

Highland Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023-2026

Annual Report 2024/25





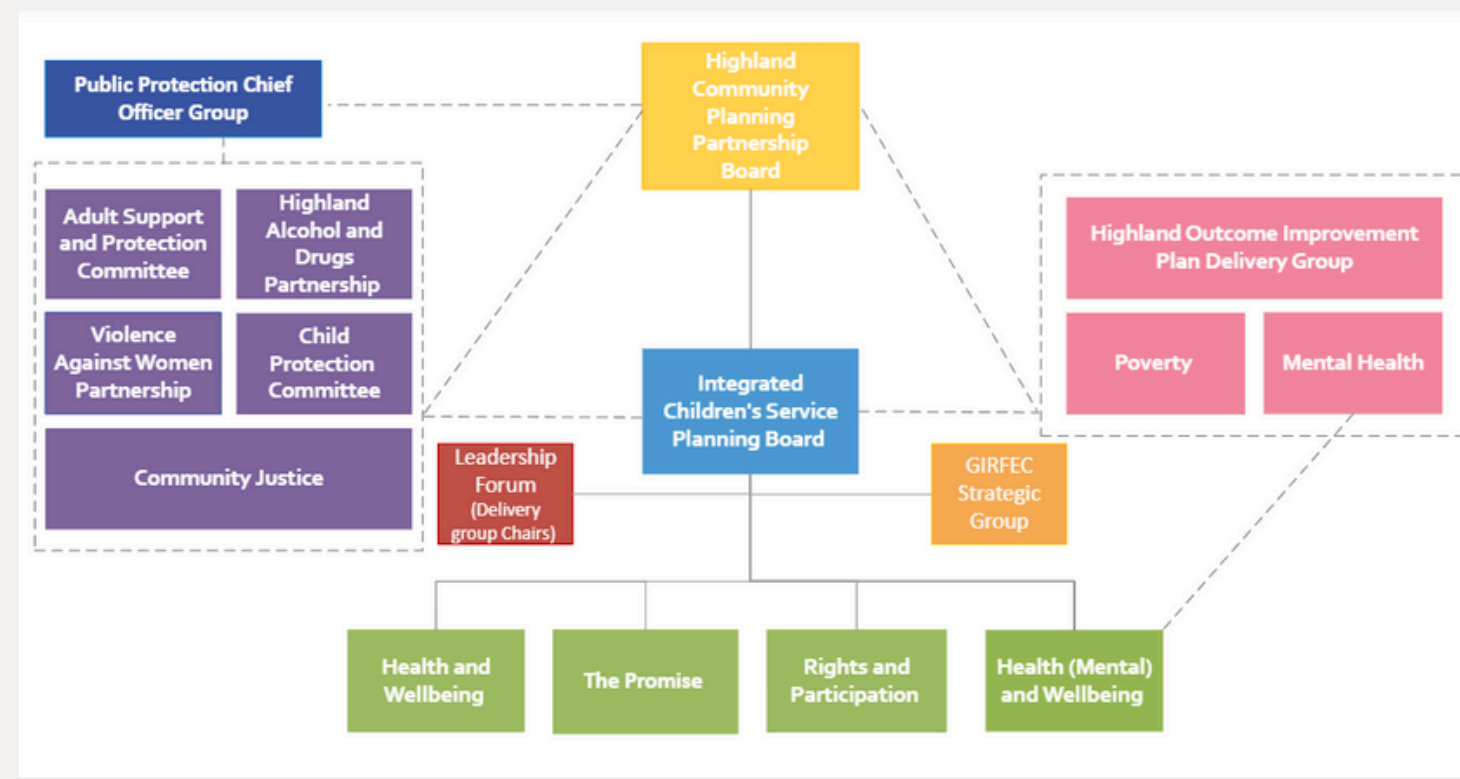
Integrated Children's Service Board



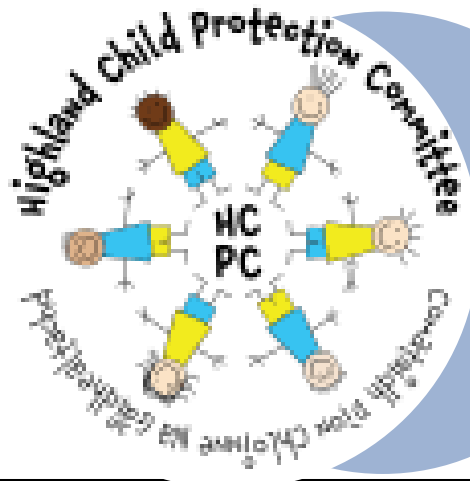
Highland Children's Service Plan sits within a context of the Community Planning Partnership and the Integrated Children's Service Planning Board, strategically leads the improvement of outcomes for all Highland's Children and Families.

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. [Find full plan here](#)

The annual report represents the work undertaken during 2024/25 and outcomes achieved in the delivery of the integrated children's service plan 2023-2026. The change ideas and priorities are implemented through each of the delivery groups.



