sector organisations in Highland, who deliver support services to families. This will commence in March 2024.
- Service Provision Scope/Mapping** which will be incorporated into the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding - National Self-Assessment Toolkit process. Commencing February 2024 to March 2024.

The gathering and analysis of this data set will ascertain predicated need around each of the nine Community Partnership localities and will further allow for the process of funding applications to commence.

4 Pillars



768 comments inspired by Pillar 1
Children & Families at the Centre of Service Design



966 comments inspired by Pillar 2
Availability & Access



942 comments inspired by Pillar 3
Whole system approach

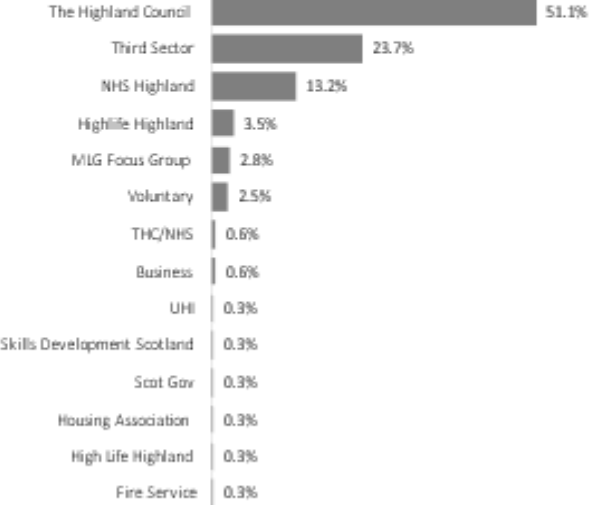


776 comments inspired by Pillar 4
Leadership, Workforce & Culture

Participant Headlines



Summary of attendance by Organisation



Integrated Planning Our Themes



Poverty



Child Protection



Corporate Parenting



Rights and Participation



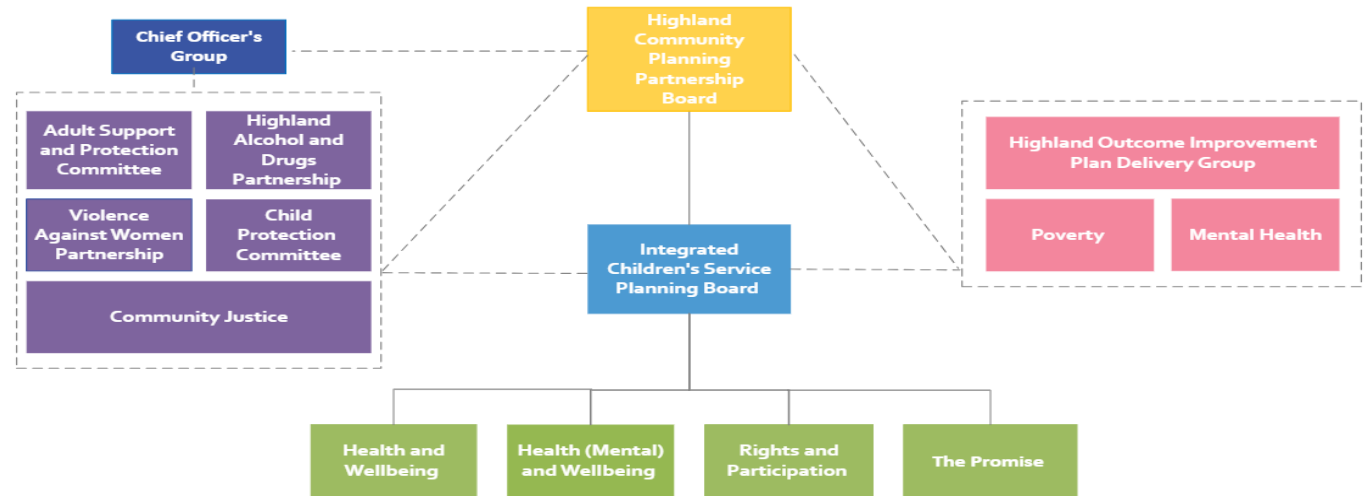
Health and Wellbeing



Drugs and Alcohol

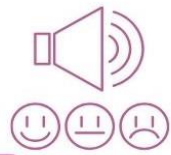
The plan takes a thematic approach to improving outcomes for infants, children, young people and families. These themes have been identified through listening to children, young people and their families and analysis of the data and evidence within The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2023).

