



Dumfries and Galloway Children's Rights Report 2017- 2020





Foreword

This is the first joint report on children's rights prepared by Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway. It provides information about the progress made by both organisations, working together, in securing and promoting children's rights between 2017 and 2020, and it identifies areas for improvement.

In Dumfries and Galloway, we are committed to providing the best start in life for all our children; to listen to them and to support them to achieve their full potential. We want to ensure that they not only achieve but also that they grow, develop and contribute to their local communities. We recognise that children's rights are central to the achievement of this ambition, and that we must continue to work together with our children and young people to ensure that every child and young person in Dumfries and Galloway can enjoy all their rights.

In producing this report, we sought to evaluate from a partnership perspective how well we were securing the requirements of the UNCRC by 2020. We then shared our draft report and our proposed key messages with young people and asked them for their own views on these. In their feedback, young people questioned some of our content, leading us to revise the report and the recommendations. Going forward we plan to take a different approach to reporting on children's rights and to co-produce the 2020-23 report with children and young people. The report ends by identifying recommendations for improvement, and we are committed to working with our children and young people to make these a reality.

Gavin Stevenson

Chief Executive Dumfries and Galloway Council



Jeff Ace

Chief Executive NHS Dumfries and Galloway



Hannah Birse

Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council, MSYP (Galloway and West Dumfries)



Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction	5
Duty to report on UNCRC	5
About the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	5
Our Vision and our Ambition	5
Dumfries and Galloway: Our Young People and Our Region.....	6
Cluster 1 - General measures of implementation	8
Our Community Planning Vision and Principles.....	8
Our Council Priorities	8
Respecting Equality and Diversity.....	9
Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)	9
Electoral Registration and Voting.....	10
Relationship-based approach to working with children and families	10
Youth Participation and Engagement.....	10
Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council.....	11
Involving children and young people in service-planning and delivery.....	11
Consultation with children and young people.....	12
Providing high-quality services to national standards	14
Cluster 2 - General principles of UNCRC	15
Involving Children and Young People	16
Addressing Child Poverty.....	18
Cluster 3 - Civil rights and freedoms	19
Supporting children and young people to express their opinions	19
Right to privacy	19
Provision of activities for children and young people	20
Rights around individual identity	20
Preventing degrading treatment or punishment	20
Cluster 4 - Violence against children.....	21
Supporting recovery from trauma.....	21
Involving children and young people in decision-making in child protection and other processes	21
Managing behaviour and discipline in a supportive way	22
Cluster 5 - Family environment and alternative	23
Supporting parents / carers to care for their children	23

Ensuring that all children can access their rights	24
Taking account of children and young people’s views in decision-making.....	25
Supporting young people into independent living.....	26
Cluster 6 - Basic health and welfare.....	27
Early learning and Childcare services.....	27
Promoting rights of disabled children to access services, and have choice and control.	28
Services for disabled children and those with long-term health conditions	28
Access to high-quality and preventative health-care.....	29
Meeting children and young people’s mental health needs	31
Support to children and families to meet essential needs	32
Cluster 7 - Education, leisure & culture	33
Ensuring that all children can access education that develops their fullest potential	33
Access to play and leisure opportunities; and addressing barriers to inclusive play and leisure.	35
Cluster 8 - Special Protection measures	37
Child Protection – Child Sexual Exploitation Campaign (CSE).	37
Child Protection Processes.....	38
Support for children and young people seeking asylum.....	38
Youth Justice	39
Protecting children from illegal use of drugs	40
LGBT Young People and Time for Inclusive Education	40
Evaluation of progress 2017-2020	41
Recommendations / Proposed improvement actions	42

Introduction

Duty to report on UNCRC

Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, local authorities, health boards and other public authorities have a duty to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect of the requirements of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC).

This is Dumfries and Galloway's first report on Children's Rights. The report sets out the progress that Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway have made between 2017 and 2020; and identifies areas for improvement activity.

About the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the world's most widely ratified treaty. The convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

In 2019, the Scottish Government announced that the UNCRC would be embedded into Scots Law. A new law has been proposed: the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. This new law will mean that public authorities have to ensure that everything they do complies with children's rights.

Children's rights can be gathered together into 'clusters' by similar themes, and this report shows the progress that Dumfries and Galloway Council and Health Board have made between 2017 and 2020 in delivering each cluster.

Our Vision and our Ambition

Our Children's Services Partnership's vision for children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that:

All children are safe and achieve their full potential. We will listen to children, young people and their families and work together to make sure they get the right help at the right time.

Dumfries and Galloway: Our Young People and Our Region

Dumfries and Galloway is:

- The third largest region in Scotland, characterised by small settlements of 4,000 people or less spread across a large area
- One of the most rural areas of mainland Scotland, after Argyll and Bute and the Highlands, with 21% of the population living in remote rural locations
- Our population aged 0-17 in mid-2018 was estimated at 26,328. Of these:
 - 6,488 were aged 0-4
 - 9,154 were aged 5-10
 - 7,782 were aged 11-15
 - 2,904 were aged 16-17
- Seven secondary schools have fewer than 500 pupils; 45% of primary schools have fewer than 50.
- In the year August 2018 to July 2019 there were 7,323 referrals in total into Children and Families Social work. This is an increase of 9% on the same period 2017-2018 when there were 6,744 referrals
- A 2019 report by the End Child Poverty organisation estimated that in 2017/18, 27% of children in Dumfries and Galloway were living in poverty after housing costs. This gives Dumfries and Galloway the fourth highest rate in Scotland, after Glasgow City, Dundee City and Clackmannanshire.
- In March 2019, there were 8,211 learners facing a barrier to their learning under our staged intervention approach, 1440 with an Individual Education Plan and 113 with a Coordinated Support Plan. There has been a continuing growth in the number of children and young people with a Child's Plan (951 in March 2019, increasing to 1,024 by January 2020), through the delivery of our GIRFEC named person approach.
- In January 2020, the Education management information system recorded 395 pupils as being on the Autistic Spectrum; 480 pupils self-reported as disabled; and 417 pupils assessed (diagnosed) as disabled.
- In January 2020 we had fewer than 10 children on the Child Protection Register. This is a significant reduction from January 2019.
- In 2017-18, there were 16.7 looked-after children and young people for every 1000 children and young people aged under 18 in Dumfries and Galloway. This rate was higher than the rate of 14.3 for Scotland.
- In 2018-19, 588 children were referred to the Reporter. Of these, 484 were on care and protection grounds and 148 on offence grounds (some are referred on both care and protection and offence grounds).
- In 2018-19, 177 children aged under 16 were referred to Women's Aid services in Dumfries and Galloway.
- Current numbers of Children and Young People affected by substance misuse in Dumfries and Galloway are unknown, however in 2016, estimates suggested there were between 2000 and 3000. (This estimate was based on

applying national rates of substance misuse to the Dumfries and Galloway population; and information from adult substance misuse services about the estimated number of their service users who had dependent children). Parental substance misuse has consistently been one of the top four areas of risk for children and young people placed on the Child Protection Register.

Cluster 1 - General measures of implementation

This cluster focuses on the protection of children and young people's rights. This includes:

- our commitment to children's rights, and how we reflect and communicate this through our vision, values, priorities, and our documents
- how we ensure that our staff understand about rights so that they can support children and young people to exercise them
- how we proactively include children's rights when planning services, and take our commitment to children's rights into account in resource allocation
- how we ensure that the services we provide for children and young people conform to established national standards, and are of high quality.

Our Community Planning Vision and Principles

Our overarching Community Planning Vision is 'working together to create an ambitious, prosperous and confident Dumfries and Galloway where people achieve their potential'.

A number of Principles have been identified as important in guiding partners to achieve the Vision:

Best Value - providing the right services in the right place, at the right time and at the right price.

Engagement - listening to, speaking and consulting with individuals and communities, following National Standards and Compact guidance where involving the public and ensuring participation are key elements.

Diversity - treating people equally and respecting others irrespective of social or cultural differences.

Sustainability - ensuring long-term economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

Working Together - finding ways of planning and delivering services in a better way that makes a real difference to people's lives

Our Council Priorities

Dumfries and Galloway Council has [five priorities and associated commitments](#).