DELIVERY GROUPS



The Child Protection Committee



The Promise Board



Health and Wellbeing



Drugs and Alcohol



Rights and Participation



Poverty Reduction



**Health and Wellbeing
(Mental Health)**

The delivery groups are partnership groups made up of statutory and 3rd Sector representatives. The groups take a life course approach to their improvement work of the Integrated Children's Service Plan

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

VISION 26

Another successful Vision event was held with over 200 attendees and 60 local organisations showcasing the work to support children, young people and families in Highland and the contributions to the Children's service plan. Vision 26 launched the Children and Young People Participation Strategy and the child friendly version of the Integrated Children's Service Plan. Celebrating the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law,



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION WEBSITE

USERS	VIEWS	CLICKS
478	2000	6300



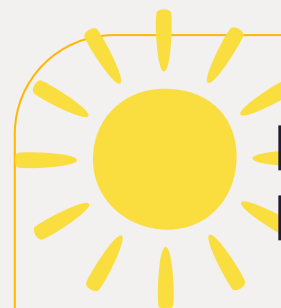
WORRIED ABOUT MONEY APP - 2300 VIEWS AND 213 USERS



100'000
Free Period
packs/ products
distributed
across Highland

1000 Views
of the Vaping
Information
Booklet

Integrated Children Service Board engaged in **4** development days to focus in on workstreams of Trauma Informed Practice
The Promise 24-30
Child Protection
Whole Family Wellbeing



BRIGHTER BEGINNINGS: WHY EARLY YEARS MATTER'S

Early years event Brighter Beginnings hosted by Inverness Family Centre and supported by Highland CPC was held at Eden Court on 3rd March 25. Over 500 Families and Children under 5 were welcomed along to meet services and enjoy the activities. Celebrating the importance of the Infant Pledge and working alongside families to give our youngest children the best possible start in life. The event welcomed key note speaker Dan Wuori. [More details on event here](#)

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

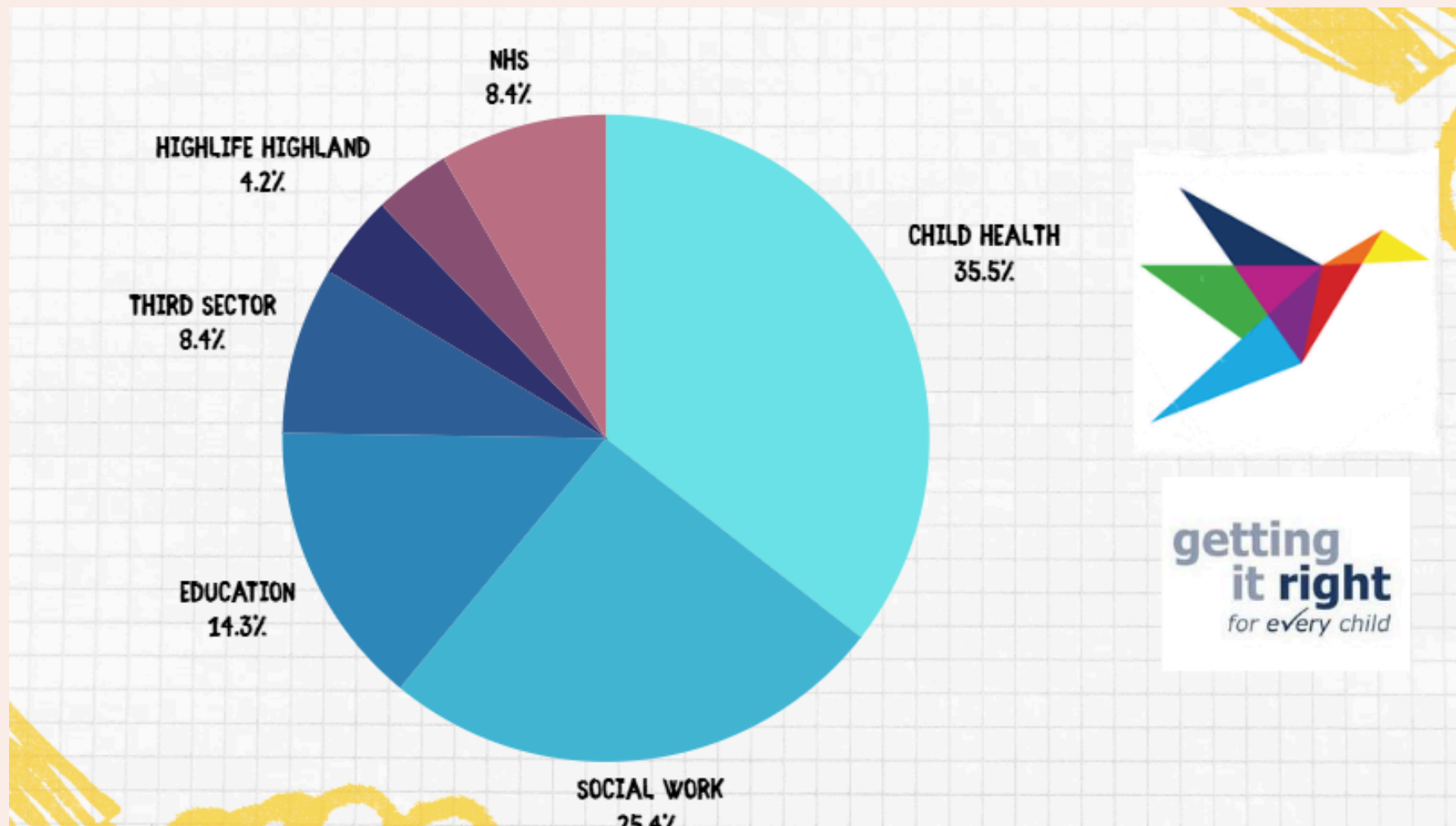
A renewed focus was developed following the updated National GIRFEC Guidance and Highland launched the GIRFEC refresh and reset, lead by The Integrated Children's Service (ICS) Board with facilitators provided across the partnership including CALA, Child Protection Committee and The Whole Family wellbeing team. This began with planned face to face sessions Highland wide. During these sessions we held discussions in relation to the eLearning module, Child's Plan, Chronologies and Implementation of the refreshed guidance. We received a wealth of feedback across the services.