The planning theme strategic oversight boards, are accountable for delivery of the priorities and plans using the life course approach. These are;



Performance and Outcome Management:

All outcomes within the Highland Children's service plan are linked to Highland's Outcome Improve Plan Performance, measured through the Integrated Children's Service Performance Management Framework and monitored by Highland Integrated Children's Service Planning Board. The plan continues to evolve to align to the work and outcome priorities along with the dynamic Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2023) to ensure this is parallel to the needs of children and families as these change. This Board has measured these outcomes against the Performance Management Framework and the priorities of the delivery groups to produce this annual report.



ICSB PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

1000 children and young people will actively have taken part in the process. The strategy can also be informed by the views of over **700** professionals in Highland on the topic of children and young people's participation



63

Promise Café Attendees

150

Staff engaged in promise awareness sessions

18

Promise Ambassadors have been recruited over the last year



PROJECTS

The Promise / CPC - Language Guide

CPC - Bairns Hoose

ADP - Planet Youth - Prevention Model



DETAILS

The production of a 'Language Guide', in the form of an online 'microbite' which was developed through engagement with children and young people with experience of care and professionals

£63000 funding secured from national Bairns Hoose fund to improve premises used for interviewing and supporting children and young people

Progress through the ten steps. Second round of bi-annual surveys completed by S4's in 5 pilot schools with data being processed via Planet Youth in Iceland



#Keep The Promise Highland

WHOLE FAMILY WELLBEING PROGRAMME

317

Participation Session Attendees

3000

Comments from Practitioners

37

Different sectors engagement

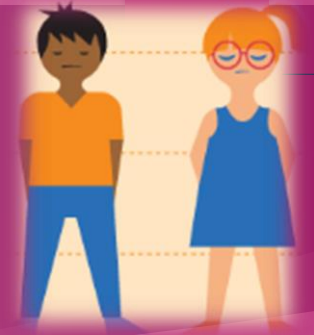
"Whole Family Wellbeing, The Promise and Families First work in harmony"

"There was lots of exchange of realistic, positive and creative thinking from the participants. I really hope the spirit of that and the realisation will continue"

"Really supportive session, I have high hopes that our input is being listened to and used!"

Key Highlights

Poverty Update



The Poverty Reduction Delivery Group has undertaken a mapping exercise to identify areas for action going forward. The mapping took the form of two strands; considering what is happening and being delivered and alongside this, where the gaps and opportunities are for shared partnership action. A survey of third sector groups supported this exercise, followed by a review and reflection session.

A summary of the emerging priorities identified are outlined below and work has commenced to develop core actions through the delivery plan.

Information and Awareness Raising

- Supporting Practitioner Learning – developing the approach to poverty related practice. Building on existing learning packages to create a suite of materials to support practitioner learning.
- Shared partnership resources targeted to support people experiencing poverty. Resources to support individuals access the advice and services required. Developing routes for sharing and referral routes (building on learning from health visitor pathway)
- Addressing Stigma – building an approach into practitioner learning and shared resources

Community Based Approaches

- Collective practitioner support - providing support and advice where individuals are coming together e.g. parent and toddler groups/community growing spaces/community cafes/tenants
- Lived experience - developing our approach to understanding lived experience and using this to identify areas for development

Specific Strands of Work

- Developing the approach to period poverty in schools
- Roll out of cost of the school day toolkit
- Developing flexible models of childcare in rural areas