This report is directly linked to our second priority, which is to provide the best start in life for all our children, with the following commitments:

- Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region's most vulnerable children safe
- Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st century which are at the heart of our communities
- Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities
- Support children to be healthy and active

Children's rights are also central to Council Priorities 3 and 4 – to protect our most vulnerable people, and to be an inclusive council respectively.

Respecting Equality and Diversity

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all people within our community. We have published a range of policies and reports which show how we are meeting our legal duties.

Everyone should have the same chances to do what they can but some people may need extra help. The Equality Act 2010 intends to make Britain a fairer and equal place for everyone. We have a duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- promote equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our [equality outcomes](#) and associated actions are based on views and experiences that local people have shared with us.

Dumfries and Galloway Council's mission is that we work in partnership to empower people to make positive contributions to their communities, by challenging discrimination, by promoting greater integration and by maximising support for everyone across Dumfries and Galloway. There is Youth Councillor representation on our Diversity Working Group, which aims to improve co-ordination and integration between public sector organisations and communities of interest for the nine Protected Characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation; identify opportunities for joint working that improve the efficiency of services in Dumfries and Galloway; and respond effectively to the needs of communities and individuals within these strands.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway are committed to provide an environment in which diversity is valued and encouraged, and to ensure patients, carers, families and staff are treated with dignity and respect. No-one should be excluded or experience difficulty in accessing and effectively using our services due to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

Over the course of this reporting period, our local approach to GIRFEC implementation has been fully embedded in Dumfries and Galloway. Early planning takes place for children and young people putting them at the centre, making available a named person as their point of contact. There is an agreed suite of

GIRFEC products and paperwork which is used across the partnership, and which ensures that there is a shared approach and language regardless of agency involved. Dumfries and Galloway have also adopted a solution-focused approach to planning for children and young people and this supports and mirrors the Signs of Safety approach in child protection.

Electoral Registration and Voting

The terms of the Reduction in Voting Age Act 2015, allow the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) to add 16 and 17-year-olds to the Electoral Register, and to ensure that children and young people are able to exercise their right to vote when they reach age 16, the ERO is able to process applications from those who are 14 or 15.

All of these applications are processed sensitively, and the legislative provisions ensure that the personal information of anyone under 15 is handled appropriately. To do this the ERO works with partner agencies in the region and across the country to promote awareness and encourage registration.

Relationship-based approach to working with children and families

The relationship-based approach used by Social Work Services is now embedded in front-line practice; and a training programme has been delivered to multi-agency partners including Education, Police, Health and third sector organisations in the Signs of Safety practice model and methodology.

This approach ensures that all children with Social Work involvement, have a version of a plan they understand. The tools used by Social Work Services are designed to understand the views of the children that they work with. Tools also support these children and young people to participate in developing their own planning; and to understand how Social Work Services will help and support themselves and their families.

Youth Participation and Engagement

In Dumfries and Galloway, we are committed to ensuring all our young people achieve their potential. To do this they must feel confident and have the skills and support to make their voice heard and have their views taken seriously. Our Council and our partners are committed to work with all young people and community groups in order to deliver the best possible outcomes to make a real difference. Our [Youth Engagement and Participation Strategy](#) outlined the structures in place that aim to support young people to become active citizens, effective contributors and valued partners in decision making processes.

The strategy set out our commitment as follows:

- We will make sure young people have the skills, ability and confidence to speak out.

- We will talk with, listen to and value our young people.
- We will make sure that young people have opportunities and given the choices to actively and meaningfully take part in decisions that affect their lives.
- We will respond to the views of young people by reviewing and changing Council Services as required.

Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council

The Regional Youth Council was elected on 1 April 2019 and includes capacity for a total of 35 representatives:

- 4 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (2 for each parliamentary constituency)
- 24 Ward Youth Councillors (2 for each ward area)
- 7 Nominated Youth Councillors (1 for each minority group)

Elections for the Youth Council and Scottish Youth Parliament run every 2 years with the next election due to take place in November 2021. Youth Councillors and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament are responsible for advocating on behalf of young people to local (Elected Members) and national (MPs and MSPs) decision makers to ensure that young people's voice are heard and acted upon.

The Youth Council is supported by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Team. The Nominated Youth Councillors work alongside existing groups providing targeted support for young people with minority identities to ensure they are able to effectively represent young people with minority identities, for example our Care Experienced Youth Councillor links in with the Champions Board Project. This is the same for our Youth Councillors who represent Young Parents, Young People with ASN and Disabilities, Ethnic Minority Youth, Gypsy Traveller Youth, Young Carers and LGBT Youth.

Involving children and young people in service-planning and delivery

In Social Work Services, young people are included on interview panels for the interviewing of social workers, including senior posts and studentships.

Young representatives have the opportunity to become a member on the Commissioned Services Group Board meeting.

In NHS Dumfries and Galloway, young People have been involved in the recruitment of staff, for example in the Family Nurse Partnership, CAMHS and the Looked-After Children's Specialist Health Team.

Pupils are involved in appointment process for Headteacher positions as agreed by the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT). This forms part of the

morning session and are in equal proportion to staff and parents (four of each). This is from primary-aged children to secondary. They are supported by an Education Officer and make their preferences based on the interviewees. This is fed back to the Selection Panel in the afternoon.

A Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Participation Officer was employed using Scottish Government Innovation Funding from April 2017. Links were developed with parenting and youth forums and children and young people using CAMHS were involved in the redesign of the service.

The Youth Work Service works alongside young people to design services and local provisions for young people and has a Young Leader programme for any young person who wants to get involved in the delivery of groups.

Consultation with children and young people

Realigning Children's Services Programme

In 2019 Dumfries and Galloway participated in the Realigning Children's Services programme. In early 2019, a total of 8,287 school pupils in years P5 to P7 (3,749) and S1 to S4 (4,538), accounting for 79% of all eligible primary pupils and 74% of all eligible secondary pupils in Dumfries and Galloway, agreed to take part in an online health and wellbeing survey. Findings from the survey informed the development and prioritisation of the 2020 Children's Services Plan.

10,000 Voices

As part of Scottish Governments themed Year of Young People in 2018, a consultation entitled 10,000 Voices was delivered throughout 2018 that sought to gather the views of young people aged 10-25 living in Dumfries and Galloway.

The consultation captured the views of 46.9 percent of all young people living, working and studying in Dumfries and Galloway, making it the largest collection of young people's views in Scotland for a single local authority area. Young people provided answers to two types of questions: the first focusing on the physical environment (place) of their communities (the buildings, streets, public spaces and natural spaces that make up a place) and the second focusing on the social environment (the relationships, social contact and support networks that make up a community). The findings of 10,000 Voices launched in April 2019 and were presented to Community Planning Partnership as well Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Board. Each Community Planning Partner made the commitment to use the findings to influence future service planning so that service planning reflected the findings of 10,000 Voices. Progress reports were submitted annually to Community Planning Partnership for the following three years and a follow up to 10,000 Voices will be carried out in 2024 to allow us to compare the findings. One of the legacy projects from Year of Young People is 10,000 Voices in Action in which

young people have managed and led on participatory budgeting which has seen £60,000 invested across all 12 Ward areas for events or activities that address the top issues identified in the 10,000 Voices Findings Report.

Cost of the School Day

In 2015-16, the Cost of the School Day Report was developed, through a consultation process that included the experiences of children, young people, families and school staff across the region. The consultation took place before this reporting period; however the report produced a series of recommendations on how the cost of the school day could be minimised or reduced, specifically focusing on families in low income households. This has resulted in changes throughout the term of this report for students and families.

Social Work Services

Social Work services are developing a personalised relationship-based approach with all the families that the service supports – the danger statements and safety goals are being used to be clear with families about worries and concerns and build on strengths and family/support networks. This approach is embedded in all front-line activity. The children and families are fully involved in developing their own safety plans including the timeline to enable the service to plan time for social work support involvement with the family.

The Family Support Team consult with families on service planning and the development of future service delivery. Evaluation of involvement with all families is undertaken with all families that the team works with. Elected members approved a three-year investment for this work.

