South Ayrshire Integrated Children’s Services Strategic Planning Group

STRATEGY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE 2015-18
STRAIGHT
FOR LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN IN SOUTH
AYRSHIRE 2015-18

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# STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AYRSHIRE’S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2015-18

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INTRODUCTION

South Ayrshire’s Integrated Children’s Services Strategic Planning Group is committed to improving outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) in our care.

This Strategy for South Ayrshire’s Looked After Children has been developed with input from the key services across health, social care, education, housing and the third sector, with responsibility for planning for, and delivering services to, this vulnerable group.

Improving the quality of life and outcomes for our LAC and young people will depend to a large degree on how well organisations, professionals and carers work together to ensure looked after children and young people experience high quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships that foster a sense of belonging. A key objective for many of the services involved in developing this strategy is to ensure that all children and young people have secure attachments to carers who are capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of their childhood. For the great majority of children this will be provided by their immediate or extended family. A small proportion of children however will require alternative arrangements to be made.

The relationship between a child or young person, their parent/ carer and the professionals involved in their lives and the continuity of those relationships, is central to the development of this strategy. Much of the research evidence around LAC identifies the importance of ensuring secure attachments and establishing a sense of permanence within a child. The child’s need to be loved and nurtured is fundamental to achieving long-term physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Planning for permanence must ensure that children and young people have a safe, stable and nurturing family or home base with a proportionate amount of legal security to support them through childhood and beyond.

Stable education is also essential to promoting the quality of life for LAC and enhancing their well-being.

Transition to adulthood can often be traumatic for Looked After young people and without access to services to support this transition, young people can end up unemployed, homeless or in custody and experiencing a downward spiral of rejection. Our own analysis indicates that we need to develop our approaches to supporting young people in the 12 to 16 age range, to support young people in their families and communities and reduce the need for accommodation.

In South Ayrshire we currently have 400 children (approx. as figures vary based on achieving planned outcomes) who are Looked After, in registered accommodation, at home or with kinship carers. Each child and young person has their own unique story and experience and individual needs. Our ‘Looked After’ strategy is informed by this identified need and also by the story of how young people became looked after and how we might address early and effective intervention to prevent unnecessary escalation of risk and need.

In developing this strategy, we have incorporated the requirements and guidance affecting LAC detailed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This includes providing a clear definition of corporate parenting and the bodies to which it will apply; placing a duty on local authorities to assess a care leaver’s request for assistance up to and including the age of 26; providing additional support for kinship carers in relation to their parenting role and providing families in distress with access to appropriate family counselling and appropriate supports and interventions. This sits alongside our own analysis and evaluation of our performance in supporting positive outcomes for looked after children in South Ayrshire.
Our aspirations for South Ayrshire are high and should not be compromised. This strategy is aimed at a broad, multi-agency professional audience and the recommendations should act as levers for good practice and service improvement to ensure we support our children and young people achieve positive outcomes.

While we have made progress in improving outcomes for our Looked After population we have recognised that we can and must do better and that we need to proactively plan services rather than react to circumstances. This strategy is a statement of our intent and proposed actions to achieve even better outcomes and to get best value for the looked after children in our care.

**OUR VISION**

This Strategy for Looked After Children in South Ayrshire is inherently linked to the Integrated Children’s Service Plan for South Ayrshire 2013-18 which sets out a vision to ensure, “our children and young people in South Ayrshire have the best possible life chances”; and a mission to, “improve the life chances of all the children, young people and families in South Ayrshire and in particular to improve the outcomes for the most vulnerable, ensuring that we respect their rights as individuals”.

Our aim is to improve outcomes for all Looked After children and young people in order to realise our vision: that Looked After children in South Ayrshire have the same opportunities to succeed as their non-Looked After peers. Our aim is to keep children and young people in their local communities, in their local schools as far as possible and to prevent them becoming Looked After at all where appropriate.

Universal services must work together to ensure that Looked After Children in South Ayrshire have the same opportunities to succeed as their peers who are not ‘Looked After’. Children are the future of our communities and have a right to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.

We believe that children are best cared for by their own families and, where it is required, support should be provided by universal services to prevent children from becoming looked after. Where children do become looked after we have a responsibility to work together to support their development and proactively ensure they have opportunities to achieve.

Where children are not able to live with their birth family, we have a responsibility to ensure alternative plans are made at an early stage so that each and every child is found a safe, stable, nurturing and permanent home. We are continuing to develop our High Risk Pregnancy processes to ensure we offer the best possible intervention at the earliest stage of a child’s life.

**OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

In South Ayrshire, we are committed to working in partnership with all relevant agencies to make a difference for our Looked After children and young people.

We have taken the time to review and evaluate our services for Looked After children and young people. We have examined our own data, benchmarked our performance against comparator authorities, considered good practice and have listened to young people and taken on board their views.

We have considered national and local policy frameworks for Looked After children and young people, as detailed in Appendix 1. A multi-agency group has been established with responsibility for coordinating and facilitating a joint programme of multi-agency self-evaluation.
activity. In 2014/15, two separate evaluations were undertaken – the first on children and young people affected by mental health issues; and the second on the assessment and response to risk and needs. This has informed our strategic and operational planning at individual service level and has informed our integrated children’s services planning.

In order to deliver improvements in outcomes and ensure that we realise our vision, the Looked After children and young people’s Strategy Group (short life working group) has identified six areas for improvement:

1. **Early Intervention**
   Ensure effective support and decision making is provided as early as possible in a child’s life to support the development of good attachments and capacity to learn. Review the support for children in the 0 to 4 age group involved in our child protection process particularly those identified through the High Risk Pregnancy process; and work on literacy and numeracy and develop our approach to nurture across our services in schools, residential houses and fostering.

2. **Achieving Permanence**
   Ensure that children who cannot remain with their family on a long-term basis are secured in safe, stable and caring permanent placements with the minimum of delay.

3. **Balance of Care**
   Ensure that we have the appropriate balance of care which reflects the needs of children and young people in South Ayrshire; and more specifically, review the support available to Looked After children and their families, in the 12 plus age range, in their communities and support their educational attainment and achievement.

4. **Children affected by a disability**
   Develop an integrated holistic approach to the support of children and young people affected by disability; and develop the use of SDS to improve the flexibility of support arrangements to enhance outcomes for young Looked After young people affected by a disability.

5. **Raising Achievement and attainment**
   Ensure that all Looked After children have the same opportunities to succeed as children who are not looked after. Specific objectives:
   - The attainment of Looked After young people in South Ayrshire will be above the national average and above attainment patterns described in the virtual comparator authority;
   - All Looked After young people in South Ayrshire will achieve Level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy as a minimum (unless they have additional support needs relating to learning);
   - All Looked After young people will gain awards to accredit personal achievements;
   - All Looked After young people will achieve and sustain positive destinations.
   - Develop early intervention approaches to raising achievement in Looked After children and young people.

6. **Contract and Commissioning**
   To develop a Commissioning Strategy for Children with partners to develop the best services we can for our looked after children.

**OUR CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

Corporate Parenting is defined in guidance as, “an organisations performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care
leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted”.

The concept of corporate parenting is inherently challenging: good parenting demands continuity, but organisations by their nature are continuously changing – members of staff move on, elected members change, structures change and procedures change. One challenge of being a good corporate parent is to manage these changes while giving each individual child or young person a sense of stability.

