

Falkirk's Integrated Children and Young People's Services Plan

2023-2026



Contents

- Foreword 3
- Falkirk's Vision, National and Local priorities5
- Falkirk's Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group's Governance Structure8
- Falkirk's Children and Young People's Population and Data10
- Falkirk's Children and Young People's Outcomes Focused Plan28
- Children's Rights and UNCRC Incorporation29
- The Promise Implementation (Corporate Parenting, Family Support and Whole Family Wellbeing) .30
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)32
- Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.....34
- Increasing Employability36
- Falkirk's Children's Services Workforce Learning & Development38
- Evaluation and Reporting41
- Measuring Success41

Appendices

- Appendix 1 details Falkirk's Children & Young People's Strategic Leadership subgroup membership .42
- Appendix 2 provides Falkirk's Children & Young People Data Sources43

Foreword

We want Falkirk to be a great place for children and young people to live, to learn and to thrive.

Our Integrated Children's Services Plan for 2023-2026 sets out our collective vision, aims and ambitions across the Falkirk Children's Services Planning Partnership (the Partnership), to ensure that our children and young people have the best possible start in life, and grow up feeling safe, loved and respected to fulfil their full potential.

Our Plan reflects our collaboration and commitment to improving the lives and outcomes for children and young people. It sets out the current challenges that face many of our children, young people, families, and services as well as the opportunities to support them grow up to be healthy, confident and resilient.

By working together, we will ensure that the right help and support is available at the right time, in right place for as long as it is needed.

We fully understand that our local communities continue to experience and navigate a post pandemic recovery alongside the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. And, yet despite this most of our children and young people continue to flourish and grow and we want to make Falkirk the best place we can for them.

This Plan is aligned to and sits alongside other statutory plans which are detailed within this report. More than ever, we are seeking ways to ensure that our services are designed and delivered to take account of the views and wishes of our children, young people, and their families. In the coming months, and for the lifetime of this Plan, we want to embed and deliver this approach into our everyday interactions. True and meaningful engagement is key to our success.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathie Cowan".

Cathie Cowan
Chief Executive
NHS Forth Valley



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Lawrie".

Kenneth Lawrie
Chief Executive
Falkirk Council



Our vision:
**To make Falkirk
the best place we
can for all our
children and
young people to
grow up to be
loved, safe and
respected to
achieve their full
potential.**

Local and National Priorities

Falkirk Children's Services Planning Partnership is operating in a changing national and local policy landscape, that impacts directly on how we work together to deliver services to those most in need. Some of the big changes include:

- National Child Protection Guidance (2021) - Following publication of the guidance in September 2021, a National Implementation Group was established for a two-year period to support implementation of this non statutory guidance, and whilst this will come to an end in September 2023, it is recognised that many aspects of guidance development work will continue after this time. In Falkirk we have supported the establishment of a Forth Valley National Child Protection Guidance Implementation Group chaired by an Independent Chair in recognition of a single NHS Board and Police Division across Forth Valley.
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Refresh - GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. We have been using the framework for several years in Falkirk, it has been positively embraced by services and practitioners across our Children's Services Planning Partnership, with a focus on changing culture, systems, and practice for the benefit of babies, infants, children, young people and their families. National refreshed policy and practice materials were published in September 2022 which has strengthened the principles and values on children's rights, use of the wellbeing indicators to assess at a point in time and consider how to improve wellbeing using the National Practice Model. We have established an improvement collaborative to drive our response to this refresh.
- The Promise - sets out Scotland's ambition for children and young people that 'we grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential' based on the findings from the Care Review, published in February 2020, on the experiences of care experienced children and young people.

Whilst there are many facets to Keeping the Promise, in Falkirk we have been actively engaging with our care experienced Champs Board to undertake and evidence tangible improvements. We have made good progress and recognise we have more to do. In its Programme of Government, the Scottish Government, has committed to investing at least £500m over the life of this Parliament to create a Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. This will enable the building of universal, holistic support services, available in communities across Scotland, giving families access to the help they need, where and when they need it. Fundamentally, this is about significantly reducing the number of children and young people who are living away from their families by 2030. As a partnership we have recruited to a Promise Implementation Team to coordinate our work on delivering on the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, which is one component of our joint commitment to Keep the Promise.