Views of our young people are taken into account when redesigning our approach to service delivery in areas such as suitable accommodation/venues for contact.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway

In NHS Dumfries and Galloway, the views of children and young people are gathered through:

- Engagement activities led by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Participation Officer.
- Our GIRFEC documentation and processes
- Implementation of Care Assurance across Health services, and involvement in Care Assurance audits.
- Using strength-based approaches, for example Signs of Safety
- Service level agreements which are in place with commissioned services, and require services to gather the views of young people.
- The use of goal-based outcomes which are identified in partnership with young people and take account of their views.

- The involvement of key stakeholders in the Independent Review of the Short Break Service, followed by an Options Appraisal.

In 2018 as part of a service evaluation for the Young Carers service (specifically those impacted by substance use), an opportunity was given to the children and young people accessing the service to contribute to the service evaluation. This was done via a questionnaire and with the support of the young carers staff.

ISSU18, Aberlour and The Young Carers Service were given training and support via a joint initiative between the Scottish Drugs Forum and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership to help develop involvement skills. This was to support the service engage with the children and young people they work with. The service also completed an annual self-assessment on service-user involvement.

Development of a Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway

In 2019, the Council started the process of developing a Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway and one of the themes under discussion is Young People. Discussion groups on the draft strategy themes included the region's Youth Council and Year of Young People Legacy Group.

Providing high-quality services to national standards

Social Work Services

Social Work Services commissions a range of services to support children and families. These include:

- Barnado's Advocacy Service for our looked-after children and those with other support needs
- Carers Centre support to carers and young carers – 160 young carers with direct support
- Action for Children supporting over 100 families
- Quarriers supporting over 100 families
- Holm Park View – supporting 10 young people and in addition to this supporting 10 young people via Outreach support to maintain and sustain tenancies
- Dumfries and Galloway Befriending
- Homestart Wigtownshire
- Women's Aid
- Dumfries Toy Library
- Aberlour
- Relationship Scotland

Advocacy Services have to abide by the national framework agreement with programmed risk assessments carried out to provide evidence of the level of service provided, and evidence that our standards are being met.

External contractors are assessed through the normal national frameworks (Scotland Excel) to which we contribute.

Social Work services have accelerated the staff model restructure to ensure that we are able to use our resources flexibly and ensure the right resources are targeted at the right children and families at the right time. There is the opportunity to further develop a fully agile and flexible workforce with investment in our Grow Your Own Programmes.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway is one of the few NHS Boards with a multi-disciplinary Looked-After Children's Team. NHS Dumfries and Galloway has successfully implemented the Health Visiting Universal Pathway; developed the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) model within NHS Dumfries & Galloway; and implemented locally the revised School Nursing Model for Scotland.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway has implemented Safe Staffing Legislation and the use of workload tools to inform safe staffing levels. Quality of care is ensured through the implementation of Care Assurance, and NHS Dumfries and Galloway staff attend national groups developing Care Assurance standards.

A Pre-birth Multi-Agency Service has been developed to promote a standardised, consistent approach to enable relevant agencies to act as early as possible to initiate a need-led approach of identification assessment and management concerns for vulnerable women and their babies.

Employability and Skills Service

The Employability and Skills Service has ensured the provision of high-quality levels of staffing to support young people aged 16-18 by making sure our staff are well – and appropriately – trained in a range of courses and qualifications. With regard to the Workplace Skills Award that the service delivers, all staff are expected to attend standardisation meetings to ensure the work being completed is consistent across the service.

Cluster 2 - General principles of UNCRC

This cluster focuses on the four general principles of the UNCRC which are:

- non-discrimination (Article 2) - children should not be discriminated against
- best interests of the child (Article 3) - every decision and action must be in a child's best interests
- survival and development (Article 6) - every child has the right to life and to develop to their full potential

- respect for the views of the child (Article 12)

Involving Children and Young People

The Champions Board

The Champions Board project includes a number of targeted Youth Work provisions for young people aged 12 - 25 who are care experienced, either 'looked after' in Dumfries and Galloway or 'looked after' by Dumfries and Galloway Council, or a Care Leaver.

There are three main ways for young people to get involved:

- **Local Youth Work Groups** - these are groups that run after school or in the evening for young people who are care experienced. Each group does different activities depending on the interests of the young people who attend, for example: cooking, sports, games and crafts groups.
- **Listen2Us** - this group is for young people who want to change the care system, they meet every second month and are focused on making positive changes to the way that young people are supported in the region.
- **Champions Board Meetings** - these meetings involve young people from the Listen2Us group and senior managers from services like Social Work, Health, Education, Youth Services and Police Scotland. These meetings happen a few times per year and are an opportunity for young people to tell the people making the decisions what is working and what is not.

The Listen2Us group, which sits within the wider Champions Board Project, is a youth advocacy group for young people who have experiences of care aged 12-25. Their role is to promote the experiences of young people and engage with Corporate Parents to improve services provided to care experienced children and young people throughout Dumfries and Galloway. In November 2018, they launched the findings of the Listen2Us consultation that outlined key areas of improvement for services. The Listen2Us group meet twice yearly with Senior Officers from the NHS, Social Work, Education, Young People's Services, Police Scotland, and the Third Sector at Champions Board meetings. The outcome of the engagement with the Listen2Us Group has informed our Corporate Parenting Plan.

Social Work Services

Involvement of children and young people can be evidenced further by Social Work's relationship-based approach / use of networks so that children remain with families as much as possible.

The views of looked-after children are heard throughout our planning with all the children we are supporting, and are discussed at looked after reviews, and all other planning meetings including Permanence Panel. Independent advocacy service is

offered to children and young people to ensure the child or young person is heard, listened to and respected.

Other seldom-heard children and young people

The views of seldom-heard children and young people have been gathered through involvement and consultation with children; young people; families; and other key stakeholders through the Short Break Services Review. For children with communication difficulties, Social Work Services would be creative in the way we engage and involve with them using a range of tools and technologies.

Through multi-agency working in our GIRFEC approach, as a partnership we ensure that the best interests of the child are a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. We seek to involve children and young people in their Child Plans. 'What Matters to Me' is used within documentation in health services.

The Employability and Skills Service uses service evaluation surveys, action planning and focus groups to involve young people in service planning and delivery. The client evaluation survey is completed at the end of service for every client so that the service can seek as much feedback as possible to help redesign and develop the service. Focus groups take place with different individuals to get as much information as possible to support young people in general, but also to gather feedback that allows the service to target support to more specific groups. Partnership meetings take place with other partner services to get valuable feedback from fellow professionals as to what the service is doing well, needs to improve or could implement.

The Employability and Skills Service developed a role for a specific key worker to focus solely on Looked After Young People in the region with the purpose of improving their experience and engagement with the service. The aims of this role were to help develop more looked-after-young-people-centred programmes of work; more streamlined services for them to access; and more effective partnership-working between services that these young people access regularly (Employability and Skills Service, Social Work, Youth Justice, and others). The service also supports young people who may be Young Carers, LGBTI, young parents, or have disabilities.

Gypsy Travellers

A multi-agency group considers supports to the Gypsy/Traveller community and their families. Relationship-based practice allows Social Work Services to work and support all children and families and understand their culture and the best ways we can support their individual needs of the children and families.

Young Carers

In Dumfries and Galloway, we are working to support Young Carers through Young Carers Statements. These statements are completed by the young person with help from a support worker from the Young Carers' Project. The Statements enable Young Carers to express their feelings and needs and find out what impact their caring responsibilities have on their life. The aim of the Statements is to support Young Carers in their caring role and ensure that their needs are taken into account by services.

- Between 2017 and March 2020, a total of 71 Young Carers Statements were completed.
- Between 2017 and March 2020, a total of 21 Young Carers Reviews were completed.

Young Carers have given positive feedback around their experience of completing a Young Carers Statement, for example:

- "It shows how far I have come with support"
- "Reflection and time to talk about my situation"
- "helped with my feelings and what things I need to know"
- "Helped me to tolerate other people and their behaviour"
- "Focuses on mine and mum's needs and promotes ideas"

The Youth Council also have dedicated Nominated Youth Councillors who have a regional role of representing the voices of young people who are seldom heard. There are 7 Nominated Youth Councillors that cover: Young Parents; Young People with Additional Support Needs; Gypsy Traveller Young People; Young People from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds; LGBT Youth; Young Carers; and Care Experienced Young People.

Addressing Child Poverty

Since June 2015, our Dumfries and Galloway Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and accompanying Action Plan have delivered a portfolio of over 60 interlinked projects and initiatives which have been developed in consultation with our Tackling Poverty Reference Group Members (volunteers with a lived experience of poverty).