Delivery consisted of 9 'in person' sessions

Overall, 284 attendees. The workshops were held in 7 locations between March and June 2024:

An improvement plan was developed based on the feedback from practitioners

Highland GIRFEC elearning module was developed and so far been completed by 294 practitioners



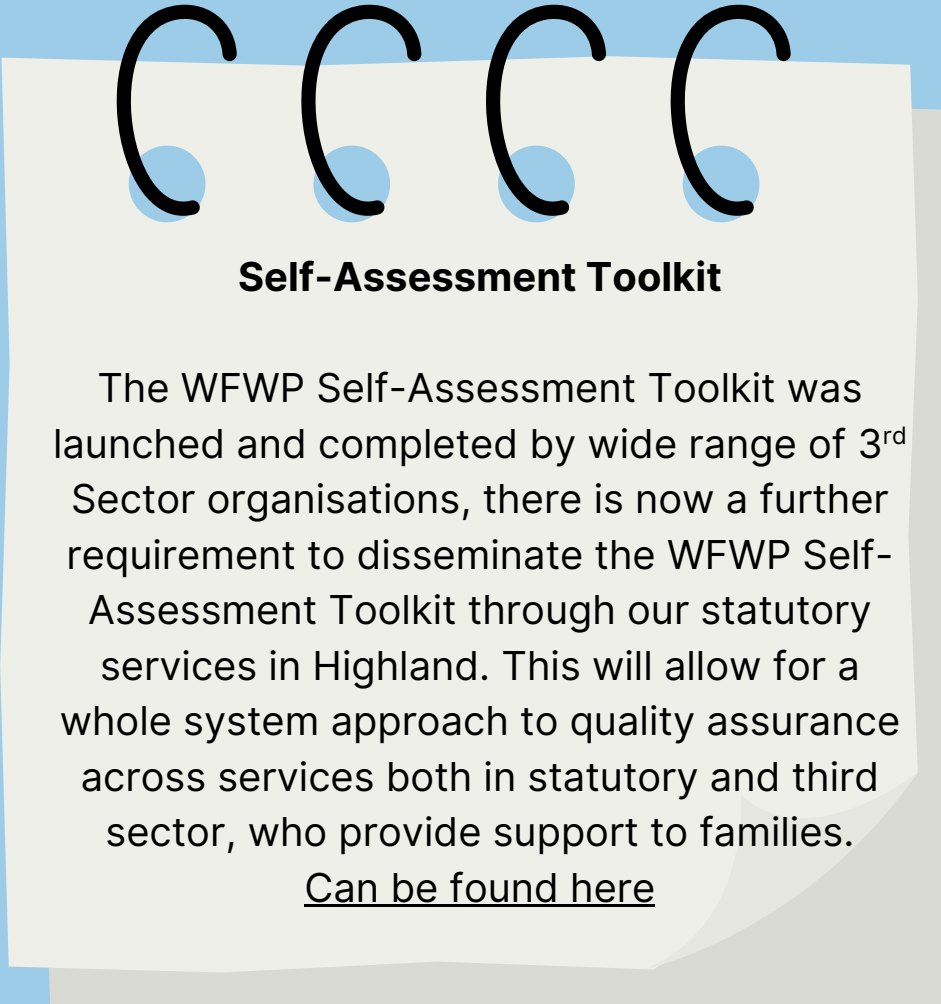
Following the feedback from refresh and reset sessions the multi agency GIRFEC Strategic Group has formed to take forward the improvement plan, this is underway and includes;

- Review of the Child's Plan (started Nov 24)
- Development of Practice Guides for Childs Plans, Additonal Support needs and Chronologies.
- GIRFEC Multiagency Training

Whole Family Wellbeing Programme

The Whole Family Wellbeing team have been undertaking significant work across Highland working towards the programme's aim to provide holistic whole family support, readily available across Highland to families that need it, when they need it for as long as they need it. Working with local organisations, assessing local need and funding activity inline with the programmes funding strategy, whilst taking a whole system approach to delivery of services provided to support children and families.