Like most extended families, the corporate family consists of many parts: local authorities, health services, independent sector providers, the police and all those parts of the system which support service delivery. Bringing up a child successfully depends very much on all family members playing their parts.

Key strands of this approach includes improving practice in line with Scottish Government recommendations (2007; 2012) on improved educational outcomes, better through care and aftercare supports to secure, positive and sustained destinations, and partner awareness of their corporate parenting responsibilities (further refined in the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 2014). Being a good corporate parent means we will:
- accept responsibility for our looked after children and young people
- make their needs a priority
- seek the same outcomes for them as any good parent would want for their own children

As a corporate family, we are in a unique position to be able to support young people whilst they are in our care and to prepare them to leave home. Our aim is to ensure they have their own housing, good economic opportunities and access to learning and development, welfare rights and advice, health and careers services. Probably the most critical factor for children looked after is the age at which they move on from being in care to living elsewhere compared with the wider population. We should be encouraging young people to stay on in positive care settings until they are ready to move on. Corporate parents need to ensure this is reflected in their policies and practices across organisations. Continuing care to these young people includes the provision of safe, secure and stable accommodation, emotional support, developing skills, financial support and also, opportunities to return.

**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE: BACKGROUND**

Every child is unique, each with their own personality, needs, experiences and aspirations. Looked After Children are clearly no different - the main thing our Looked After children have in common with each other is that even at a young age, life has not been easy for them and many will have experienced some form of trauma in their lives that impacts on their development.

A child may become Looked After for a number of reasons; including neglect, abuse, complex disabilities which require additional supports and for some there will be needs of a specialist care nature.

The term ‘Looked After’ is a legal definition. Under the terms of The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children’s Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011, it applies when a child is:
- **Provided with accommodation by a local authority;**
- **Subject to a compulsory supervision order made by a Children’s Hearing;**
- **Subject to an Order, authorisation or interim compulsory supervision order;**
- **Living in Scotland and subject to an order made in England, Wales or Northern Ireland;**
- **Subject to a permanence order.**

Where a child is accommodated for more than 24 hours he/ she are considered to be Looked After. Any child with a disability in receipt of respite care is also considered to be Looked After.
Children can be Looked after and remain in their home or in Kinship care (within extended family support arrangements) or Looked After and Accommodated residing away from home in foster care or residential care provision.

The number of Looked After Children in Scotland has been rising slowly since 2009. In South Ayrshire the number has grown more rapidly although it is now in decline. The increase in numbers of LAC is due to more children being looked after away from home with foster carers/ prospective adopters, with friends and relatives and other community settings.

In South Ayrshire the number has grown more rapidly although it is now in decline. The increase in numbers of LAC is due to more children being looked after away from home with foster carers/ prospective adopters, with friends and relatives and other community settings.

The number of children looked after in South Ayrshire in 2014 was 343\(^1\). This was a decrease of 6% from the 365 who were looked after in 2013. Our comparator authorities show a 0.7% decrease while the Scottish figure shows a 2.8% decrease. Our rate per 1000 however is at 16.6 which is greater than both our comparator average of 11.6 and the Scottish average of 15.

In 2014, 32% of Looked After Children in South Ayrshire were living at home with parents, a decrease of 7.8% from the previous year. This compares with an increase of 0.1% for comparator authorities, and a decrease of 3.1% for Scotland as a whole. The percentage of children living at home with parents (32%) is similar to the comparator average (30%) and greater than the average for Scotland (27%).

In 2014, the percentage of Looked After children with known additional support needs in South Ayrshire was 25%, an increase of 0.1% over the previous year. This compares with an increase of 0.5% for comparator authorities and an increase of 0.3% for Scotland as a whole. The percentage of Looked After children with known additional support needs (25%) is greater than the comparator average (11%) and greater than the average for Scotland (11%).

Of the 92 children discharged from our care in 2014 some 69% stayed at home with their biological parents. However that figures changes dependent on the age of the young person. At 15 some 83% will be at home with parents by age 16 this will have dropped to 53% (8) and still further to 14% (1) at the age 17.

In 2014, 4% of children Looked After in South Ayrshire have had 3 or more placements during the past year, a decrease of 1.1% over the previous year. This compares with a decrease of 0.4% for comparator authorities, and an increase of 0.4% for Scotland as a whole. The percentage of children who have had 3 or more placements during the past year (4%) is similar to the comparator average of 8% and the Scottish average of 6%.

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\(^1\) 2014 Looked After CLAS Return to Scottish Government
Outcomes for Looked After children have long been a source of concern nationally and locally. Too many have experienced disadvantage and have been denied opportunities for a stable home life and access to good health and education services. Many have experienced events and trauma in their life which will have affected their development. Children who have been accommodated will have experienced the added trauma of separation from their birth family. Research has identified five factors critical to good outcomes for looked after children:

- Having people who care about you;
- Experiencing stability;
- Being given high expectations;
- Receiving encouragement and support;
- Being able to participate and achieve.

**BALANCE OF CARE IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE 2010 TO 2014**

As a partnership we monitor the balance of care for our Looked After Children. This information is benchmarked across a family group of Local Authorities to allow for comparison and analysis so we can better understand the balance of care we offer children.

As can been seen from the table below there has been a degree of variation in the percentage of children looked after in a community setting between 2010 and 2014.

![Balance of Care for Looked After Children % of Looked After Children being cared for in the Community](image)

While the percentage changes are small, there are significant financial and planning implications for any variation in the balance between children Looked After in community settings and those Looked After in residential based services.

The tables below show the weekly cost per child in residential based services and in a community setting between 2010 and 2015.

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2 LGBF Report 2010 to 2014 CHN9 Balance of Care for Looked after Children
It costs roughly 10 times more to support a child in a residential service rather than in a community setting. Any variation then will have implications for financial and service planning and needs to be taken into account in developing any modelling.

The annual costs between 2012 and 2015 for placements for residential in-house, residential external, foster care internal, foster care external and kinship are detailed below:

## Placement Costings 2013 to 2015

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<th>Placement Type</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Foster Placements</td>
<td>£1,416,250.00</td>
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<td>External Fostering</td>
<td>£2,662,725.00</td>
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<td>Kinship</td>
<td>£218,072.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supported Carers</td>
<td>£97,154.00</td>
<td>£75,196.00</td>
<td>£101,454.00</td>
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<td>Children’s Houses Internal</td>
<td>£1,138,347.00</td>
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<td>Out With Authority Respite</td>
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<td>£17,234.00</td>
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<td>Residential Education</td>
<td>£463,423.00</td>
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<td>Residential Care</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>£347,108.00</td>
<td>£241,882.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secure Care</td>
<td>£544,103.00</td>
<td>£178,050.00</td>
<td>£412,789.00</td>
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## Costs Per Placement Type

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<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
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<td>Internal</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out with the Authority</td>
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DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH CHILDREN ARE LOOKED AFTER

Children who are Looked After by local authorities can either be Looked After at home (e.g. supervised by the local authority but living at home); Looked After away from home (e.g. living in residential accommodation or in foster care); or living in the community with family and friends.

Since 2001, there has been an increase in children Looked After away from home in community settings, in particular with foster carers/prospective adopters, with friends and relatives and other community settings.

This reflects a national trend but our figures indicate a higher than average rise in the number of Looked After children in Ayrshire and South Ayrshire. Our continued evaluation and review of trends and practice will assist our more detailed understanding of this information to inform a strategic response and recommended actions.