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - The National Child Protection Guidance, Getting it Right for Every Child and The Promise each have a strong focus which is firmly rooted in the delivery of children's rights. The Scottish Government continues to make progress on the incorporation of UNCRC which will introduce new duties to all local authorities in Scotland. In Falkirk, we are committed to fully adopting and promoting a rights-based approach, with the voice of children and young people at the heart of service design and delivery, and to ensure full compatibility across the partnership. To prepare for this we have been working alongside the Improvement Service to develop an action plan that will set out our key priorities and objectives. This important work will be informed by the growing initiative of Falkirk Youth Voice and Falkirk's Champs Board.
- Practice Improvements - The Scottish Child Interview Model is a five-component model of practice designed to capture evidence from children who have been harmed at an early stage while promoting their right to recovery. The five components are strategy, planning, action, outcome, and support, evaluation, learning and development. We

will be implementing the Scottish Child Interview Model in Falkirk along with our Forth Valley Partners over the duration of this plan. Bairns' Hoose is Scotland's approach to the Icelandic 'Barnahus', which means 'children's house'. Bairns' Hoose offers holistic, child-centred support to those who have been victims or witness of abuse and to children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused harm. As part of its 2022 - 2023 Programme for Government, a commitment has been made to "Set out the next steps in ensuring access to "Bairns' Hoose" services for all children referred for support".

- Children, young people, and families seeking refuge - the Westminster and Scottish Governments have outlined several resettlement schemes for individuals seeking refuge. As a partnership we recognise the importance of working together to support integration and access to universal service provision for those who have been resettled in Falkirk. The implementation of the National Transfer Scheme protocol for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has witnessed Falkirk accommodate a number of children and young people in accordance with our statutory responsibilities. Support for these children and young people is often complex. We have a clear pathway to ensure that appropriate support is provided based on assessed need.
- Resources - in Falkirk we are experiencing challenges in the delivery of our services due to the availability of human resources. National and local shortages of qualified and registered staff in different sectors across the partnership is presenting a real challenge. We have a duty of care to our workforce as well as protecting those in our communities most in need and have had to work collaboratively to ensure a joint approach to consider how we can make best use of the human resources available to us across the partnership. In addition, there is significant pressure on placement resources for children in need of care and protection with a national and local shortage of foster carers.



At a local level, the Partnership has identified our priorities through a refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), taking into consideration the post pandemic context. The JSNA has highlighted the challenges faced by some of Falkirk's children, young people, and families, which for them are significant.

In addition, we have reviewed our key performance outcomes using data analysis of quality indicator 1.1 of the key performance outcomes in the Care Inspectorate Quality framework for children and young people in need of care and protection NOV 2022.pdf ([careinspectorate.com](https://www.careinspectorate.com))

We will also refer to other recent data sets provided by the Scottish Government's national Mental Health and Wellbeing survey for school age children Health and Wellbeing Census Scotland 2021- 2022 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) as well as a recent workforce survey.

This Plan focuses on the way in which we will work collaboratively across the partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people and families.

Given the complexity of these priorities, the partnership does not do this in isolation. This plan takes account of and contributes towards the identified outcomes within each of the following:

- Falkirk's Local Child Poverty Action Report 2021
- Fairer Falkirk - Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019-2024
- Falkirk's Community Learning and Development Action Plan 2021 - 2024
- Falkirk ADP Delivery Plan 2023-26
- The Falkirk Plan 2021-2030 Community Planning - The Falkirk Plan | Falkirk Council