Inverness High School ASG Test of Concept. Partnership working with CALA, Thriving Families and Home-Start East Highland working as an alliance to provide Holistic Whole Family Support through the Family Links Project within the Inverness High School ASG area. This is now reaching a 6 month evaluation of the project.



Self-Assessment Toolkit

The WFWP Self-Assessment Toolkit was launched and completed by wide range of 3rd Sector organisations, there is now a further requirement to disseminate the WFWP Self-Assessment Toolkit through our statutory services in Highland. This will allow for a whole system approach to quality assurance across services both in statutory and third sector, who provide support to families.

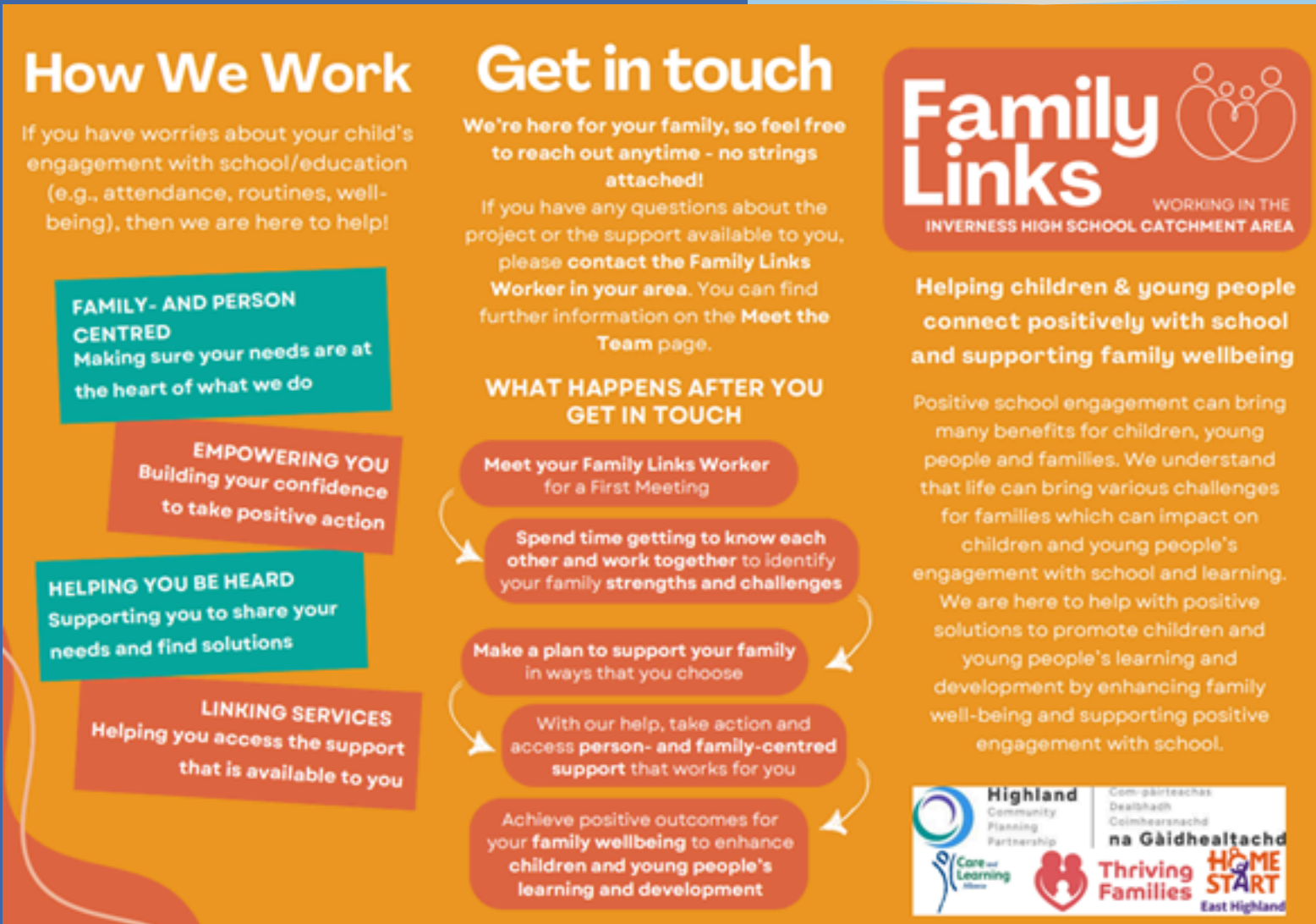
[Can be found here](#)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT THE CENTRE

AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS

WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH / JOINED UP SUPPORT

LEADERSHIP WORKFORCE CULTURE



How We Work

If you have worries about your child's engagement with school/education (e.g., attendance, routines, well-being), then we are here to help!

- FAMILY- AND PERSON CENTRED**
Making sure your needs are at the heart of what we do
- EMPOWERING YOU**
Building your confidence to take positive action
- HELPING YOU BE HEARD**
Supporting you to share your needs and find solutions
- LINKING SERVICES**
Helping you access the support that is available to you


Get in touch

We're here for your family, so feel free to reach out anytime - no strings attached!