Achieving Permanence for Looked After Children

It is known that children are best cared for within their own families, other than in exceptional circumstances and the paramount concern in planning for children is to safeguard and promote their welfare.

When a child’s needs cannot be met by birth parents the local authority has a duty to consider alternatives to ensure that the child, wherever possible, has a family experience. These alternatives could be kinship care, foster care, adoption or residential care.

Decisions will be made through multi-agency assessment and planning, taking into full account the age and stage of the child’s development and family circumstances. CELCIS (Centre for Excellence in Child Care in Scotland) have been engaged to support our continual development of good practice in securing permanence timeously for children in South Ayrshire.

Looked After At Home

A child who is Looked After at home will be subject to a compulsory supervision order from a Children’s Hearing. The corporate parent duties towards children Looked After at home are essentially the same as the duties towards children Looked After away from home.

When children are Looked After at home, the parents and the corporate parent must work together to ensure the children are living in a safe and nurturing environment. Children cease to be Looked After at home only when the compulsory supervision order ends.

As a group across Scotland, children and young people who are Looked After at home have poorer educational and health outcomes than those who are Looked After away from home. This strategy aims to ensure improved outcomes for South Ayrshire’s Looked After at home children.
The table above show a small decrease in the numbers of LAC at home with parents\(^3\).

**Looked After At Home - What we Have Done:**
- Three dedicated officers have been appointed to chair reviews and to scrutinise care plans for children looked After at home to ensure they are outcome focussed and timeously progressed.
- A quality assurance framework and service standards for Children and Families have been drafted and are currently being consulted. These detail roles and responsibilities; and an escalation process, should service delivery not be achieved in line with service standards.

**Looked After At Home - What we Know:**
- Audit and research activity has evidenced that Looked After children at home have poorer outcomes than children looked After away from home.
- There are a number of young people aged 12 plus where the appropriate community resource is not available to provide support.
- There is a significant gap in resources to support parents and families with children aged 12+ where vulnerabilities arise.

**Looked After At Home - What we Intend to do Now:**
- Implement the findings of the recent multi-agency audit.
- Review the community support to young people aged 12 plus and identify resource gaps.

**Kinship Care\(^4\)**

Kinship care refers to the main full-time care arrangement provided by a member of the child’s extended family or wider network of friends where the child is Looked After or would otherwise be Looked After, if a kinship carer were not able to provide the care arrangement. Kinship care is considered as the first option for a placement for a Looked After child when staying at home is no longer an option and is a key component of our strategy to support children and young people in their families and communities.

We work closely with colleagues in the Third Sector to provide support for Kinship Carers and to support families.

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\(^3\) Taken from Children and Families Management Information July 2015.

\(^4\) Taken from Children and Families Management Information July 2015.
Kinship Care - What we Have Done:
- Dedicated officers have been appointed to chair reviews and to scrutinise care plans for Children in Kinship Care to ensure they are outcome focussed and timeously progressed.
- As part of the Ayrshire hub, Children 1st facilitate monthly Kinship Carer Support Groups in South Ayrshire as part of a 3 year Government funded project. Children 1st also provide direct, individual support to Kinship Carers, Children and Young People. The services are wide and varied including group work and therapeutic input to children and young people through their Team approach and Therapist.

Kinship Care - What we Know:
- Analysis of data evidences an increasing number of children in Kinship Care in South Ayrshire.

Kinship Care - What we Intend to do Now:
- Review and develop the support available to Kinship Carers.
- Develop and implement a kinship care policy.

Foster Care

The purpose of foster care is to provide a family experience to children and young people until a return to their own family is possible. Substitute family placements with approved foster carers will be considered for children who are not able to remain within their family. Where a return home is not possible, foster care will prepare the child or young person for permanency, either in a permanent alternative family, or in independent living.

In South Ayrshire there has been a considerable focus on recruiting our own foster carers:

We have a number of children placed with private foster agencies:

Foster Care - What we Have Done:
- An extensive publicity and recruitment campaign has delivered an increase in the number of Foster Carers that South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership provides internally.
- The number of children and young people Looked After in their own homes or placed with our own internal foster carers has increased subsequently delivering a decrease in the use of external placements to support our most vulnerable children and young people.
- The review of fostering, adoption and kinship allowances to support and sustain children in

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5 Taken from Children and Families Management Information July 2015.
placement combined with our support to careers should lead to a reduction in the number of disruptions to placements.

**Foster Care - What we Know:**
- Analysis of data evidences that an increasing number of our children are placed with South Ayrshire carers and there is a reducing number placed with external foster care agencies.

**Foster Care - What we Intend to do Now:**
- Review and enhance the support arrangements for Local Authority foster carers.
- Review and enhance the foster care resource available and develop the recruitment process for local foster carers for young people who are aged 12 plus.

**Private Fostering**

Private fostering is the term used when a parent or guardian places a child who is under school leaving age in the care of someone else, who is a close relative or an officially approved foster carer, for a period of more than 28 days.

Although the arrangement is private, the relevant local authority social work department has an obligation to secure the welfare of every privately fostered child. In South Ayrshire, there are few private fostering agreements.

**Adoption**

Adoption is a legal process that removes parental responsibilities and the care provision from a child’s birth parents and transfers them to new adoptive parents. Children who are adopted will almost always have been Looked After, except where a step-parent adopts the child(ren) of their partner or, in the case of inter-country adoptions, where the child comes from outside the UK.

This strategy aims to improve permanency planning arrangements which include adoption for children and young people who cannot return to the care of their birth families.

**Adoption - What we Have Done:**
- We have identified 2 social worker’s within the Family Placement and Adoption Team to take on specific responsibility to recruit, assess and support Permanent foster carers and Adopters
- Form E workshops have now been implemented to support staff prepare comprehensive and analytical assessments to inform permanency decision making. The process for developing the child’s profile has been enhanced to include Foster Carers, Supervising Social Worker’s for the carers, and the child’s Social Worker’s to ensure the information for the child’s profile is robust and accurate and will support family finding and matching arrangements.
- Counselling for birth parents is available from the Family Placement and Adoption Team, when a decision around permanence out-with parent’s care has been agreed.
- There is a Quarterly overview of permanence plans by the Quality Assurance officers to track the progress of individual children and young people’s Permanence Plans (this also includes a representative from Legal Services)
- Established links have been secured with Scotland’s Adoption Register to ensure that all efforts are made to identify families for children and young people who require permanent care out-with their birth family
- South Ayrshire staff have active involvement in the development of Adoption Activity Day’s in Scotland which supports placement finding for children.
- Strong relationships have been developed with our neighbouring Authorities and a Pan-Ayrshire Resource Group exists as a mechanism for sharing information regarding
Adoptive Families and children who require placements out-with the South Ayrshire boundary, with a view to placement finding across authorities.

Adoption - What we Know:
- Drift and Delay can create difficulties in securing the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- There is a shortage of adoptive families nationally. Children in South Ayrshire are regularly assessed as requiring a permanent placement out-with the Authority.
- Children who often require permanence out-with their birth family have significant difficulties associated with trauma, abuse and neglect and as such there is a requirement for robust post adoption support plans which South Ayrshire are legally responsible for resourcing.

Adoption - What we Intend to do Now:
- The introduction and implementation of Substantive Looked After and accommodated reviews, where Legal Services attend to support and review progress on decision making and planning for permanence.
- From January 2016 the Form E workshops will be enhanced (on a pilot basis) to include Health Visitors/School Nurse/LAAC Nurse in the sharing of information for the Child’s profile.
- Review capacity within the Team to ensure that the support available to Permanent Foster Carers/ Adopters can be met within the existing structural arrangements.
- CELCIS will support the development of a plan of work and continuous improvement in relation to permanency planning for children.