The Intensive Family Support Service has supported families in complex poverty to break the cycle of poverty. The service was developed and delivered by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Social Work Team with funding of £1.2 Million through Anti-Poverty Policy Development Funding. Between September 2017 and March 2020, 134 families have been provided with intensive family support provision.

Our Council's Welfare and Housing Options Support Team was put in place to help individuals and families in complex poverty to avoid eviction and to act as a conduit between Landlords (both Registered Social Landlords and private sector), the Department of Work and Pensions and also other Council Services including the Council Tax Team who may be owed large sums of arrears. This team has continually prevented evictions for families since its inception in September 2017 and has prevented children going through the disruption, emotional upheaval and damage of their family being evicted from their home.

Cluster 3 - Civil rights and freedoms

This cluster focuses on children's civil rights and freedoms including: children's right to move freely in public space and to meet with others; children's right to think and believe what they like, to access information and speak their mind as long it is not harmful to others; children's right to keep personal matters and communications private; and their right to be protected from inhumane or degrading treatment.

Supporting children and young people to express their opinions

Children have the right to an advocate if they have a mental health disorder or are looked after. Some young people with additional support needs and disabilities, and young carers in some circumstances can also access independent advocacy. Children and young people are supported to express their opinions through planning processes.

Information on health services for children and young people is provided on social media and a self-referral process is available to access some services. 'What Matters to You', and Goal-Based Outcomes are used by health services.

The Employability and Skills Service works in partnership with a large range of different service providers. The service supports clients with expressing their opinions in an appropriate way to the relevant people. Young people are signposted to appropriate services to access the information and provisions available to them.

Right to privacy

In NHS services, consent to share information is documented and this is revisited on a regular basis. Staff have conversations with children and young people to inform them about confidentiality and agree how information will be shared.

Legal Advice to Social Work and Education departments in relation to processing of personal data ensures that Children's Personal Data is only processed in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

The Employability and Skills Service ensures that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is upheld with regard to information provided to the service. Young people are informed of what the service can and cannot share, and what the service has to share with appropriate services should there be any concerns.

Provision of activities for children and young people

The Council's Youth Work Service delivers a wide range of voluntary universal and targeted youth groups, programmes, events and low-level psychological support (Youth Information in Schools) for young people aged 12-25 across Dumfries and Galloway. This includes the delivery of seasonal programmes and accredited learning awards at no cost for young people and their families. The service provides support to a number of youth-led management committees; and runs Young Leader programmes for those who want to volunteer in their local community. The service also delivers an annual youth gathering in partnership with the Youth Council, and the annual Youth Beatz Festival which includes The Toon Productions in partnership with young people. Programmes are co-produced with young people with regular evaluation built-in to ensure the service continues to meet the needs of those who access it.

Health and Safety Risk Assessments are carried out in schools to ensure safe play spaces, and that playgrounds are provided with appropriate supervision.

Young people using the Employability and Skills Service are given assurance that meetings with service staff are considered safe spaces where young people can be sign-posted to other services in response to their needs. Where appropriate, the service promotes group work and peer support between young people and encourages the young people accessing support to seek out organised and safe activities and opportunities to associate with other young people.

Rights around individual identity

Legal Services advise and check that rehabilitation options have been carefully ruled out before permanence plans can progress to Permanence Panel.

Preventing degrading treatment or punishment

Young people supported by the Employability and Skills Team are supported into positive next steps including work placements if appropriate. The service makes sure that any programmes and workplaces are safe. In particular, the service discourages zero-hour contract employment. The service encourages Fair Work to employers, making sure that the client is paid the correct wages for their age group and is not being exploited (for example ensuring that working patterns are appropriate and that the young person is provided with appropriate breaks and other employment rights). The service helps the young people to build their knowledge of their own rights as an employee, while also educating employers.

Cluster 4 - Violence against children

This cluster focuses on situations where children experience violence in all its forms including physical and mental violence, abuse and neglect, maltreatment and exploitation including sexual abuse; it highlights the right of children to services which support their physical and psychological recovery; and emphasises that children should not be subjected to torture or to other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including physical or corporal punishment.

Supporting recovery from trauma

The Specialist Health and Wellbeing Team for looked after children works with many groups involved in the care system including: Family Placement Teams, Fostering and Adoption and Local Authority Residential Homes. The aim is to work with partners and develop a system that is trauma-informed and able to recognise and respond to the effects of adverse childhood experiences. In order that the system is trauma-informed, the service has continued to build on training that has been delivered over the last 3 years. Training provided by the service is all aligned with the national trauma training framework by NHS Education Scotland (NES, 2017).

Involving children and young people in decision-making in child protection and other processes

Children are involved in decision-making in child protection processes through the implementation of Child Protection and Child's Planning processes. Information is provided to children and their families so that they will know what is happening throughout the process.

Age-appropriate tools and activities are used with children to help them give their views in child-protection processes. Children are involved as much as possible throughout the process – this includes involvement in mapping the existing strengths and worries and helping to develop the Safety Plan, as long as this does not mean they are worried about adult issues or taking on responsibilities themselves. Words and pictures are used to help children understand any decisions made or changes to their circumstances.

Children have a simplified version of their plan that does not contain formal jargon, so they know what is happening and they can say what they think should be in the plan. Children are involved in helping to identify their Support Network, including thinking about safe adults who they can talk to when they are worried about anything. Some children have a safety object they can use to help them tell their teacher or other trusted adult when they are worried. All children from age 5 and above involved in the Child Protection process are offered an independent Advocate through Barnardo's Hear4U.

Chairs of Child Protection Case Conferences speak to parents and older children, about the conference before the meeting takes place.

A small number of children needed to be accommodated in secure care during the reporting period. In all cases the child had representation from an advocate and/or a solicitor as well as their social worker to ensure they were involved in decisions made about them.

Managing behaviour and discipline in a supportive way

The introduction of the Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act 2019 (EPA) was implemented in Scotland on the 7th November 2020, this removed the defence of “reasonable chastisement”. This means that parents, and carers/guardians, can be given a warning from the police that lasts for 2 years, or they can be charged for more significant incidents. It is important that Social Work Services work with families to adopt different strategies to manage difficult and challenging behaviour and that families are supported to have good and consistent routines and boundaries in place for their children.

Our provision of Parenting Programmes supports parents to manage behaviour appropriately.

Health staff and multiagency partners receive training in behaviour management strategies. Training is provided on the attachment-focused treatment for childhood trauma and abuse: Playfulness - Acceptance - Curiosity - Empathy (P.A.C.E.). Training on this model is delivered to Health and Social Work professionals as well as foster carers and parents who are looking after or working with children who have been affected by trauma. In Social Work, work-programmes are being developed for Family Support Workers to use with families where children have experienced trauma. Life-story work is undertaken with children when they are settled and safe to help them understand their life experiences.

There has been a significant focus on Mental Health services for young people and supports are available right through all our services so that young people get the right help at the right time, this can be through Youth Work (Youth Information Projects), Social Work, GP practices and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Our Local authority [Education Handbook](#) acknowledges UNCRC and the Equality Act, and states that all schools should have an anti-bullying policy.

Some of the young people working with the Employability and Skills Team are involved with [Project SEARCH](#). This is an international transition to work

programme committed to transforming the lives of young people with learning disabilities and autism. Project SEARCH undertakes a lot of work with young people on the programme to manage and identify their own behaviour and discipline prior to going into employment placements. Effective partnership working ensure the involvement of other appropriate services, and regular review are completed with young people to identify progression/regression with aspects of their behaviour.

Cluster 5 - Family environment and alternative

This cluster focuses on: the primary role of parents and the support parents should have to bring up their children; the right of children to not be separated from parents unless this is in their best interests; the right of children to be well cared for where they live apart from their parents; the right of a child to maintain contact with both parents if that is in their best interests; the right of a child to have a say when decisions are made about where they should live, with placements subject to regular review; and the right of all children to be protected against all forms of violence and abuse.

Supporting parents / carers to care for their children

Intensive Family Support

Social Work Services provide a family support service that uses a relationship-based approach which offers an early support to families when they need it most, with the aim of maintaining children and young people at home.