If you have any questions about the project or the support available to you, please contact the Family Links Worker in your area. You can find further information on the Meet the Team page.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU GET IN TOUCH


- Meet your Family Links Worker for a First Meeting
- Spend time getting to know each other and work together to identify your family strengths and challenges
- Make a plan to support your family in ways that you choose
- With our help, take action and access person- and family-centred support that works for you
- Achieve positive outcomes for your family wellbeing to enhance children and young people's learning and development



Family Links
WORKING IN THE INVERNESS HIGH SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

Helping children & young people connect positively with school and supporting family wellbeing

Positive school engagement can bring many benefits for children, young people and families. We understand that life can bring various challenges for families which can impact on children and young people's engagement with school and learning. We are here to help with positive solutions to promote children and young people's learning and development by enhancing family well-being and supporting positive engagement with school.



WFWB - News Round up distributed to over 800 people monthly.

Detailing locality and highland family support activity

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding Strategy

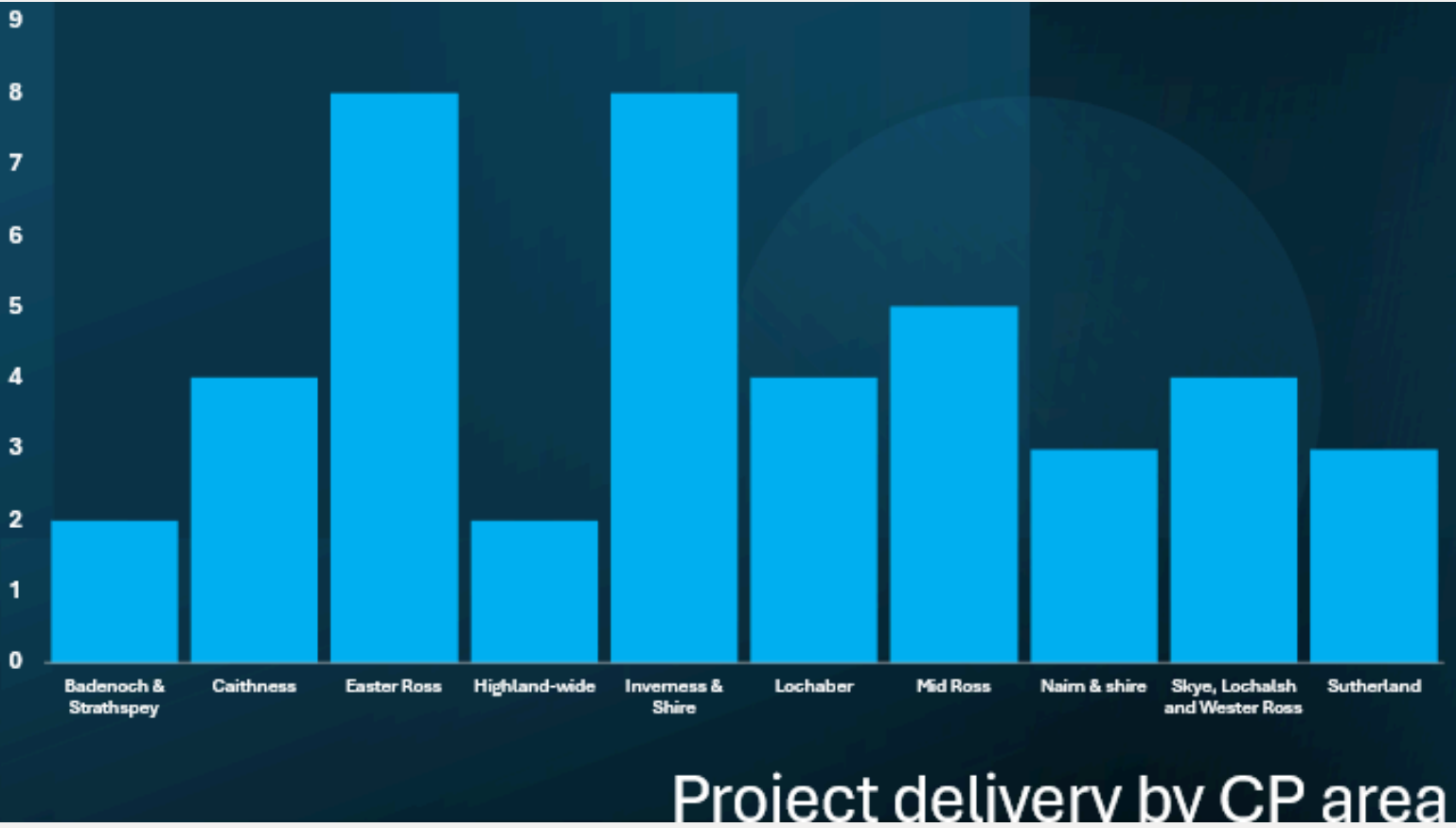
The WFWB Funding strategy was developed to define the approach, application/allocation process and governance of the Whole Family Wellbeing fund, to services who are providing Holistic Whole Family Wellbeing Support across Highland. [Funding Strategy](#)

Element 1 Funding

Element 1: Locality Community Based Activity Small Grant Fund (>£10K)

To date a total of 34 applications were received from Third Sector Organisations, with 30 of those being successful.