Residential Child Care

The distinguishing feature of residential care compared with foster care is that children live with a group of other children Looked After by qualified staff. Residential care is a positive and appropriate choice for some Looked After children and young people who would not cope well within family settings.

There are occasions where some of our Looked After children or young people may need to be accommodated in a placement which is out with the local authority area. This may be because of a specific complexity or because of the impact of family circumstances, or we simply do not have a resource available locally. When a placement is sought options are carefully explored. The table below details the number of children in residential placements out-with the local authority over an 8 month period in 2014/15. These children are reviewed as part of our LAC procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Looked After Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug-14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-14</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov-14</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec-14</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan-15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of the National Framework for Children’s Residential Services brings greater transparency and consistency to the contractual relationship between local authorities and providers. We are, however, working to ensure that young people are accommodated within South Ayrshire provision whenever possible.
Residential Care - What we Have Done:
- A key priority has been the investment in modern high quality children's houses for our Looked After children and young people, specifically the development of internal local provision within residential and fostering services to meet the needs of children and their families within their own communities. A purpose built facility for Looked After children and young people was completed in 2013 following extensive consultation with young Looked After young people, the local community and other partners. A further purpose-built children’s house is currently being progressed.
- An independent advocacy service, through partnership with “Who Cares?” has been put in place for Looked After children and young people.
- A small team of Officers have been appointed to chair reviews and to scrutinise care plans for children who are Looked After away from home to ensure care plans are outcome focussed and timeously progressed.
- Enhanced semi-supported accommodation has been developed for young people in partnership with Quarrier’s (independent provider) to support care leavers making the transition to independent living.
- The Supported Carers Service has been developed to support vulnerable young people and is now established with a dedicated Social Worker overseeing carer’s support and development.
- We continue with our recruitment of carers to secure more local placement options for young people, and have taken account of the new changes and additional responsibilities for Local Authorities embedded in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. With this in mind we have considered the implementation of the Continuing Care agenda and a number of our carers are being approved for dual registration so they can continue to support young people up to the age of 26 years. This effectively places increased pressure and demands on Local Authority fostering services and there is a need to recruit foster carers for those young people aged 14 plus to enhance the options for local care arrangements for this group as well as continuing to recruit supported carers to meet future need.

Residential Care - What we Know:
- Analysis of data evidences that we have a significant number of young people who are Looked After out with the local authority area.
- We also have a number of young people in our own children’s houses who are involved with increasing substance misuse and exhibiting particularly aggressive behaviours associated with NPS use.

Residential Care - What we Intend To Do Now:
- Undertake a lean review of out with authority placement budgets, including a review of external placements.
- Review our services in the community and our Children’s Houses as part of the overall review of needs. We want to establish appropriate local supports and services in order to sustain young people locally and ensure young people feel safe, nurtured and supported in
our accommodation.

- Undertake a review of our models of care to ensure that service provision reflects the needs of our young people.
- Continue to review workforce learning and development across the Partnership to inform future practice in supporting our Looked After young people.
- Review the process and strategy relating to continuing care and Self Directed Support – with an emphasis on meeting the needs of Looked After children and families within legal requirements.

**Secure Care**

Regardless of whether a child requires care for their own safety or presents a risk to others, getting the right balance between care and control is paramount. The decision to restrict the liberty of a child is a significant and considered action in accordance with national Secure Care Guidance, and with the authorisation of the Chief Social Work Officer.

South Ayrshire has had, in the past, relatively low numbers of young people requiring a secure placement however in 2015 there has been a number placed in a secure setting.

**Secure Care - What we Have Done:**
- A Secure Screening Group has been established.
- A framework and guidance for secure screening has been established.

**Secure Care - What we Know:**
- Analysis of data evidences an increasing number of children have been placed in Secure Care over the last 6 months.
- There is a dearth of community resources and intensity of services to maintain a young person at risk in the community.

**Secure Care - What we Intend To Do Now:**
- Review the support in the community to young people who are aged 12 plus to help prevent secure accommodation.
- Understand and address the factors that lead to secure admission.
- Develop a local and pan Ayrshire response to initial mental health assessment informing potential placement and associated specialist mental health needs linking to partnership CAMHs services.

**Children with a Disability**

At July 2015\(^6\) there were 87 children with a disability who were Looked After. Many of these children require specialised packages of care and support. We have a Social Work team dedicated to working with children with Disabilities.

**Children with a Disability - What we Have Done:**
- Working with partners in assessing and acknowledged the presenting needs in the authority, clearly identifying the support requirements of disabled children and their families.
- Maintain a data base which informs service requirements and provision – e.g. identifying the cluster of children diagnosed with Juvenile Huntington’s, impacted by Autistic Spectrum Disorder, requiring palliative care plans etc. and in response – Established a skilled, knowledgeable Children and Families Disability Team with a focus on the presenting needs of an extremely vulnerable section of the LAC population in South Ayrshire.

\(^6\) 2014 Looked After CLAS Return to Scottish Government
• Analysis of LAC Data in relation to Children and Families impacted by Disability evidences the lower than average number of disabled children looked after in residential placements / outwith family home, when compared with comparator Local Authorities.

• Provided statutory supports to Looked After children and their families, including having the skill set `in house` to confidently undertake complex Child Protection Investigations, Assessments and Care Plans involving children and / or parents, carers impacted by Learning Disability, avoiding the requirement to purchase costly out with authority services.

• Supported parents with a diagnosed Learning Difficulty to safely and successfully parent their children within family home, supported by a statutory Supervision Order [ LAC at Home ] - avoiding additional costs to the Looked After Away from Home / Outwith Authority Budget.

• Provided `in house` specialist training and ongoing support to Foster Carers, Residential Care Staff, Pre 5 and Out of School Services to maintain LAC children impacted by disability in their local community.

• Provided packages of care and support within constraints of budget capacity.

Children with a Disability - What we Know:
• The use of Self-Directed Support has not been utilised effectively to support Looked After children affected by a disability.

• The range of local service provision for children with a disability is not sufficient and a commissioning strategy requires to be developed to give consideration to this.

Children with a Disability - What we Intend To Do Now:
• Work with partners to review the process and strategy relating to supporting children and families impacted by life shortening conditions, building on current multi-agency good practise to support children to remain in their own home, attending their local educational and respite provision throughout their life – supporting delivery of palliative care in the home. Avoiding the need for costly out with authority specialist provision.

• Develop a model of integrated specialist mental health support to children and young people with disability, initially scoping and mapping out need

• Refocus / review regarding practise around delivery of LAC Services to children impacted by Disability, who require to be accommodated / looked after outwith family home – with particular emphasis on supporting these children to remain in South Ayrshire, supported within South Ayrshire `In house` provision.

• Review the process and strategy relating to continuing care and Self Directed Support – with an emphasis on meeting the needs of Looked After children with disabilities.

• Autism strategy – continue to contribute to the development and implementation of the autism strategy, to enhance South Ayrshire practise of embedding autistic specific provision within mainstream services. Review current Autistic specific budget to ensure it remains fit for purpose

• Review of accessibility strategy within Education – build on current good practise, around the close cooperation with specialist education provision to ensure inter agency working is embedded in practise

• Develop an integrated approach to care and support pathways including a focus on transition stages.