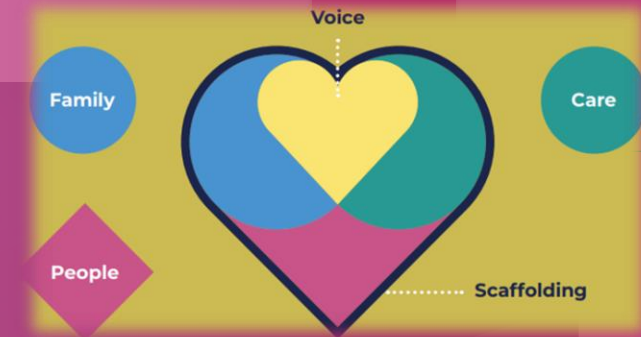
Child Protection Update



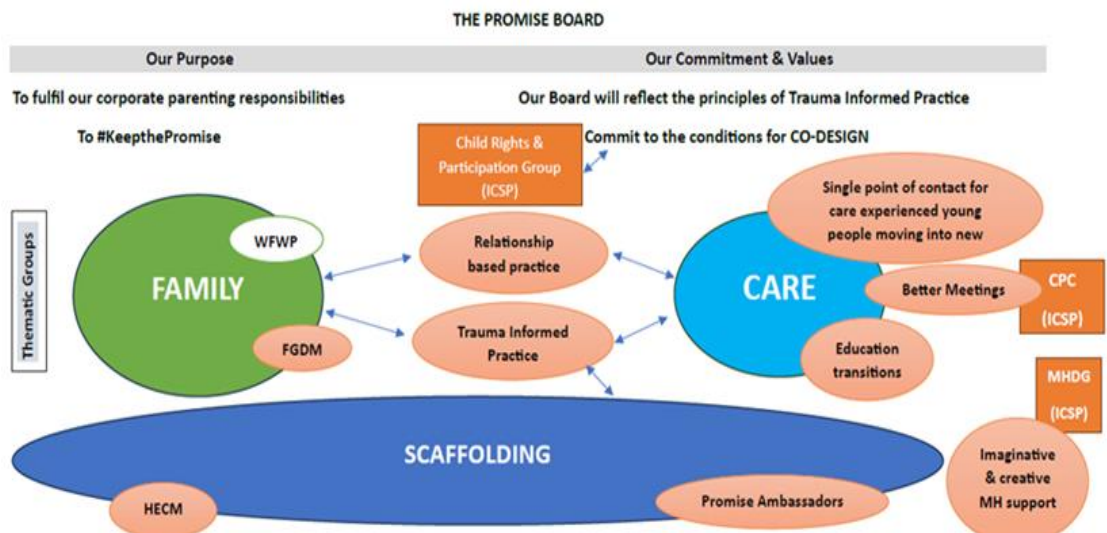
Following feedback from Highland’s inspection for children at risk of harm, and a review of current priorities, the Child Protection Committee have been progressing key issues to deliver change ideas to support children, young people and families. Highlights include:

- GIRFEC and Child Protection Procedures reviewed and updated in line with national guidance with accompanying e-learning resources
- Implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) in September 2023
- Highland invited to be an affiliate in the National Bairns’ Hoose programme
- £63000 funding secured from national Bairns’ Hoose fund to improve premises used for interviewing and supporting children and young people in Caithness and Inverness initially
- Work with Children and Young Peoples Centre for Justice and Action for Children in relation to re-imagining youth justice underway
- Exploitation Partnership Steering Group established to oversee CORRA project and development of RISE service and the Anchor project.
- £200,000 funding secured from The Promise CORRA fund to support young people affected by criminal and sexual exploitation
- Highland evaluation completed by the National Missing People project and recommendations to improve responses to missing young people now being progressed
- Increased focus on Quality Assurance of child protection processes including roll out of Interagency Referral Discussion audit work and implementation and analysis of the new National Minimum Dataset
- Development of language guide in partnership with The Promise Highland team

Promise Board Update



The Promise Board (previously known as the Corporate Parenting Board) underwent a period of reflection and development between January and May 23. The result was a newly formed Promise Board, with new membership and new priorities, reflected in the ICSP. In development is a delivery plan in line with the 5 foundations of The Promise with 2 key thematic delivery groups: FAMILY and CARE (See Graphic below)



Family

‘Empower families through Family Group Decision Making’

Empowering families to build safety for children and young people is central to the Promise and Highland’s commitment to delivering the Promise. Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is currently being rolled out as a pilot across 3 family teams in the Inverness areas.