A total of £286,583.64 has been released so far to the 30 successful Projects across Community Partnership areas



Element 2 Funding

£1,257,308.00

Funding was awarded for element 2 tests of concept to improve the reach of Holistic Whole Family Support across various thematic work streams, covering a broad range of support services meeting family needs in Highland.

Poverty

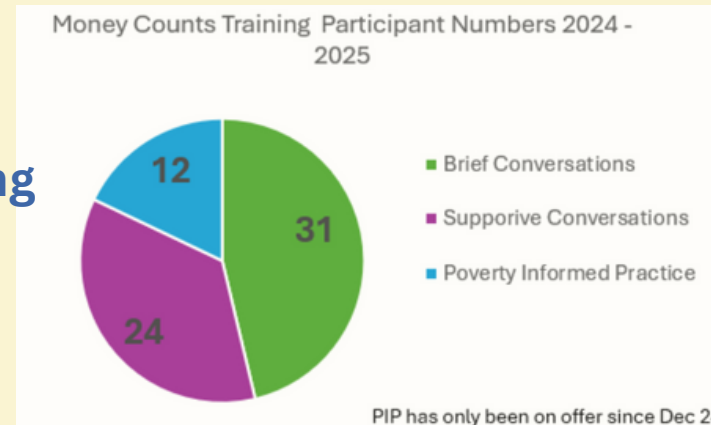
Money Counts Training delivered since April 24.

5x Brief Conversations,

4x Supportive Conversations Training and

2x Poverty Informed Practice Training

This continues to be offered as a means of increasing the number and quality of conversations around money worries. The training highlights the **Worrying About Money? Leaflet** and app as tools to support individuals access a range of appropriate support services and organisations.



Local Child Poverty Action Update Report produced and published



[Find worrying about money leaflet here](#)

2024 has seen further delivery of projects across the Highlands and sessions to boost numeracy confidence in everyday life ranging from outdoor family fun days to weekly activities within highlife libraries for families to explore everyday numeracy through games, crafts and play. With the introduction of additional evening classes to achieve maths qualifications and the development of digital tools to support learning.

Lead Officer for Period Products attended various events across the summer in conjunction with the Welfare Support Team. Events attended included **Belladrum Music Festival**, Inverness Highland Games, Pop up shops in Eastgate Centre, **Vision 26** at Inverness Leisure Centre with over **100'000** packs of free period products distributed across Highland

Caithness Parental Employability Pilot

The aim of the project is to develop and deliver a 6-week, 2 days-a-week pilot place-based offer in Wick that is targeted at helping approximately 8 unemployed parents overcome some of the barriers they face to securing fair and sustainable employment in the local area. This in turn has the potential to reduce levels of child poverty in the area and help employers secure the staff they need. This will be rolled out wider across Highland following successful evaluation of the pilot

Development of Flexible Models of Childcare in Rural Areas

- New models piloted. A more sustainable delivery model in place, including a shift in the balance of Early Learning and Childcare delivery between Local Authority and Private providers.
- Successful Alcohol and Drug Partnership funding bid focused on new models of delivering rural childcare
- ADAP funding to engage rural consultant to support CALA in development of the integrated Single Care Model (SCM) pathway pilot and working group has met and continues to develop model
- Partners include CALA, HIE, Highland Council, NHS Highland, Care Inspectorate and 3rd/private providers.
- Challenges of rural delivery of childcare been highlighted to Minister for Children and Young People as well as MSPs to gain support to allow flexibility in models.
- Close partnership working on new models for childminding

Child Protection

GIRFEC and Child Protection Procedures were launched in December 2024. These joint procedures were brought together to reinforce the importance of the continuum of care, support and protection. An APP has been developed for easy access to the guidance.

GIRFEC and CP Procedures plus APP

In 2024/25 CPC and partners delivered training to **3632** people

492 downloads of the GIRFEC and Child Protection Procedures APP

Highland Child Protection Committee Biennial report has been produced and published

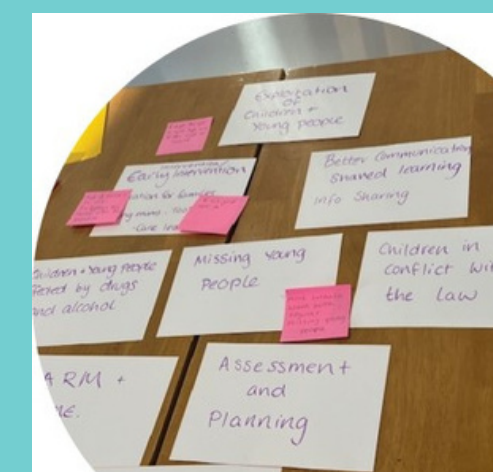
To provide support for older young people in Highland, we have continued to work in partnership with Police Scotland, Action for Children, Aberlour and Barnardos to deliver specialist services for young people at risk of exploitation, including delivery of an outreach service through The Anchor Project. We have also worked with the CYCJ, Youth Action Team and our partners in the Highland Alliance to develop an Older Young People Action Plan to support young people at risk of community harm and those involved with justice services.