CHILD PROTECTION IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE

In South Ayrshire, as at August 2015, there were 60 children and young people whose names had been placed on the Child Protection Register.

As can be seen in the table below the numbers of children whose names have been placed on
the child protection register has increased considerably since 2007 and reached a peak of 91 during 2014. This has placed considerable pressures on the children and family teams and increasingly we are intervening earlier in a child’s life.

During 2013/14, Children and Families dealt with 189 child protection referrals. Although this equates to a reduction of 19% over the previous year, we continued to see an increased proportion of children progressing to case conference and registration. 122 children (65% of referrals) were considered at case conference. Proportionally this is a 5% increase over the previous year. 80 children’s (66% of those considered) names were placed on the Child Protection Register. Proportionally this is an increase of 12% over the previous year.

**Age Profile of Children on the Child Protection Register**

During 2013/14, we saw a 17% increase from the previous year in pre-birth child protection referrals. A total of 49 referrals were dealt with. Of these, 35 (71%) of referrals were considered at case conference and 28 (80%) had their names placed on the Child Protection Register.

Our increase in CP registration activity is reflective of a significant proportion of children under the age of four, and in particular under 2 years of age who are subject of child protection measures. This increase in activity reflects the implementation of National Guidance and an

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Scottish Government Child Protection Statistics 2007 to 2014
appropriate drive for early identification and management of risk of the most vulnerable babies and children, including unborn children.

Child Protection - What we Have Done:
- Developed a multi-agency approach to High Risk Pregnancy screening and support processes.
- Improved Child Protection services in South Ayrshire, as evidenced in the Care Inspectorate’s joint inspection of services to protect children and young people report published in 2012.

Child Protection - What we Know:
- Analysis of our data indicates that there are a significant number of children under the age of four in South Ayrshire who are subject to child protection measures.

Child Protection - What we Intend to do Now:
- Continue to improve practice and resourcing to our High Risk Pregnancy process.
- Review supports in place to ensure that the appropriate intervention is put in place at the earliest stage possible and to identify any gaps in resource provision.
- Develop services for early and effective intervention and support families prevent and reduce risks of harm for children.

HEALTH AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

A variety of health needs and higher levels of vulnerability are often predisposing factors contributing to risks leading to children becoming Looked After. Looked after children are vulnerable to a range of poor health outcomes, and may face particular inequalities in accessing health services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health Problems for Looked After Children</th>
<th>LAAC</th>
<th>Normal Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Disorder</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Disorder</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperkinetic Disorder</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>8% (52% 5-10 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suicide and Self Harm</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Harm</td>
<td>39% Residential Care, 18% LAC, 14% Foster Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>16% (Glasgow Study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22% (Scotland Wide)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Health Problems for Looked After Children</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Caries</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute Dental Problems</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nocturnal Enuresis</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional factor in poor health outcomes for Looked after children can be disjointed and fragmented health care availability as a result of placement moves. These moves uproot the child or young person from their known support systems, their family and local community and
cause significant risk through loss of routine and disjointed communication, creating barriers to 
accessing universal health services. There are significant issues nationally and locally, in 
relation to supporting Looked After children’s mental and emotional health needs with 
difficulties accessing specialist services such as CAMHS when a child is placed out with their 
own health board area.

Within the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, there was a move to improve health outcomes 
through moving away from the required “Freedom from Infection” medical at point of entry to 
care (provided largely by GP’s) to a more holistic full health assessment to be completed within 
four weeks of the NHS Board being notified the child/young person has become Looked After.

Chief Executive’s Letter 16 (2009) was issued to all NHS Boards as part of the Implementation 
of Action 15 of the Looked After Children and Young People Report: We Can and Must Do Better:

*Each NHS Board will assess the physical, mental and emotional health needs of all Looked 
After children and young people for whom they have responsibility and put in place appropriate 
measures which take account of these assessments. They will ensure that all health service 
providers will work to make their services more accessible to Looked After and accommodated 
children and young people and to those in the transition from care to independence.*

Health - What we Have Done:

- An effective process has been established that enables the local authority to timeously 
notify the NHS Board of all Looked After children.
- A system is in place whereby each Looked After child has an assigned named nurse.
- An assessment tool has been developed for Looked After children and integrated into the 
electronic child health record (FACE).
- A Medical Adviser has been appointed to support all Adoption and Fostering Panels.
- A Throughcare Nursing post has been established to ensure work is targeted at those 
most in need across the Young People’s Support and Transitions service with a particular 
focus on meeting the holistic health needs of young people involved with Throughcare 
support services.
- The South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership have introduced the Health 
Improving Care Establishment Framework which provides a holistic approach and 
structure from which health promotion activity can be directed.

Health - What we Know:

- Looked After Children have poorer health outcomes than their peers.
- All Looked After children notified to NHS Ayrshire and Arran have a nurse assigned to their 
care. For those children who are of preschool age, this is the Health Visitor; those who are 
Looked After at home, the school nurse; and those who are of school age and Looked After 
and Accommodated, the Looked After and Accommodated Nurse.
- All assessments carried out are completed in the context of the National Practice Model 
and are compliant with the principles of GIRFEC.

Health - What we Intend To Do Now:

- Build on the current health assessment process and ensure priority is given to maximising 
the emotional health and psychological wellbeing of Looked After and Accommodated 
children and young people. This will include support to parents and carers, and the 
development of pathways to ensure the appropriate level of support is given to meet the 
holistic needs of individual children and young people.
- Further development of the electronic case record FACE/ Care Partners, to allow data on 
health outcomes to be extracted.
- Develop a clear pathway to access specialist mental health assessment and support where 
appropriate for children and young people recognising the unique mental health profile of
this population

- Review existing processes to improve the continuity of health care for children who are placed out of area.
- Assess the feasibility of providing a health assessment by a health professional with expertise in LAAC (i.e. Medical Adviser/ LAAC Nurse) at the time of accommodation.
- In relation to the adoption process, we will ensure a Medical Adviser will attend panels to discuss cases of adoption and permanence and provide written information about each child’s background, parentage, health and mental and emotional development as per Section 18 Adoption Agencies Regulations (Scotland) 2009. In addition, the Medical Adviser will be available to discuss complex health issues with prospective adopters and ensure the adoptive parents are given a copy of the child’s health report as per Section 24 of the Regulations.

EDUCATION AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Good educational attainment is associated with positive outcomes and resilience. Improving educational outcomes for looked after children has been part of the national agenda for a number of years.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004), amended in 2009, created a legal presumption that a coordinated support plan should be considered for any child who is Looked After by a local authority.

Due to life experiences Looked After children are often have gaps in learning. Research indicates that there are issues around how a child’s learning experiences will impact on their image of themselves and the world around them. This in turn influences how they interact with the people and adults around them throughout their lives.

All agencies require to work collaboratively to assess and plan and review the educational support Looked After children need to support them achieve their fullest potential.

Planning for transition within educational settings should begin at least 12 months before the child or young person is due to transition and should involve the young person and relevant agencies at every transition stage – including nursery to primary; primary to secondary; and any changes in placements.