Signs of Safety

Our relationship and strength-based approach involves working with families to achieve positive outcomes and recognise that families are experts in their own lives.

Support for parenting

In further recognition of the need to move away from crisis driven responses and deliver early intervention and prevention we acknowledged the critical role that parents and carers play in meeting the needs of children and young people and our responsibility to provide the right level of supports and services to enable them to do this.

Parenting approaches and family support arrangements have included the Solihull Approach as our underpinning philosophy with all staff working with children and families being trained on this approach by an in-house team of facilitators. Our in-house team of facilitators have delivered 4x 2-day training sessions to 48 staff from across all agencies. Parenting programmes have included Mellow Bumps and Incredible Years which were successfully delivered across Dumfries and Galloway in 2019-20. We have also tested the delivery of the Peep Learning Together

programme across Dumfries and Galloway, initially targeting our communities with the greatest evidence of need.

The delivery of the Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership services and the Health Visiting Universal Pathway are providing early intervention support to families. Therapeutic Parenting work supports parents to care for their children.

Bespoke training is provided for parents of children with complex needs.

The Employability and Skills Service has Parental Employability Support Funding from the Scottish Government which is designed to support eligible parents to improve their employment circumstances therefore having a positive impact on the lives of their children.

Ensuring that all children can access their rights

Article 5 of the UNCRC is about recognising that most young people will find that their parents, guardians or family are the people who are most qualified to give them good advice. It is also about understanding how important family is to a young person's wellbeing. We need to support families as much as we can to stay together, this includes providing appropriate family support, at a time they need it, and helping families have access to services within their community as well as specialist resources when they need them.

We use our supports to enable families to build their own networks of support and develop their own plans. Where it is not safe for a child to remain at home, all kinship care options are explored before a foster, or residential placement is considered. Often Foster carers become part of the support network when plans are being made to return a child home.

Children are advised of their rights throughout their involvement with Social Work, their consent is sought for referral to services, sharing of information and in decision-making. Clearly professionals do have to make decisions at times to keep children safe that may not be what the child wishes. Children are referred to advocacy services and provided with legal advice and representation at Children's Hearing depending on their wishes. It is extremely important that children are involved fully in all planning for them.

The Employability and Skills Team developed a position within the service to target extra support centred on looked-after young people. With this position the service has become more involved with Social Work Services and has supported young people to engage with their Social Workers better and access what is available to them.

Taking account of children and young people's views in decision-making Social Work Services

We have implemented a relationship-based approach to empower children and families. We continue to work alongside families to help them create and develop support networks which will enable them to no longer require the support of Social Work and face their own challenges in the longer term.

Age-appropriate tools and activities are used with children to help them give their views. Children are involved as much as possible in Child in Need and Looked after processes, including in mapping the existing strengths and worries and helping to develop the Safety Plan. Words and Pictures are used to help them understand any decisions made or changes to their circumstances. Children have a simplified version of their plan so they know what is happening and they can say what they think should be in their plan. Children are involved in helping to identify their Support Network, including thinking about safe adults who they can talk to when they are worried about anything. There is a Timeline to help children and their families understand how long the work will take and when Social Work hope to end their involvement. Children's views are recorded in their plans and assessments and there is evidence of their involvement in developing their plans.

Family time, or contact with parents and siblings is an important consideration for all children looked after away from home, with kinship carers or where their parents are separated. Children's views are listened to, and plans are made that involve them.

For children who have a parent that has been convicted of an offence consideration will be made about what family time or contact is best for them, particularly if offences have been committed against children.

All children have their plans reviewed a minimum of six monthly, as outlined in their Timeline. All foster carers and kinship carers are reviewed on an annual basis.

Our Signs of Safety tools are adapted to work with Children with Disabilities. "Signs of Ability" helps us to best help children and families where different supports are needed. Hear4U Advocacy service also works with children with disabilities. The people who know the child the best help them to give their views, this can be schools, personal assistants, or family members. Every child is an individual, their wishes and support they need will be tailored to their needs.

The Family Support Service carries out an evaluation of their involvement with all children and their families when the service ends. The plan is to extend this to all families that the service works with.

Employability and Skills

The Employability and Skills Service completes action plans for all young people and reviews these with the young people, ensuring that the work they are doing is targeted to them specifically and they have an opportunity at this point to feedback on pieces of work that have gone well or could be improved upon in future. In these action planning and review sessions, the young people are able to express their opinions to Key-Workers in a safe environment. The service ensures that decisions taken are in the best interest of young people by having transparent, honest conversations between the young person and all support agencies involved in their lives. Person-centred approaches, and joined-up working help to minimise confusion and ensure a streamlined service for the young person.

Supporting young people into independent living

Our aim in Dumfries and Galloway is to transform the way that we provide housing options for young people aged 16 to 24 who are care-leavers so that care-leavers would be better prepared to manage a tenancy and at less risk of becoming homeless. We are delivering this aim through the development of supported housing such as Holm Park View and the implementation by Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership of a Common Allocation Policy for social housing.

Holm Park View provides accommodation with support for vulnerable looked-after young people and care-leavers to meet their identified needs. It is transitional housing aimed at helping young people gain the skills they need to move on and live independently. Young people can live at Holm Park View for up to two years. The length of time there will depend on the level of support needs and the progress made at Holm Park View. Each young person is allocated a support worker who works with them to help them gain skills in all areas of their tenancy upkeep and housing support.

The only way to access Holm Park View is through a referral from Children and Families Social Work Services. Development staff work closely with the Leaving Care Team and Children and Families locality teams to make sure that all the needs of the young people are met.

The approach is proving effective in meeting the needs of these vulnerable care-leavers who were not ready to sustain a tenancy without support and who might otherwise have come to the attention of multiple services. Those who are moving into their own homes have developed the life-skills that they need to manage their own home and have established relationships with support workers. While Holm Park View is a successful project, further accommodation solutions are required in

Dumfries and Galloway for vulnerable young people, and those leaving care. This is a priority going forward in our 2020-23 Corporate Parenting Plan.

Cluster 6 - Basic health and welfare

This cluster focuses on the health and welfare of all children and the consideration of disabled children's rights. All children should have the best possible standard of health, including access to relevant health services. There should be a focus on the determinants of children's health, including mental health. Where families do not have enough to live on, children have a right to support to meet their basic needs.

Early learning and Childcare services

Dumfries and Galloway's delivery and implementation of the Scottish Government's early learning and childcare policy (1140 hours) has been a key success over the last three years. Considerable resource has been committed to engaging with parents and the community, upskilling and developing the required workforce and ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to deliver this ambitious programme across a diverse and rural area.

Dumfries and Galloway adopted a phased approach to 1140 Hours implementation:

- Phase one of the expansion in Dumfries and Galloway commenced in August 2017 with nine settings; eight authority nursery classes, one voluntary provider and a number of childminders beginning to deliver 1140hrs of Early Learning and Childcare during the academic year.
- Phase two included five more settings in January 2019 with an additional two local authority nursery classes, two voluntary providers, one private provider and several additional childminders offering 1140 hours to children within their community.
- Phase three commenced in August 2019 with an additional fifteen settings and more childminders offering additional hours to almost 1000 children in the Autumn and over 1100 children in Spring.

Dumfries and Galloway Council completed the procurement of services to deliver 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare in February 2020.

- 40 private and voluntary providers have been accepted onto the framework,
- 45 childminding services have also been accepted onto the framework.
- Around 40% of the eligible two-year-old cohort are taking up the offer of a place.

Promoting rights of disabled children to access services, and have choice and control.

Our assessments help us understand the needs of individual children and families so that we can find the right support for them. Children and families are made aware of the options for support that are available to them. These might include childcare support through the Brokerage Service, Self-Directed Support or Short Breaks. Social Work staff help children and families understand the options available, and help them to access these supports.

Brokerage Service

Education and Social Work provide a Brokerage Service to support our vulnerable children. An assessment is completed with all families supported by Social Work. If it is believed that the child would benefit from an early child-care placement then they are matched to a child-minder or nurse, and this is reviewed after an agreed period.