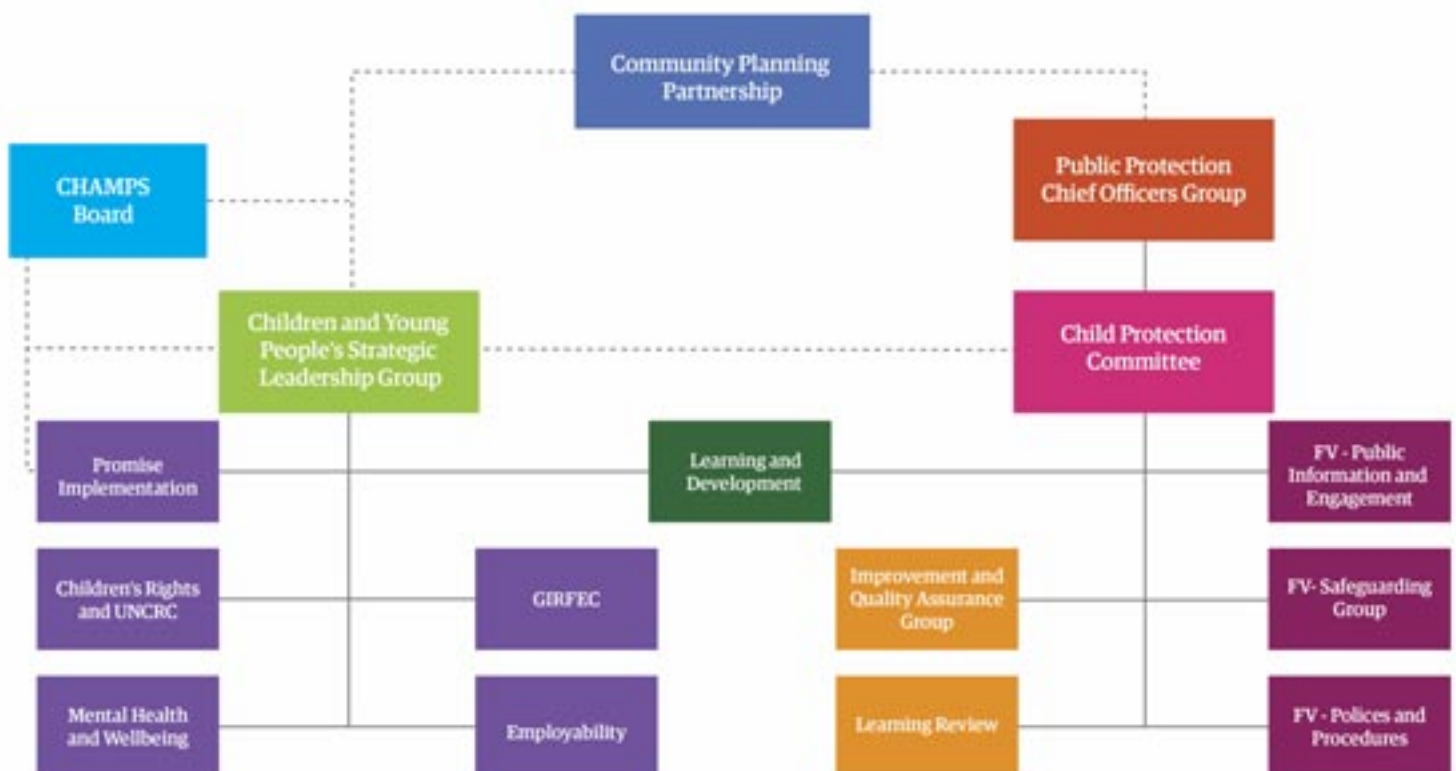
Falkirk's Children's Services Planning Partnership sits within the Governance Structure shown below. As a Partnership we have taken the opportunity to review and refresh our Governance arrangements to illustrate the connectivity and reporting structure between each of the subgroups directly into the Strategic Leadership Group. This also highlights the broader relationship that exists with Falkirk's Public Protection arrangements and the Community Planning Partnership.

Falkirk's Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group

The multi-agency partners that make up Falkirk's Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group constitute the Children Services Planning Partnership (CSPP). The Leadership Group directs the strategic planning, development and where applicable, delivery of children and young people's services.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group is made up of the following partners:

- NHS Forth Valley
- Third/Voluntary Sector
- Falkirk's Health and Social Care Partnership
- Forth Valley College (Falkirk Campus)
- Skills Development Scotland
- Police Scotland
- Falkirk Council
- Falkirk Council Children's Services
- Falkirk Council Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services



Public Protection Chief Officers Group

Public Protection includes Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Gender Based Violence and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

The purpose of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group is to provide leadership, direction, and oversight through the scrutiny of the joined up public protection response in Falkirk, to ensure that they are delivering their best services. The group brings together senior officers from agencies who have a clear role in Public Protection. For our children and young people, this includes.

- Falkirk Council
- Chief Executive
- Director of Children's Services
- Head of Children's Social Work/ Chief Social Work Officer
- Independent Chair of the Child Protection Committee
- Police Scotland Area Commander
- NHS Forth Valley Chief Executive
- Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Executive

...keeping all children in Falkirk safe from abuse and neglect...

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) is an inter agency strategic partnership. It is responsible for developing, implementing, and improving our Child Protection strategy across and between agencies and the local community.

The Committee aims to support staff and members of the public to make sure Falkirk is the best place in Scotland to grow up, and to keep all children in Falkirk safe from abuse and neglect. The Child Protection Committee members hold senior roles within their organisations and have child protection as part of their remit. Members include Education, Housing, Social Work, NHS Forth Valley, Police, Third Sector, and the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration.

The Child Protection Committee reports to the Falkirk Public Protection Chief Officers Group. The key roles of the Child Protection Committee are:

- Public Information, engagement, and participation
- Continuous Improvement
- Strategic planning and connections

Public Information, engagement and participation encompasses how we engage with the public, families, children, and young people. The aim is to:

- Raise awareness about child about and neglect.
- Ensure information is available to the public about what to do if you have a concern about a child who may be at risk of harm.