Education - What we Have Done:

- Established a Care and Learning Team with a focus on the needs of the most vulnerable Looked After children.
- Identified a Looked After Children Coordinator in every school.
- Provided guidance to Looked After Children Coordinators on their role.
- Provided additional funding to each school to ensure Looked After Children and young people at risk of missing out on opportunities are able to benefit from their education.
- Ensured that all Looked After Children and young people are flagged on SEEMIS so that schools can track their progress.
- Developed More Choices More Chances (MCMC) Partnerships to provide intensive support for vulnerable young people including those who are Looked After to make the transition from school and to achieve a positive destination.
- Tracking and monitoring of the progress of Looked After children and young people in secondary schools annually through the analysis of attainment data. The progress and achievement of LAC pupils are now discussed annually by the Director with all secondary schools in their Self Improvement visits and by Quality Improvement Officers during their visits to all schools. Attainment data is shared across all schools to support the identification and sharing of best practice.
- Psychological Services have developed, implemented and evaluated a Nurture Approach
across educational establishments involving early years, primary schools, secondary schools and specialist sector. This focuses on building staff capacity to support children with social and emotional additional support needs. This will continue to be developed across all schools with intensive provision in two schools to date.

- Four schools operate Nurture Groups funded by South Ayrshire with Psychological Services providing training and implementation support. The Groups support children who need additional support with their emotional difficulties and social skills on a small group basis. It is particularly beneficial for children who have difficulties with attachment.
- Psychological Services have provided training to school on attachment and its impact in the classroom setting. This training includes strategies to support children who experience such difficulties.
- Each child who is Looked After has a named Educational Psychologist.

**Education - What we Know:**
- Looked After children have poorer educational outcomes than their peers.
- South Ayrshire has a significant number of Looked After children who have Additional Support Needs (ASN).
- Children Looked After at home have poorer outcomes than those Looked After away from home.

**Education - What we Intend To Do Now:**
- Refocus the work of central ASN teams, including Care and Learning, to ensure a much sharper focus on meeting the needs of Looked After children and young people.
- Set challenging targets on Looked After children and young people’s attainment, including a minimum level of attainment on leaving school which is at SCQF Level 4 or above.
- Develop systems to monitor the progress of Looked After learners from 0 to 18 years during the session in all schools. This system will monitor all children and young people who are Looked After or who have been Looked After in the past.
- Revise guidance for Looked After Children Coordinators in every school to ensure clarity and consistency on their responsibilities.
- Nurture Approach will be a key strategy across educations and the approach will continue to be rolled out across the authority.
- Develop a ‘team around the child’ approach to monitoring and supporting the progress of children and young people as required as per the requirements of GIRFEC.
- Create opportunities to consult Looked After learners on the revised educational strategy.
- Focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills of Looked After Children through early intervention.

**HOUSING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The Youth Housing Support Group is a multi-agency group which works to ensure that care leavers are supported into appropriate housing. A Care Leavers Policy\(^8\) is in place although this does not include all accommodated young people. This joint protocol is in place between Children’s Services and Housing to ensure that the diverse accommodation and support needs of young people leaving care are addressed and homelessness is prevented.

The Youth Housing Support Group will assess when a young care leaver is ready to live in permanent housing. The young care leaver will complete a housing application form and submit it to the Homeless Casework Co-ordinator. The Homeless Casework Co-ordinator will pass the application to the relevant area office and the application will be processed using young care leaver priority housing status. The application will be placed at the top of the waiting list, ready to be allocated a suitable permanent tenancy. Applicants under this category

\(^8\) The Young Carers Policy is published on the Children and Families Intranet page
will be made one suitable offer of housing, and will be held for all house types, heating types and neighbourhoods in their chosen letting districts. The priority application with the earliest date of application will appear at the top of the list. Where an applicant refuses one reasonable offer of housing their application will revert to a general application for selection under normal rotation.

**Housing - What we Have Done:**

- A housing strategy is in the process of development which will address the needs of vulnerable families and care leavers, key services supporting families will be engaged in the development of the strategy.
- Looked After children have poorer housing outcomes than their peers.
- We have a number of young care experienced young people whose needs cannot adequately be met within existing services.

**Housing - What we Intend To Do Now:**

- The Youth Housing Support Group will review the impact of withdrawing a young person's accommodation.
- Develop a joint approach to meeting the needs of those most vulnerable at risk of losing accommodation.
- Work with colleagues in housing services and partner providers to develop sustainable housing options and appropriate supports for Looked After young people.
- Work with colleagues in housing services and partner providers to develop sustainable housing options and appropriate supports for Looked After young people taking into consideration The Continuing Care Agenda. From April 2015 Continuing Care will enable young people born after 1999 and who are looked after in residential care, kinship or foster care, to remain in their current placement up to their 21st birthday.
  
  Young people in Continuing Care placements will not be referred to as “looked after” but the Act requires the authority to support young people in the same manner as when they were “looked after”.

**POSITIVE DESTINATIONS**

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) work to ensure all young people are given the best possible chance to progress into a positive and sustained destination. In 2014-15 SDS will continue to work closely with local partners to fulfil our collective corporate parenting responsibilities to the care leaver group. The delivery of SDS’s Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service has a focus on supporting young people who are recognised as being at risk of not making a successful transition from school. This includes young people from a care background who would benefit from a coaching approach from a SDS Adviser.

All secondary schools have a MCMC(More Choices More Chances) multi-agency group to identify and support SDS and work closely with schools and partners to provide coordinated support to these individual young people at transition, and for those who do not have an identified pathway, SDS will support them to make a successful journey from school into their first transition destination and further placements as appropriate.

**Positive Destinations - What We Have Done:**

- Created a work placement within children’s houses which is managed by STEP to help young people get work experience.
- Implemented the Centre for Youth Achievement Awards – staff are trained in assessments; and care plans are linked to providing awards

**Positive Destinations - What we Know:**

- Looked After children have poorer positive destinations than their peers.

**Positive Destinations - What we Intend To Do Now:**
Establish a tracking group focusing on supports for our Looked After young people to ensure supports are appropriate and targeted where required,
- Develop performance monitoring arrangements in respect of destinations for Looked After young people.

**CONTRACTING AND COMMISSIONING**

Strategic commissioning of services is about identifying the needs of Looked After Children and ensuring we have the right services and support in the right configuration to meet those needs.

South Ayrshire has a number of existing commissioned services which are closely monitored and evaluated. However we require to develop a Strategic Commissioning Strategy which reflects the changing environment with regards to the requirements of the Children and Young People Act (2014), based on informed and evaluated assessment of service needs.

This strategy requires to support our integrated children’s service plan and the content of this LAC Strategy. Young People who have care experience as well as those who care for them require to be involved in any commissioning processes and their views require to be considered as part of development of the strategy.

**Contracts and Commissioning - What We Have Done:**
- Commissioned services have been subject to continual evaluation and review
- There have been challenges in relation to developing a coherent approach and commissioning of services based on robust strategic needs assessment and we need to develop this approach with our partners.

**Contracts and Commissioning - What we Know:**

There is a need for a coherent approach towards commissioning of services to meet identified need. This requires to be done in conjunction with all our partners.

**Contracts and Commissioning - What we Intend To Do Now:**
- Engage in an informed and transparent way with service users and service providers to progress commissioned services that meet the needs of our children young people and their families, informed by continuous evaluation.
- Enhance commissioning and review arrangements to ensure we get best value and services are effective.
- Engage with the review of the national framework for commissioning of services.
- Work with frontline staff to ensure they are fully familiar with commissioning requirements and their key role in defining the needs of service users for whom individual services are commissioned.