78 Children identified for possible FDGM. Focus in 2024-25 will be on tracking outcomes and learning from the pilot

Voice

The production of a ‘Language Guide’, in the form of an online ‘microbite’ developed through engagement with children and young people with experience of care will be launched early 2024. Training from Each & Every Child on their framing recommendations (evidence based framing recommendations to change the public perception of care experience) was delivered to Highland’s Child Protection Committee and Promise Board.

Care Experienced young people of Highland produced a [video](#) for Corporate Parents on what they wanted from Board members, which was shared as part of training sessions to The Promise Board.

The *Better Meetings Practitioner Guides* were launched in 2022. These guides emphasised good practice before, during and after meetings and hearings to ensure that the voice and views of young people are at the heart of everything we do. They are currently being evaluated, with the views of children and young people central to the findings.

Care

Your Voice Matters gathered the views of young people who experienced residential care in Highland from Jan 2020 – July 22. A striking finding was the significance of relationships. Improvements are underway with early data being collated. 2023 inspections in residential care homes have begun to evidence improvement and progress (inspections: *good, very good and excellent*)

People

‘*develop relationships*’ Promotion and engagement of The Promise continues across Highland. To date 9 sessions to over 150 staff, and 4 Promise Café have been held with 63 attendees. There has been 4 *Keeping the Promise* newsletters produced and circulated across the partnership. Data from pre & post measures indicate an increase in staff knowledge, they feel more informed and have more ideas about how to #Keepthepromise.

‘*Promise Ambassadors*’ 18 Promise Ambassadors have been recruited, across Health, Social Care and Education. The ambassadors have met 4 times over the last year. This initiative is expanding with opportunity to extend beyond The Council.

Rights and Participation Update



The Rights and Participation Delivery Group have been working to implement the delivery plan. Royal Assent was received for the UNCRC Incorporation on 16 January with significant implications for both statutory and non-statutory bodies. Positive work is progressing across many workstreams;

Play improvement group established to start a dialogue as one workstream and to share information across partnerships.

Baseline data and information established relating to the rights of children and young people.

Work to support embedding Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment into Integrated Impact Assessment process. Training module created as part of the mandatory training, including information on the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law for all managers.

Work on the Children's Charter and the Participation Strategy underway.

Survey sent to all 3rd sector groups in Highland including questions on supports they provide to further children's rights.

Cawdor Primary School are used as an example on Education Scotland's Play Pedagogy Toolkit:

<https://www.thinglink.com/card/1609461484272746499>

Primary aged section of a Book Creator resource has been drafted by children from Raigmore Primary School with graphics and recorded voices embedded in the virtual book. Draft shared with other groups to gather their views and additions before being finalised and shared more widely with families.

Discussion with the Youth Convener about how to take the work so far on the Charter graphic and move forward with some meaningful dialogue regarding children and young people's views being considered by elected members on decisions that impact them.

Committee paper presented to elected members on the work undertaken thus far in embedding Children's Rights.

Thematic analysis completed on feedback from 148 nursery children in relation to their use of playparks. The Play Park strategy was completed in November 2023.

Executive summary and a child friendly version included in the report created from over 1200 responses to the consultation, many from pre-5s.

Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement Case Study Play Pedagogy at Cawdor Primary & ELC

Cawdor Primary & ELC share their approaches to developing Play Pedagogy "across the school from ELC to P7 where children are able to be curious, inquire and have FUN in order to learn." James shares how the school has engaged with national practice guidance Realising the Ambition with a specific focus on the child-centred pedagogy in practice cycle.



Click here to listen to Headteacher James Cook describe the approach at Cawdor Primary & ELC.