Key messages include helping the public to understand that all adults play a role in keeping children safe from harm.

Continuous improvement is the biggest priority of the Committee, and it is responsible for giving clear guidance, policies, and procedures in child protection related areas.

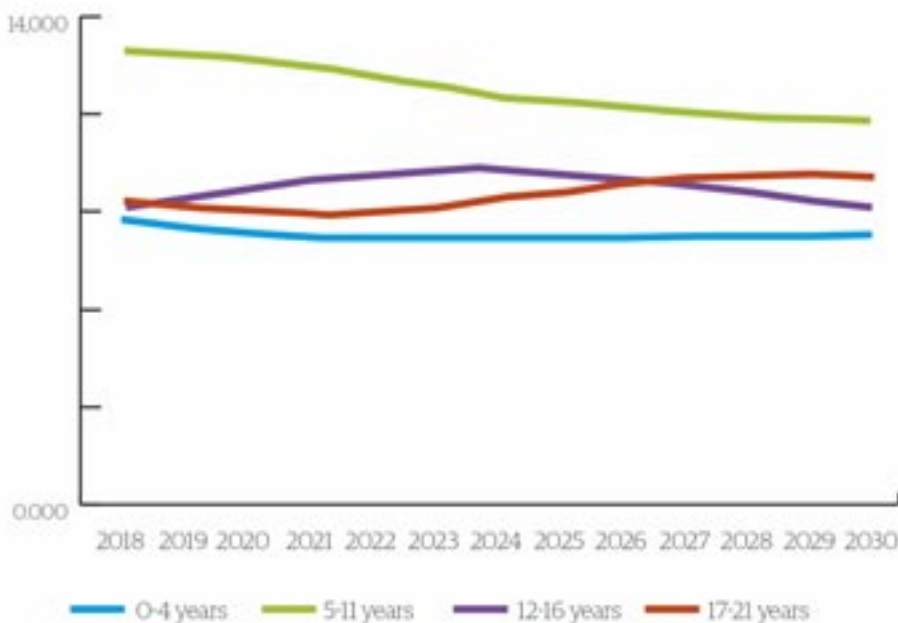
Profile of Falkirk

Population and Data

We must understand the current needs of our children, young people and families across the Falkirk area to help inform the key priorities for delivery within the Integrated Children's Service Plan. We recently updated and refreshed our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which provides us with the data informed trends and landscape in which we are currently delivering services.

 **Live Births**
1466

Falkirk Young Peoples Population Projections 2018-2030




Number of Children aged 5 in Local Authority (March 2023)
1657


Pupils whose home language is not English.
1370





Children living in absolute poverty

Falkirk's Child Poverty Action Plan seeks to address our absolute and relative Child Poverty rates which are slightly above the national average



Children in Temporary Accommodation

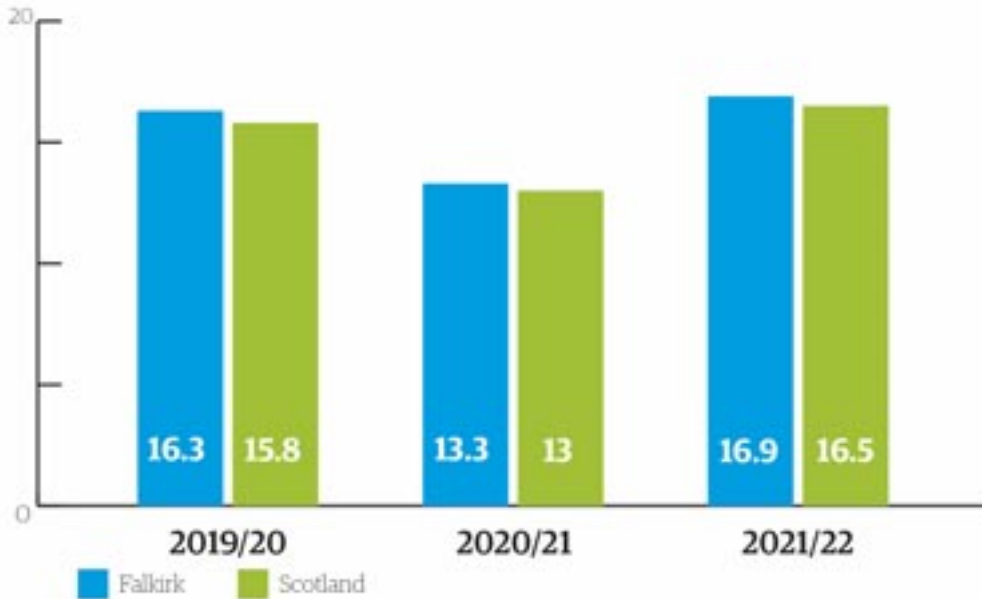
90



No of Children referred to Children's Hearing (January 2023)