The Vulnerable Pregnancy Pathway has been reviewed and relaunched as Women, Pregnancy and Additional Support Needs guidance. Led by our Midwifery Development Officers, this activity forms part of the CPC 'Starting Out' Action Plan to work together and make sure families are at the heart of all our assessment and planning processes. The voice of our youngest children is a key priority and on 3rd March 2025 we relaunched our Consulting with our youngest children toolkit developed in partnership with the Care and Learning Alliance. All resources can be found at www.hcpc.scot.

The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) aims to support children who have experienced abuse or harm, making sure they are interviewed in a trauma informed way, and receive ongoing support through Bairns' Hoose standards. Funded by the Scottish Government, we have been working to create warm and welcoming spaces for children, families and services to work together and support recovery. We have now recruited a Bairns Hoose Manager and a full-time SCIM team to take this work forward. Further information on Bairns Hoose and SCIM is available at www.hcpc.scot/resources.



The launch of Scottish Child Interview Model and Bairns Hoose took place in May 2024.



Highland welcomed Graeme Armstrong (author of the bestselling novel The Young Team and presenter of the BBC documentary series Street Gangs). This unique opportunity allowed staff and practitioners working with young people in the Highlands to gain valuable insights into gang culture, youth violence, and the power of connection and healing

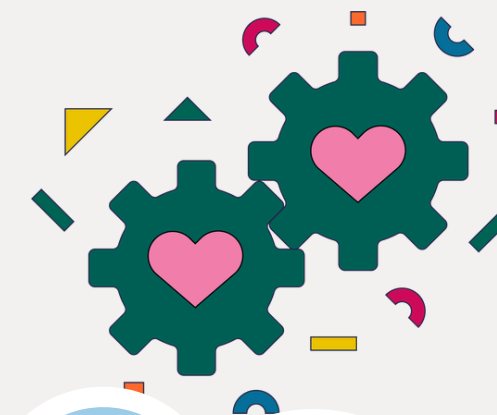
The Promise



Highland Promise Plan 2025-2028

Highland 's first Promise Plan was developed and is built on the voices and experiences of care experienced children and young people through a broad range of engagement and participation activities across Highland and developed as a collaborative Promise Board Plan

[Find the Highland Promise Plan here](#)



Children's Rights and Participation Service

Children's Rights and Participation service recruited 3 Child Rights and Participation Officers.

Their role is to support the council's commitment to 'Keeping The Promise' and actively listening to children and young people about decisions that affect their lives

Highland now have

28

Promise Ambassadors

10

Has Answers APP



HasAnswers developed by the Calman Trust, is designed to equip young people to manage the challenges they may encounter as they move towards independent living. **214** Individuals have registered. Advice most frequently accessed is

- Help to find or keep a job (50)
- Money related information/advice (28)
- Ways to save money (19)
- Cooking for yourself (19)
- Things that cause worry (mental health) (14)
- Recipes (14)

Direct help from the HasAnswers team is available for further support.



Family Group Decision Making

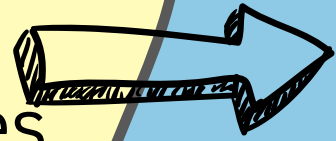
Referrals to Family Group Decision Making for 135 children from 92 families.

67% of referrals relate to children and young people who are on the edge of care, 21% relate to children and young people who are Looked After Away from Home 12% are for young people transitioning from care. This included supporting families to create, review a family plan. Families that did not want to create a family plan, worked with coordinators to make commitments to what they would provide for the child or caregivers.

- Trauma Summit held with senior leaders across partnerships in Sept 2024, supported by MSPs, Scottish Government and Improvement Service
- Development session on Trauma Informed Systems held , in line with Road Map and Self Assessment tool (Jan 2025) Actions identified from the meeting are being take forward.

Rights and Participation

Children's Rights and Participation website was developed and launched. This includes The Library of Voices is live and there are already examples of consultations uploaded.



Users
478

Views
2000

Clicks
6300

Traineesy training for understanding of UNCRC and Impact assessments went live **97 staff have accessed and completed these**

Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments have now been undertaken for **149** strategic developments and actions across Highland Council.

Children and Young People Participation Strategy

Development was led by Inspiring Young Voices and was designed ensuring the meaningful and equitable participation of children and young people at the heart of the process. With input gathered from almost 800 children and young people from across Highland. Implementation is now underway with focus on training, support and Voice



Highland Community Planning Partnership | Com-pàirteachas Dealbhadh Coimhearsnachd na Gàidhealtachd

SPACE VOICE AUDIENCE INFLUENCE

Highland Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2024 - 2029

"Together we can all make change"

Health and wellbeing (Mental Health)



Community Based Supports

An interactive session was led by colleagues from Public Health to explore how we align to the Framework's four outcomes around community-based supports and services Scottish Government CYP Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework, : which will enhance the work of the delivery group

Mental Health and Wellbeing delivery group held a development day held to map Highland Services across the continuum of need using the THRIVE Framework

A collective focus on Pathways has been agreed and in development for young people to gain a better understanding across the system and so any gaps can be identified.