**PROMOTING PARTICIPATION**

The views of our Looked After children are now sought through ‘Having Your Say’ processes and the licence for ‘Viewpoint’, an electronic tool to collate and report on the views of young people, has been purchased. Currently the use of Viewpoint is being implemented within residential services and training and implementation of this tool will be fully embedded across all service areas by August 2015.

An annual celebration of achievements for young people involved in Through Care is in place.
Much good work is done and young people are very involved in development of their own plans as well as informing and determining service improvements in our residential services.

There is room however to enhance and develop our mechanisms and processes for engaging young people as part of service evaluation and development particularly those who are looked after at home.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

A work plan for 2015-2016 (Appendix 1) has been developed which identifies the tasks to help achieve the strategic priorities identified in this Strategy. This will be monitored by the Refreshed Corporate Parent Group; reported to the Integrated Children and Young People’s Planning Group on a quarterly basis; and to the Community Planning Partnership on a bi-annual basis. Progress will be reported to Council through the Chief Social Work Officer’s Annual Report. The work plan will be refreshed on an annual basis.
Strategy for Looked After Children in South Ayrshire 2015-18

Appendix 1: Looked After Children in Scotland Key Legislation and Policy Framework

Acts and Regulations

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- The Support and Assistance of Young People Leaving Care (Scotland) Regulations 2003
- The Secure Accommodation (Scotland) Regulations 1996
- The Residential Establishments – Child Care (Scotland) Regulations 1996
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

National Guidance

- Assessment and Support for Kinship Carers of Looked After Children (2008)
- Getting It Right For Every Child (2008)
- We Can and Must Do Better (Scottish Government, 2007)
- Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland: Regulations and Guidance on Services for Young People Ceasing to be Looked After by Local Authorities (2004)

National Reports

- These are Our Bairns (Scottish Government) (2008)
- Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better (Scottish Government, 2007)
- Better Health, Better Care (Scottish Government) (2007)
- Extraordinary Lives – Creating a Positive Future for Looked After Children and Young People in Scotland (SWIA, 2006)
- How Good is Your Throughcare and Aftercare Service? (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum) (2006)

Local Strategies

- South Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement 2013-17
- South Ayrshire Integrated Children’s Service Plan 2013-18
- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2015-18
- South Ayrshire Refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy 2013-18
### Early Intervention

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<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unborn babies are kept safe as a result of early identification of high risk pregnancies and effective implementation of multi-agency supports to parents to reduce and manage risk.</td>
<td>Use understanding of the difference services are making to Looked After children and young people in South Ayrshire, to inform development of Integrated Children’s Services Planning</td>
<td>Integrated Children’s Services Group:</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>• ICSG are able to determine the difference services have made to Looked After children and young people in South Ayrshire</td>
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<td>Very young children continue to be safely supported and nurtured within their own birth families. Services are designed to ensure early and effective intervention in line with assessed need.</td>
<td>Develop early identification and responses as a fundamental component of the named person service and in line with GIRFEC principles. Build in monitoring and supporting arrangements that evidence positive progress and actions for children and young people</td>
<td>GIRFEC Implementation Group: Chair Paula Godfrey Reports to ICSP Strategic Delivery Partnership and to the Pan Ayrshire Programme Board.</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>• (Measures to be identified through GIRFEC Implementation)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review and develop service provision for unborn children and babies identified under the High Risk Pregnancy Protocol to continue to deliver early identification and assessment and effective interventions</td>
<td>Child Protection Committee: supported by the HRP working group</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>• % of High Risk Pregnancy initial risk assessments completed by week 24 of pregnancy</td>
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<td>Undertake a test of change in relation to early assessment and sharing of information with the vulnerable midwifery service</td>
<td>Child Protection Committee: Maureen Bell/ Jayne Miller/ Elaine Moore/ Elaine Jarvie</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a ‘request for assistance’ process for School Nurses in conjunction with</td>
<td>Jayne Miller</td>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td>• Case file audits evidence improved information sharing and feedback between</td>
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<td>Named Persons in Education</td>
<td>Develop priorities and action plan Further in line with corporate parenting duties and responsibilities</td>
<td>Corporate Parenting Sub-Group: Reporting to ICSP</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Case file audits evidence improved access to services for Looked After children and young people AND IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES FOR Looked After children</td>
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<td>Review and develop our supports to vulnerable parents and families to promote good attachments and support parenting in early years</td>
<td>Nurture Sub-Group: Reporting to ICSP</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>Increased number of parenting supports offered, Increased number of referrals to Team Around the Child groups, subsequently referred on to parenting programmes, Increased number of parents utilising parenting courses, Increased numbers of Looked After Children and young people who experience nurturing home and kinship placements</td>
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<td>With the support of CELCIS, continue to develop early and effective decision making in permanency planning to ensure the long term needs of children who are accommodated are met timeously.</td>
<td>Corporate Parenting Sub-Group: REPORTING TO ICSP</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>% of children in foster care or local authority residential units who are either rehabilitated back into the family home or approved for permanency within 6 months of admission, % of children with permanency plans where permanency is concluded within 18 months of a permanency decision</td>
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<td>Implement the Alcohol and Drug Partnership CAPSM Action Plan to support children and families affected by addiction</td>
<td>CAPSM Sub-Group: Lesley James</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>Performance measures identified in CAPSM Action Plan are monitored by the ADP and the CPC and inform improvement planning</td>
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<td>Analyse the effectiveness of the Kyle Cluster 'Team Around the Child' forums to inform future development of GIRFEC Locality Forums and other screening and</td>
<td>GIRFEC Sub-Group: Aileen Valenti</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Balance of Care</td>
<td>With the support of CELCIS, review the placement provision for young people aged 12+ within our children’s houses and more widely in the community</td>
<td>Paula Godfrey in conjunction with multi-agency steering group</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>% of looked after children in local authority residential placements &lt;br&gt; % of looked after children in residential placements with private providers &lt;br&gt; Timescales for rehabilitation assessments (new measure) &lt;br&gt; Quality of rehabilitation assessments (new measure) &lt;br&gt; % of care staff with required qualifications in local authority residential children’s houses &lt;br&gt; Number of requirements (and recommendations) issued within regulated services (i.e. Fostering, Adoption, Cunningham Place, Woodhead Road and Supported Carers) &lt;br&gt; Proportion of regulated services (i.e. Fostering, Adoption, Cunningham Place, Woodhead Road and Supported Carers) graded “good” or better in Care Inspectorate inspections &lt;br&gt; Young people’s needs are met and evidence of this gained via Viewpoint and participation event feedback. &lt;br&gt; Outcomes and achievements for young people are improving &lt;br&gt; Reduction in the number of accommodations in the 12+ age range &lt;br&gt; % of looked after children with supported accommodation carers</td>
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<td>Looked After children and young people are supported in appropriate placement destinations which reflect their needs.</td>
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<td>Looked After young people aged 12+ are supported to remain within community settings with their families where it is safe to do so.</td>
<td>Ensure continued modernisation of our residential children’s houses within local communities</td>
<td>Lesley James</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
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<td>Ensure young people who are Looked After have their educational support needs met.</td>
<td>ICSP and subgroup “achieving” D. Hutchison and E Brown</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
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<td>Continue to undertake self-evaluation activity to develop our understanding of LAC thresholds; and placement requirements</td>
<td>Joint Improvement Group, multi agency and single agency audit Reporting to corporate parenting and ICSP groups.</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
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<td>Review available data and existing processes to develop a consistent, multi-agency approach to preventing Looked After young people from running away; and ensure that appropriate responses are in place to support and reduce risk.</td>
<td>Safe Sub-Group: Iscp  Lesley James/ Eileen Taylor</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>• Reduction in the use of secure accommodation</td>
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<td>Support development of the use of Nurture Approach across Children’s Houses and agree a Nurture Strategy for all Looked After Children</td>
<td>Nurture Sub-Group: Jacqui Ward/ Lesley James</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>• Reduction in numbers of young people absconding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review the support available to local authority foster carers – including out of hours access to support.</td>
<td>Fostering services/ F MacDonald and A Craig</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>• Young people’s wellbeing and emotional health needs are being met. Information from viewpoint and Health assessments.</td>
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|         | Develop fostering resources for young people aged 12 plus. | Fostering services as above | October 2016 | • Foster carer questionnaire returns  
• Reduction in the number of placements where there has been 2 or more disruptions or unplanned moves. |
|         | Work with key partners to implement the After Care and Continuing Care provisions within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 | Children and Families Social Work Management Team (in Conjunction with Youth Housing Support Group): Lesley James/ | March 2017 | • % increase in the range of local options for supporting young people 16+  
• Survey feedback from young people re services available to support them, Viewpoint  
• % young people who remain in their long term placement but placement provision is adapted appropriately to meet their changing needs. |
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<td>Implement Getting it Right for Every Child in South Ayrshire – the South Ayrshire Integrated Children’s Services Plan 2013/18</td>
<td>Fiona MacDonald/ Lynn Wilson</td>
<td>March 2018 (Annual Review)</td>
<td>• Measures identified within the ICSP are delivered in line with agreed targets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continuous review of suitability of outwith authority placements</td>
<td>Social work and education L James and J Ward</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>• Increase in the % of children being looked after in the community (LGBF)</td>
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<td>• Increase in % of looked after children in foster placement with local authority carers</td>
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<td>Children Affected by a Disability</td>
<td>To develop the use of SDS to improve the outcomes for looked after young people affected by a disability.</td>
<td>Develop improved performance information to inform development of the Children with Disabilities service.</td>
<td>Children and Families Social Work Management Team: Lesley James/ Fiona Dalziel/ Jean Davies</td>
<td>April 2018 (Annual Review)</td>
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<td>Review transition arrangements between children and adult services and further develop multi-agency transition planning and protocols.</td>
<td>Transitions Group: Lesley James</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
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<td>Review the process and strategy relating to Continuing Care and Self Directed Support</td>
<td>Children and Families Social Work Management Team: Lesley James/ Fiona Dalzell</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>• Increase in the % use of SDS self-directed support</td>
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<td>Raising Achievement</td>
<td>To ensure that all looked after children have the same opportunities to succeed as children who are not looked after.</td>
<td>Nurture Sub-Group: Jacqui Ward</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>• % of Looked After Children who have received nurturing support in school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to develop an integrated Nurture Approach and build capacity within staff to support vulnerable children and young people to raise achievement and attainment</td>
<td>Achieving Sub-Group: Eileen Brown</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
<td>• ASN Review</td>
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<td>Refocus the work of central ASN teams, including Care and Learning, to ensure a much sharper focus on meeting the needs of Looked After children and young people</td>
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<td>Implement challenging targets for Looked After children and young people’s attainment, including a minimum level of attainment on leaving school which is at SCQF Level 4 or above</td>
<td>Achieving Sub-Group: Eileen Brown/ Frank Cardle</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
<td>• % of Looked After children and young people with appropriate CfE levels in Literacy and Numeracy by the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve 5 or more passes at Level 3 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve 5 or more passes at Level 4 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve 5 or more passes at Level 5 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve 5 or more passes at Level 6 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve awards for wider personal achievement by the end of their schooling &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve passes in Literacy and Numeracy at Level 4 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve passes in Literacy and Numeracy at Level 5 &lt;br&gt; • % of Looked After children and young people who achieve passes in Literacy and Numeracy at Level 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a multi-agency process to ensure consistent approaches, pathways and communications are in place in relation to Looked After children and young people to support improvements in educational outcomes</td>
<td>Achieving Sub-Group: Eileen Brown</td>
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<td>Develop and implement attachment training for educational staff in line with agreed Nurture Strategy</td>
<td>Achieving Sub-Group: Eileen Brown/ Jacqui Ward</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
<td>• % of Looked children and young people who have had their attachment needs identified and supported</td>
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<td>Develop educational systems to track and monitor the progress of Looked After learners (all children and young people who are Looked After or who have been Looked After in the past) from 0-18 years during the session in all schools</td>
<td>Achieving Sub-Group: Eileen Brown</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
<td>• Systems in place</td>
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</table>
|         | Revise guidance for Looked After Children Coordinators in every school to ensure clarity and consistency in relation to their responsibilities and expectations of the role | Achieving Sub-Group: Eileen Brown | Reviewed December 2016 | • Guidance in place  
• Staff aware of their responsibilities/staff survey |
|         | Create opportunities to consult Looked After learners on the revised educational strategy | Achieving Sub-Group: Douglas Hutchison | March 2018 | |
|         | Improve Positive Educational Destinations for Looked After Children | Achieving Sub-Group: Douglas Hutchison | March 2018 | • % of Looked after Children in a Positive Destination |