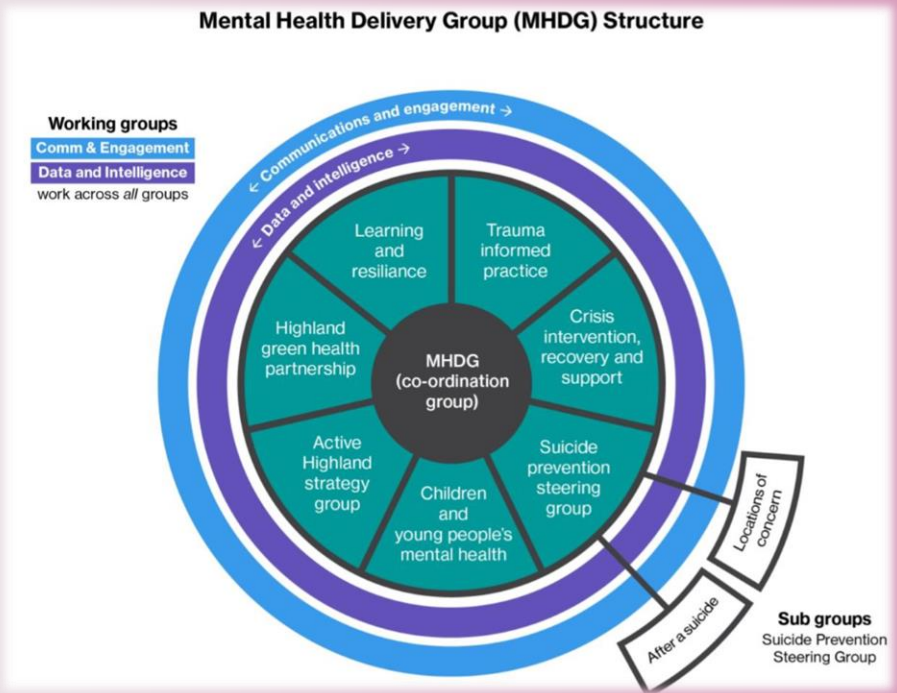
Click here for presentation slides and more information about play pedagogy at Cawdor Primary & ELC



Health and Wellbeing Update



The Health and Wellbeing (Mental Health) forms a subgroup of the Mental Health Delivery Group Structure and reports into the MHDG co-ordination group and the Integrated Children’s Service Board. The delivery group has a delivery plan taken from the priorities that are identified within the Integrated Children’s Service Plan.



- Inspiring Young Voices provided an opportunity for those aged 18-26 in Highland to take part in an online focus group to voice their opinions on topics including:
 - Existing mental health support and resources
 - Accessibility and barriers to accessing mental health support
 - What resources or support do you want to be made available?
 A report of findings is currently being produced.
- Mikeysline recruiting for Bee the Change champions, destigmatise mental health and suicide prevention this is extended across communities including schools
- Continued support from the partnership for Kooth who attended Mental Health Delivery Group and shared a presentation detailing information and data of their work.

Drug and Alcohol Update



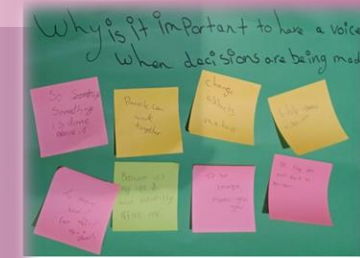
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Training dates set for community midwives, “Pregnancy Alcohol and Drugs Advice and Support Sessions” attended by midwives supporting women and families who are affected by continued drugs or alcohol use during pregnancy.
- Pre-conception Information Support Preparation and adaptation of Alcohol Brief Interventions learning package for community midwives. Resources updated and developed for midwives
- Support for Antenatal Care Networking with Third Sector to support improved signposting by midwives, Improved liaison and collaboration with Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS).
- Planet Youth – Prevention Model Continue to progress through the ten steps. Second round of bi-annual surveys completed in 5 pilot schools with data being processed via Planet Youth in Iceland. Data will be further analysed and collated into a Highland report. Planet youth Strategic Group now providing leadership for the programme
- Culture Change/Whole Family Activities Collaboration with Highlife Highland partners to increase positive activities in targeted areas. This includes, supervised family gym blocks which are free of charge and aim to embed family involvement in sport and physical activity.
- Discussing Drugs and Alcohol with Young People resource including Pre-course eLearning via TURAS in development.
- Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit (H-SAT) Whole school early intervention approach to embedding H-SAT as a test of change underway. Regular review of content via google analytic with promotion through community events
- Advanced Nurse Practitioner Specialist alcohol and drugs role being developed for schools to strengthen knowledge, skills and confidence of school nurses to deliver substance related priorities.
- Treatment and Support Planning underway to respond to UK Clinical Guidelines for Alcohol Treatment - Consultation young people sections, Participation via Health improvement partners in development of national prevention strategy Planning for second Scottish Government self-assessment exercise on the Whole Family Framework - Drugs and Alcohol to be followed by a local improvement plan.
- Assertive outreach teams active in Inverness (to extend to Mid and East Ross) and Caithness providing support to those at higher risk of harm and death from 16 and over that are not currently in school Inverness team includes a social worker post. Harm prevention police officer post collaborating with assertive outreach teams.