Self-Directed Support

An assessment is completed with all families that Social Work Services work with to understand what support they might need, and how best this support could be provided. Funding could allow the individual child to tailor their support package to their own needs. This could include help to make them feel less isolated and make them more independent. This could be through social work purchasing a service or the family employing their own personal assistant. If this is to be through an SDS package, then the best option is agreed, and the family are given advice about the different options. There are regular roadshows/drop-in sessions for parents and carers to help them understand the different options.

Services for disabled children and those with long-term health conditions

Short breaks for children, and family support are provided through Quarriers. Short breaks are provided through Children's Hospice Association Scotland. Acorn House is commissioned to provide support for parents and carers of children and young people with learning disabilities, challenging behaviours or complex needs through provision of short-term stay respite breaks. The Health Visitor Service can assess the needs of children, and then refer to specialist service/s.

In partnership with Dumfries and Galloway College, the Employability and Skills Service introduced Project SEARCH in 2015. The aim was to offer an extra, intensive supported programme to raise the attainment levels of people in the region with additional support needs and disabilities, and help them to find and sustain employment. This programme supports 12 people per year (August – June) and has a target of 70% in employment every year.

Acorn House provides high quality short breaks experiences to children and young people who have a learning disability and have challenging behaviours and/or

complex medical needs. This may also include the provision of outreach to children and families with disabilities in their own home, play sessions and direct work on specific issues depending on the identified individual needs of the children and young people.

Aims of the Service are:

- To provide a range of short break experiences where children, young people and their parents/carers will feel supported to help them maintain and cope with the challenges of daily living.
- To support and work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that their children and young people are able to live at home with support and reduce the needs for children and young people to be accommodated outwith Dumfries and Galloway.
- To develop the needs of each child and young person in terms of their emotional, educational, health and social care needs.
- To provide a range of planned short breaks which are flexible and responsive to the needs of families with children and young people with complex needs. This could include experiences that may last for several hours – for example after school care and socialisation; or half-day care during holiday periods.

Access to high-quality and preventative health-care

Family Nurse Partnership (FNP)

Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is a licensed programme, originally developed in the USA and underpinned by an extensive worldwide research evidence base, in which specially trained nurses work with first-time teenage mothers to improve the health, well-being and economic self-sufficiency of themselves and their children.

The Family Nurse Partnership commenced in NHS Dumfries and Galloway in October 2018, initially as a 3-year test programme in the Nithsdale locality. During 2019, the programme expanded to provide the service in Annandale and Eskdale localities. The service is being developed incrementally across the localities and aims to serve the whole region by its third year.

Since the programmes commenced there have been 70 referrals of teenage mothers, and 59 of those received the Family Nurse Service.

Health Visiting

The Universal Health Visiting Pathway was set out by the Scottish Government in 2015. The Pathway presents a core home visiting programme to be offered to all families by Health Visitors as a minimum standard. NHS Dumfries and Galloway adopted an incremental approach to delivery of the pathway. All 11 pathway contacts (home visits) are now being implemented, with the introduction of the 4-5-year review in May 2020.

All children with a Child's Plan have the support of a Health Visitor as Named Person. Where GIRFEC national practice model assessment identifies support needs for early intervention, the Health Visitor provides that support, or planned care is delegated to Health Visitor Assistant Practitioner. Requests for assistance are made to partner agencies where necessary.

There is a Specialist Health Visitor for Gypsy Traveller families.

School Nursing

The refocused role for School Nursing, which was tested in NHS Dumfries and Galloway during 2016-2017, is now being rolled out across Scotland. This model has a continuing focus on prevention, early intervention and support for the most vulnerable children over five years. In addition, School Nursing concentrates primarily on ten priority pathway areas under the overall headings of vulnerable children and families, mental health and wellbeing and risk-taking behaviour:

- Emotional/mental health and Wellbeing
- Substance misuse: drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Child protection
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual health and wellbeing/Pregnancy and parenthood
- Youth justice
- Young Carers
- Transitions

Within Dumfries and Galloway, the new model for School Nursing is now fully embedded in practice. Referrals from other professionals or agencies are made via a Single Point of Contact email address, while a self-referral contact number has been established for parents/carers and young people.

Dental Health

The Child Smile programme is a preventative approach that delivers fluoride varnishing for children aged 3 and until Primary 4 in 11 priority nurseries and schools across Dumfries and Galloway. The programme also supports nurseries and primary schools to offer free, daily, supervised toothbrushing (whether it is a local authority, voluntary or private nursery). The 2018 National Dental Inspection Programme results for Dumfries and Galloway demonstrate that 67% of Primary 1 children had no obvious dental decay experience in their deciduous teeth.

Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood education.

Staff have been trained in Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood education. All schools in Dumfries and Galloway are now accessing the new national suite of

resources for delivering Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood learning and teaching to children and young people aged 3-18.

Cool2talk is an interactive digital service for young people aged 12-20. Young people can use the service to:

- post health related questions that are answered honestly and accurately within 24 hours
- read questions and answers on a range of topics already posted on the website
- access a one-to-one counselling service.

The website offers reassurance, encouragement, information and advice on any health-related issue as well as sign posting to appropriate local or national services.

Meeting children and young people's mental health needs

Children's and young people's mental health was one of the local areas of priority action in our 2017 to 2020 Children's Services Plan, and this reflects the national picture where there is a need to focus on improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service; the Looked-After Children's Specialist Health Team, and ISSU18 are services that support children and young people with mental health needs.

Universal infant mental health services are provided through universal Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership services.

Action for Children and the Befriending Service are progressing work to support children and young people's mental health.

Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group carried out local consultation with an identified grouping of secondary age young people, and engaged with the named persons across our schools to identify their areas of priority and concern regarding mental health.

This engagement consistently identified mental health, resilience and anxiety as the key areas for development. Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group therefore focused on these areas and developed an action plan to support our school community in this regard. In particular this has focused on the establishment of low-level mental health support within our secondary schools and a stress control pilot delivered through the curriculum to support S3/S4 pupils manage their own stress and anxiety.

Funding was secured to provide three Full Time Equivalent (FTE) 'Youth Information Workers' to deliver low level mental health support to young people in need, through

one-to-one support, informal drop-ins and group work programmes. After a successful pilot project between 2018 - 2020, the project was expanded to Youth Information Workers delivering 2 days per week in 15 secondary schools across Dumfries and Galloway.

Dumfries and Galloway is one of the few NHS Boards with a children's substance misuse service. The manager of the ISSU18 service represents the needs of the service and its service users on a mental health partnership group.

The Employability and Skills Service recognises that young people's mental health benefits from routine, structure, feeling valued and making a positive contribution as well as moving toward achieving their own goals. All the young people supported by the service have one-to-one key-worker support and are supported to plan an individual programme that might include work experience/volunteering/learning/training and qualifications to help provide structure and positive outcomes. Young people with acute or complex mental health difficulties are referred to appropriate services.

Support to children and families to meet essential needs

Since June 2015, our Dumfries and Galloway Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and accompanying Action Plan have delivered a portfolio of over 60 interlinked projects and initiatives which have been developed in consultation with our Tackling Poverty Reference Group Members (volunteers with a lived experience of poverty). These projects have included the development and delivery of a range of projects and services which have directly reduced the costs of the School Day including:

- Covering the costs of Home Economics and Technical Design Classes
- The Holiday Food Fund Programme
- Free Sanitary Products in Schools (developed before the allocation of funding from the Scottish Government)
- Breakfast Clubs in Schools
- Funding for the costs of S5 and S6 Subjects including Geography, Art and Design, Photography for senior pupils, and in addition the costs of travel to support pupils to attend extra-curricular activities.

Universal services have provided children and families with signposting and referral to Third Sector services including housing and food banks.

Action for Children supports children and families in Upper Nithsdale.

The Employability and Skills Service supports young people and adults with applications to the Holywood Trust, referrals to foodbanks, referrals to social services and housing providers, paying for clothing for interviews/jobs, and accessing welfare funds for clients.

Cluster 7 - Education, leisure & culture

This cluster focuses on the right of all children to an education that will help them achieve their potential without discrimination. Education should be child-centred and empowering and strengthen their capacity to enjoy the full range of children's human rights including their right to express their views and participate in all aspects of their education. Article 29 entitles children to a broad curriculum. Article 31 states that children have a right to play, recreational activities, rest and leisure and to take part in cultural life.