Outcome 1: Wellbeing

Children, young people and their families have improved mental health and wellbeing.

Outcome 2: Early guidance and support

Children, young people and their families can access guidance and support at an early stage, when and where they need it.

Outcome 3: Clearer pathways

Children, young people and their families receive the help they need, and pathways to supports and services are clearly communicated.

Outcome 4: Whole-system approach

Supports and services are part of a whole system where key partners work together to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families, all of whom are integral to the co-design of supports and services.

CYP Community Mental Health and Wellbeing fund been introduced to the Integrated Children Services Board and encouragement has been made for better use of partnership funding by working together. Aligned to the WFWP Funding Strategy and enabling a joined-up approach for improvements to community-based supports and services across Highland

Drugs and Alcohol



Planet Youth- 5 Local Action Groups have agreed 3 clear goals each, focused on reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors for substance use initiation, and improving overall mental and physical health outcomes.

Increased provision of activities for young people via Highlife Highland, with estimated 645 young people involved in specific Planet Youth activities since July 24

Parents and Carers Padlet
This resource has had excellent feedback and provides data and support around the topics reviewed by the Planet Youth survey:
[Find the padlet here](#)

Webinar delivered with Safe, Strong and Free with a focus on bullying, coincided with anti-bullying week, and was available online

Vaping booklet has been produced by NHS Health Improvement Team with over +1000 views, with positive feedback.



Midwifery Packs

To help reduce stigma and respect everyone's right to dignity, packs for mums are now available in the Maternity department in Raigmore Hospital. These have been made in reusable bags, with clothing items available in a range of sizes. Each bag includes a dressing gown, pyjamas, slippers, socks, pants, a water bottle, and wash bag. Wash bags include a wide range of toiletries for Mum. With thanks to small grant funding from Police Scotland.

Mocktails for Mums

As part of ongoing efforts to raise awareness about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), specialist midwives served alcohol-free "mocktails for mums" at several events, all thanks to funding from HADP. Our mocktails provided an opportunity to actively engage in conversations about the impact of alcohol during pregnancy with both staff and members of the public. We were then able to offer evidence-based information and advice for safe and healthy pregnancies with our printed recipe cards. We were delighted to receive positive feedback about the taste of the mocktails from those who engaged with us.

Mocktails for Mums

Berridale Bellini (Serves 6)

- 750ml bottle of no-alcohol prosecco
- A handful of frozen berries pureed in a blender
- Sugar syrup made of 1 tsp of sugar and 1 tsp of water
- Serve with a slice of lime

Munlochy Mule (Serves 4)

- 500ml of ginger ale
- Juice of 1 grapefruit
- Juice of 1 lime
- 200ml of sparkling water
- Lime slices and a handful of fresh basil leaves to decorate

13

Feedback

What Practitioners, Children and Young people and families tell us

Vaping information pack was useful to understand why young people vape and how to help them avoid starting

- Active Schools

Ensure my voice is heard
Young person,
Feedback about
Childs Plans

Planet Youth provided information that was specific to our school, which highlighted areas to work on
Parent - School Parent Council

It was busy and highlighted just how much we have going on for young people in Highland. It was a great chance to network -
Organisation Rep Vision 26.

'I think the Padlet is an absolutely brilliant resource. My son is 11 and there is so much on there to talk about together and to help create healthy habits, as well as so many things to turn to when difficulties arise'
Parent- Planet Youth

We are the next generation so what happens will affect us in the future -
Young person - C&YP Strategy

I very much love it when Family Links Worker comes to see me on Fridays because it makes me feel like more people care about me and it is very fun and I wish I could go with her every day
p6 child Family Links Project

"I am thankful for my time with the Family Links Worker. It was about my daughter's anxieties about going to school, but it is as much for me as for my daughter. I was needing reassurance, and our time together put me at ease. Parent - Family Links Test of Concept Project.

Excellent to have lots of partner agencies together to focus on GIRFEC in practice.
Practitioner - GIRFEC Refresh Session

Development of Integrated Children's Service Plan
2026-2029 -Predicated on Children's Voice

GIRFEC FOCUS - Continued Implementation of Improvement
plan, delivery of training and completion of Childs plan
review

Whole Family Wellbeing Programme - Developing Holistic
Whole Family Support operating model for Highland

Children's Rights and Participation - Child Friendly Complaints Process in
Highland produced by children and young people and creation of a
guidance document to support practitioners understand what 'capacity'
means in relation to Child Friendly Complaints, but also more widely.

Highland Child Protection Committee are undertaking reviews
and work on neglect and CSA, based on data evidence.
Including development of a neglect toolkit of support.

The Promise Board and delivery groups will continue
implementation of Highland Promise Plan 2025-2028



Work Progressing into 2025/26