The Voice and Participation of Children and Young People

Participation Strategy



One of the young leaders with 'Barbra Bearstrand', participation expert, who worked alongside a group of Rainbows, aged 4.



Some views from care experienced young people, captured during Care Day 2024.



Development of a Children and Young People's Participation Strategy for Highland

In January 2023, the decision was made by the Integrated Children's Services Board to develop a Children and young people's participation strategy for Highland. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children and young people have a right to participate (to speak up, to be listened to and taken seriously) when decisions are being made. In recent years, examples of excellent participation practice have emerged across all sectors Highland and the strategy aims to build on these to make children and young people's participation the norm across our partnership.

Exemplifying participation in the development of the strategy - The CYP Participation Strategy Steering Group, formed in January 2023, undertook to develop the strategy with meaningful participation of children and young people at its core, exemplifying the participatory approach we hope to see across Highland in the future.

Engagement - In March and April 2023, a number of focus groups were run alongside children and young people already involved in participation and collective advocacy activities with the aim of determining the questions to be asked across Highland as part of the strategy development process.

During extensive engagement with children and young people and stakeholders, key questions asked were;

- What does participation mean to you?
- Why is it important to have a voice (when decisions are being made)?
- What helps you to speak out and have a voice?
- What gets in the way of you having a voice?
- If you knew the right people were listening, what issues would you like to speak up about?
- How can we make sure everybody's voice is heard and everyone gets and chance to participate

Engagement has been ongoing since May 2023. Where possible, this has been led by paid young facilitators. This phase will conclude at the end of March 2024, by which time it expected that more than 1000 children and young people will actively have taken part in the process. Through the work of the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme in Highland, the strategy has also be informed by the views of over 700 professionals in Highland on the topic of children and young people's participation – aspirations, barriers, existing expertise, practicalities – which is key to successful implementation.

The strategy and the 2024 – 2026 Implementation Plan will be completed in June 2024.

Governance

The Integrated Children's Service Planning Partnership Board provides oversight to the on-going work and future development of the plan on behalf of the Highland Community Planning Partnership. The Board is directly accountable to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

In order to ensure a robust partnership approach to governance, assurance and performance management, the Integrated Children's Service Board provides additional reporting to:

❖ The Highland Council, and the NHS Highland Board through The NHS Highland Health and Social Care Committee and The Highland Council Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.

❖ The Public Protection Chief Officer Group, who undertake their statutory responsibility ensuring that appropriate assurance on the development and progress of the plan is received.

❖ Highland Child Protection Committee and Highland's Joint Monitoring Committee.

Membership of Highland Integrated Children's Service Board :

- Director of Public Health, NHS Highland
- Board Nurse Director, NHS Highland
- Head of Health Improvement, NHS Highland
- Head of Education, The Highland Council
- Head of Children's Social work, The Highland Council
- Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care & Chief Social Work Officer, The Highland Council
- Child Health Lead, The Highland Council
- Head of Operations, Women and Children's Directorate, NHS Highland
- Head of community support and engagement, The Highland Council
- Police Scotland, Partnership Superintendent
- Child Health Commissioner – NHS Highland
- Chief Executive, Care and Learning Alliance (Third sector)
- Director of Children and Families (Aberlour Trust) Third sector
- Principal Educational Psychologist, The Highland Council
- Lead Officer, Highland Child Protection Committee
- Youth Work Manager, Youth Highland (Third Sector)