Ensuring that all children can access education that develops their fullest potential

Dumfries and Galloway Education and Learning Directorate

All schools in Dumfries and Galloway have mechanisms for offering young people a voice in their learning and school community. Examples of this include: Pupil Councils; Eco Committees; Junior Road Safety Officers; House Captain roles; Mentors in Violence Prevention; and Support Buddies. Schools are also engaged in Young STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) Leaders which encourages young people to take a lead in delivering STEM and Developing the Young Workforce activities.

Schools are increasingly engaging in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools award programme, this aligns closely with legislation around United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. As of June 2021, Dumfries and Galloway had 1 Gold, 4 Silver, and 19 Bronze awarded schools, with a further four schools having registered to start their Rights Respecting Schools journey.

Schools and Early Learning Childcare settings work closely with partners including Social Work Services, NHS, Police Scotland and others, to ensure that GIRFEC principles are embedded throughout the policies and practice of education. The SHANARRI principles (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included) which describe the well-being of children and young people and are a central element of GIRFEC are underpinned by the UNCRC.

Dumfries and Galloway Council's priorities for all children and young people also sit alongside the National Improvement Framework priorities, shown below.

Our Commitments are:	National Improvement Priorities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region’s vulnerable children safe • Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st century which are at the heart of our communities • Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities • Support children to be healthy and active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy • Closing the attainment gap between the most and the least disadvantaged children and young people • Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing • Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway

The universal services of Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership undertake Ages and Stages developmental assessment and make onwards referrals as necessary. These services will liaise with Educational Visitors to help children access appropriate, timely support. The School Nursing Service supports school-age children through multi-agency working. Our Community Nursing Team support education providers with bespoke training in order to support children with complex needs to attend school. Nursery Nurses on the paediatric ward support children with learning and play. Children have been supported to access leisure and play, and cultural activities through social media signposting and advertising. Allied Health Professionals (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Dieticians) work across the region within a universal, targeted and individualised approach to ensure children and young people are able to access advice, support and intervention to support their access to education.

Employability and Skills Service

The service works with young people 16-18 to find the education they want to undertake. Young people are supported to identify what they will need to have in order to apply for certain courses. They are helped to upskill prior to education if they do not already have the necessary qualification levels required; and helped with application forms to college/university and preparation for interviews.

The service aims to support as many clients as possible from a multitude of different backgrounds. For any client that the service works with, the service can support them to gain evidence they will need to become compliant with the service – for example by paying for birth certificates, passports, provisional driving licences. The service can also support with funding to help people travel to and from meetings, work, education, work experience, etc as well as paying for example, for clothing for interviews, clothing for work, and other work/training-related costs.

During the reporting period, the Employability and Skills service helped support young people between the ages of 16-24 into positive destinations. Young people were supported into employment through employer recruitment incentives where a portion of the employee's wages were funded through the service.

The Employability and Skills service also delivers the Dumfries and Galloway Workplace Skills Award which was developed to help those individuals who are not suited to classroom-based learning develop and thrive outside of this environment. The Workplace Skills award was developed in partnership between the Employability and Skills service and local businesses to ensure that clients were leaving the service and entering work with the appropriate, transferable skills for the workplace. This is a Scottish Qualifications Authority accredited qualification at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework levels 3 and 4.

Access to play and leisure opportunities; and addressing barriers to inclusive play and leisure.

Development of Inclusive Play parks

Dumfries and Galloway Council allocated £500k investment for the further development of three established play parks with the aim of making these more inclusive. The funding allowed for the provision of equipment which is accessible by mobility impaired children, as well as equipment which provides stimulation and amusement for visually impaired children. Access routes to the location for this equipment, as well as paths and standing areas in the vicinity were also improved.

Considerable consultation took place with the public regarding future investment in the upgrade of play parks in a further four locations across Dumfries and Galloway - Newton Stewart, Castle Douglas, Upper Nithsdale and Lockerbie. Over 900 responses were received through the online and hard copy survey, and a further 93 individuals took part in focus groups over the region.

Free access to leisure and cultural activities for care-experienced children and young people

As corporate parents, our aspiration is that our looked-after and care-experienced children and young people should have the same opportunities as their non-looked-

after peers. Through our engagement with young people, one of the early requests raised by young people through the Listen2Us group and the Champions Board was to improve access to leisure and cultural activities for looked-after and care-experienced children and young people.

This led to the development of the Dumfries and Galloway Access scheme for looked-after and care-experienced children and young people, and free membership to Council-led leisure and sport sessions, classes and facilities. In 2019 this was re-branded to Club Sport with some changes being introduced based on the feedback from children and young people.

Employability and Skills Service

Young people are referred by the service to Youth Services programmes, and helped to access the Dumfries and Galloway Access scheme if looked-after. They are referred to leisure partners, and the Employability and Skills Service can cover travel costs of transport to and from activities.

Holiday allowance for Foster Carers

Foster carers are provided with an additional holiday allowance to support them to do summer activities with the children and young people they care for.

Dumfries Toy Library

The Toy Library provides opportunities for children and young people to play and socialise.

Upper Nithsdale Family Service

The service delivers support and services to families who are affected by poverty and deprivation to support them to overcome the obstacles to improve their family situation. They also deliver play sessions for pre-school children.

Homestart Wigtownshire

Homestart provides families with opportunities to meet play and socialise.

Befriending Project

Dumfries and Galloway Befriending Project offers young people experiencing challenges at home, school or in the community, the opportunity of extra support and regular positive adult attention.

Having a befriender can help the young person tackle difficulties before they get too big, introduce them to new activities and help them be the best they can be. The young people benefit from the energy and enthusiasm of their befrienders and gain confidence from forming a positive relationship with a supportive adult.

Coordinators in Dumfries and Wigtownshire carefully match the young person with a volunteer and support the match by arranging regular and frequent progress meetings.

Access to Leisure Services

Any increase in fees can place barriers to the families and individuals most at risk across the region. To enhance the offering, Leisure Services have implemented an extension to the Easy Access scheme whereby children qualifying for free school meals shall now be able to access coached activity at a 50% reduction.

Dumfries and Galloway Disability Sport

DG Disability Sport provides an opportunity for children with disabilities and additional support needs to take part in sport and physical activity. Sessions are available across the region for all ages and abilities. The specialised sessions provide the child with an introduction to physical activity adapted to their ability and an opportunity to progress along the pathway to competition.

Cluster 8 - Special Protection measures

This cluster focuses on groups of vulnerable and marginalised children who require special protection. These are often the children who are most at risk of having their rights ignored or infringed. They include asylum-seeking and refugee children, child victims of trafficking or exploitation, and children in trouble with the law.

Child Protection – Child Sexual Exploitation Campaign (CSE).

A campaign focused on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) demonstrated commitment of time and resources across the partnership and elements of the campaign were used by other areas in Scotland. The campaign involved all types of media and was aimed across a wide section of the community. It included:

- Bus Advertising for 6 weeks across Dumfries & Galloway.
- Radio Adverts for 2 weeks on West Sound Radio.
- 8500 Children and Young People Cards distributed to children and young people in S2 to S6 and S1 pupils (where deemed appropriate).
- Just under 12,000 Parent Leaflets distributed through school bag drops to parents of all pupils in P6 and P7 and also all Secondary pupils.
- 3780 Leaflets for the general public distributed to Council Offices, NHS premises, Dentist Offices, Police Stations and Schools.
- 285 public posters distributed to Council Offices, NHS premises, Dentists, Police Stations, Schools and Taxi Offices.
- 938 Information Cards for Businesses distributed to all Licenced Premises and Taxi Drivers.

- 32 Workshops were delivered (16 in Secondary Schools) to a total of 2058 children, young people, parents, public and professionals from across all agencies.

Child Protection Processes

Our child protection practices, in line with the national framework, help us to keep children safe. Our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub supports the tripartite consideration of all child protection referrals. All children subject to child protection enquiry are seen and spoken to within 24 hours. Interim safety plans are developed for all children while a child protection investigation is being completed. Our relationship-based approach enables us to explore family support networks and help families to develop their own plans to keep children safe.

Where there are significant concerns of the safety of a child, Social Work will seek a Child Protection Order in conjunction with our internal Legal Services.