**Improving Health**

To ensure that all looked after children and young people have access to appropriate universal and specialist health professionals and services as required.

Within the Universal Pathway of support provided by Health Visitors ensure every Looked After child has a health assessment initiated within 4 weeks of notification and that this is shared with the relevant Lead Professional and Named Person

ICSP health sub group Jayne Miller/ Maureen Bell

December 2016  
• % of Looked After children for whom a health assessment has been initiated within 4 weeks of notification  
• % of Looked After and accommodated school age children who have an annual health review  
• % of Pre-school children who are Looked After who are assigned to the Additional Programme of HV Care

Ensure all Looked After Children have a Mental Health

Reviewed  
• % of looked after school age children who
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<td>Mental Health and Wellbeing Assessment</td>
<td>Group: Jayne Miller</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>have an assessment of their Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure all children and young people who require Primary &amp; Specialist Mental Health Care are referred to and assessed by appropriate services.</td>
<td>Mental Health Group: Jayne Miller and CAMHS service</td>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>% of children and young people who require care from Primary &amp; Specialist Mental Health care who are referred at an appropriate point</td>
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<td>Audit mental health and wellbeing supports within education to ensure all children's needs are met and gaps in service provision identified</td>
<td>Mental Health Group: Douglas Hutchison</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revised mental health strategy developed and implemented</td>
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<td>Develop improved pathways and intensive support services to ensure appropriate support is provided to meet the holistic needs of individual children and young people</td>
<td>Mental Health Group: Jayne/ Miller/ Maureen Bell/ Tommy Stevenson</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pathways to access Mental Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop improved triage process to assess and respond to requests for service</td>
<td>Mental Health Group: Jayne/ Miller/ Maureen Bell/ Tommy Stevenson</td>
<td>Reviewed December 2016</td>
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<td>Review existing provision and pathways to improve the continuity of health care for Looked After children who are placed out with the local authority area</td>
<td>Jayne Miller Maureen Bell</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consistent approach to assessment in place</td>
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<td>Improve the completion rate of health assessments by a health professional with expertise in LAAC (i.e. Medical Adviser/ LAAC Nurse) at the time of</td>
<td>Dr Sarah Brown Jayne Miller Maureen Bell</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
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<td>% of audited assessments which reflect continuity of care</td>
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