Support for children and young people seeking asylum

Children and Families Social Work provide support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people who have spontaneously arrived in Dumfries and Galloway from countries including Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Afghanistan, and Vietnam. Young people who are aged under 18 years of age are deemed to be Looked After Children and are provided with somewhere safe to live and appropriate care. Young people (from 18-26 years of age) receive after care support from the team to help them live independently. 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. The service has supported many unaccompanied 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. All young people are offered support up until their 26th birthday by the Leaving Care Team.

Legal services have advised Social Work Services in respect of legal duties in cases of unaccompanied asylum seeker children who arrive unexpectedly in Dumfries and Galloway.

Due to limited resources, and year-on-year challenge to identify foster carers to help us care for our looked after children, during Foster Care Fortnight a recruitment campaign was carried out to attract foster carers for teenagers, sibling groups and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in times of crisis/emergency basis.

Young people seeking asylum are referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for a multi-agency response. Age assessments are completed, and the young people are supported to get legal representation and allowed access to a professional interpreter service to assist communication. Health needs of the young people are assessed, and they are able to access the Looked-After Children's Specialist Health Services. Young people are provided with age-appropriate accommodation.

The Employability and Skills Service is able to work with people who identify themselves as asylum seekers or refugees which also includes those aged 16-18. Individuals are assisted with gaining documentation, English as a second language support, translators, and signposting to appropriate services for other support.

Youth Justice

In our 2017-20 Youth Justice Strategy and Action Plan, we reviewed our diversion systems to ensure that they fit with national and local priorities. This included:

- Diversion from a youth justice service
- Diversion in terms of restorative justice and the impact upon the victim
- Diversion from prosecution.
- Development and delivery of diversion processes to include 18, 19 and 20-year-olds.

The Youth Justice service was reviewed and redesigned to ensure it is able to respond to deliver a wider range of earlier interventions by responding to lower-level concerns from partners regarding children at risk of offending.

Our 2017 – 2020 Youth Justice Strategy and action plan focused on earlier intervention under Whole Systems Approach with a focus on links with education and the delivery of groupwork programmes to address behaviours which might lead to offending. This included linking in with schools around enhanced transition periods and identifying children whose behaviours indicated they would benefit from targeted support. We realigned our multi-agency case progression to ensure children who were charged with very minor offences received support based on assessment of those closest to the child – that is their named person, whilst coordinated by Youth Justice.

The criteria for Youth Justice intervention was reviewed by lowering the age to 8 years and removing the requirement for a child to have already been charged or referred to the Children's Hearing.

Young people who do enter the justice system are a priority area for the School Nursing service, and are supported by the Looked-After Children's Specialist Health Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and ISSU18 Service.

The Employability and Skills Service works with young people who are either part of the justice system; may potentially come to the awareness of the criminal justice system; or who have been through the criminal justice system in the past. The work that the service does with clients can go a long way to supporting these young people stay away from entering this system again and prosecutors take into account that a person is actively trying to turn their life around by engaging with key workers.

Sheriffs may ask for the Employability and Skills Service to support people to achieve or undertake certain work to keep them from being prosecuted. In these cases, the service helps to identify appropriate work/learning for these young people, supports them to attend any meetings/groups and feeds back to the appropriate people on progress.

Protecting children from illegal use of drugs

Dumfries and Galloway is one of the few NHS Boards with a children's substance misuse service

All of our substance use services are committed to the protection of children whose parents who are using substances. All child protection protocols are followed, and referrals made to social work as required. Services are also able to refer children and young people to ISSU18 and the Young Carers Service for support in their own right.

The Alcohol and Drug Partnership provided funding and support to an interactive education activity hosted by youth work services during the "Youth Beatz" events. This provided young people with information on the dangers and risks of illegal drug use (as well as information and awareness on other risky behaviours).

LGBT Young People and Time for Inclusive Education

Dumfries and Galloway were the first local authority in Scotland to set up a Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) Steering Group.

In November 2017, Dumfries and Galloway approved a [motion](#) that:

"Dumfries and Galloway Council affirms that all young people in Scotland have the right to an education which is fully inclusive; to learn in an environment which is tolerant and accepting of LGBTI identifies; and free of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

Dumfries and Galloway Council notes the contributions of the Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) campaign in raising awareness around homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, and further notes that the Scottish Parliament has supported the campaign's proposals for LGBTI-inclusive education in all schools.

The motion recommended that Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Democracy and Participation Team would carry out a consultation around the TIE campaign's strategic proposals, and assess the progress make across schools and youth services in Dumfries and Galloway that would result in a set of recommendations to achieve the TIE campaign's strategic aims.

Following the approval of this motion, a short life working group was convened made up of young people using a co-production model so that the consultation was peer led. This group led a consultation that focused on the experiences of LGBT young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

A [report](#), with [findings of the consultation](#) was presented to [committee](#), with a set of recommendations and a short-life implementation team was established, led by Education Services and supported by LGBT Youth Scotland and Youth Work Services; and including young people from the new Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council to take forward the recommendations.

Evaluation of progress 2017-2020

Our position is that at the end of the reporting period in 2020, as a partnership we could demonstrate evidence of how we were meeting UNCRC requirements across all clusters. However, where we have been particularly successful in implementing elements of the UNCRC, this has often been due to the success of specific approaches or projects, rather than as the result of any over-arching strategic approach. For example, children's rights are central to GIRFEC and Signs of Safety, both of which we have embedded into day-to-day practice and process. We also have established youth democracy structures that support young people to get involved and have their voices heard. However, whilst Education, Social Work Services and child health services are more familiar with these rights and these concepts, and they are more embedded in day-to-day systems of working, other Council and Health departments are less familiar with these rights and the profound and wide-reaching impact of the forthcoming legal changes.

As a partnership, we need to acknowledge the wider implications of the forthcoming incorporation of UNCRC into domestic legislation – including the potential for legal challenge – and develop a strategic approach to this. This legal change will affect all departments within Health and the Council, not just those that are generally associated with children and young people's needs.

Recommendations / Proposed improvement actions

The recommendations below were identified through the development of this report and our aim is to use them to develop an action plan with a set of improvement actions. During the reporting period, and prior to this period, we collected a great deal of feedback from a wide range of engagement and consultation activity with children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway. Our children and young people are now telling us that we need to prioritise action on the issues that they have told us about - and where plans have already been jointly developed and agreed with young people. In developing our action plan, we will therefore ensure that we have thoroughly mapped the planning landscape to ensure that our Rights Action Plan complements existing plans.

Going forwards, we plan to take a different approach to rights-reporting and to develop a co-productive approach with children and young people. We have already agreed the first steps, with a Council decision to establish a working group to progress children's rights. The group will include Elected Members, members of the Youth Council and officers.

Our identified recommendations for improvement are as follows:

1. Training - all staff across the partnership need to have a minimum basic awareness of children's rights and the implications for each organisation of incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law. For Council staff this could involve the development of a mandatory online learning module (or similar). Another proposed approach could involve the development of a training roadshow, which could go round all departments and meet with teams, raise awareness, and answer questions on what the implications for each department might be. The cost of defending judicial review applications against the Council in cases where we have failed to take the rights of children into consideration in our decision making has the potential to be high.
2. Consider how we explicitly state our commitment to children's rights and communicate this, both as separate agencies and as a community planning partnership - for example through our organisational vision, values, aims and commitments, other documents, and organisational websites.
3. Our partnership has a Chief Officers' Vision for children's services that should be regularly revisited and reviewed. The current vision states that we will 'listen to' children and young people, but we could consider reviewing it to include a specific commitment around children's rights.
4. Inclusion of a rights action plan within our Children's Services Plan.
5. As a partnership, we need to introduce the use of Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) when any new policy is introduced. This would help to ensure that we have taken account of the UNCRC and that our decision-making will stand up to legal challenge.

6. Consider the appointment of a Children's Rights Officer/Participation Officer – with the appointment made from those that have lived experience of needing support to access their rights.
7. Look at how to further involve children and young people through representation on groups/committees.
8. Move towards a co-production model with children and young people – our next Children's Services Plan needs to be developed with children and young people.
9. Children and young people need to be more involved in our reporting. They could play a greater role in production of our Joint Annual Reports on the Children's Services Plan, but also in our wider organisational reporting.
10. Produce child-friendly versions of any of our plans relating to services for children and young people.
11. Include 'failure to comply with children's rights legislation' as a risk on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.