218

Children Living In Absolute Low Income Families Across Falkirk (%)



Alcohol and Drug Related Admissions for Young People

NHS Forth Valley, 2022

Condition	FY2019/20	FY2020/21	FY2021/22
Alcohol	67	34	50
Drugs	30	35	22

Homelessness Presentations





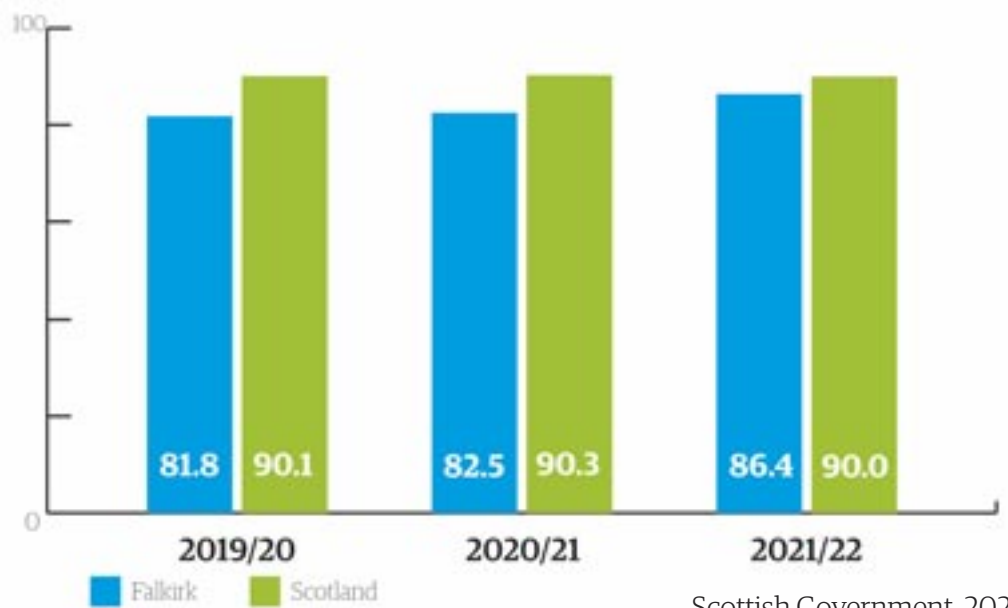


Looked After Children

We are shifting the balance of care towards community based places for children who need to be looked after away from home.

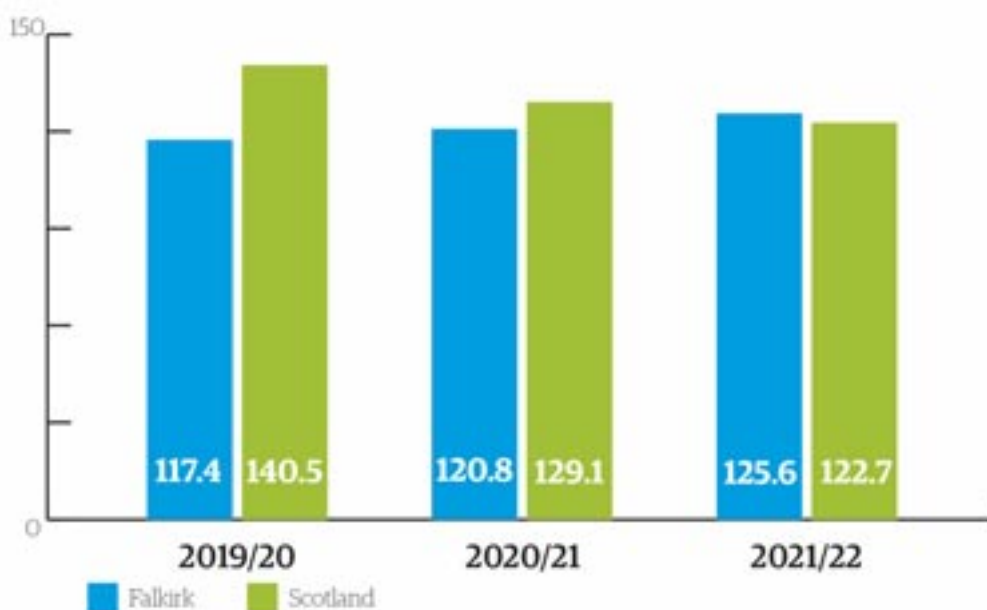


Balance of care between community and residential at 31 July (%)

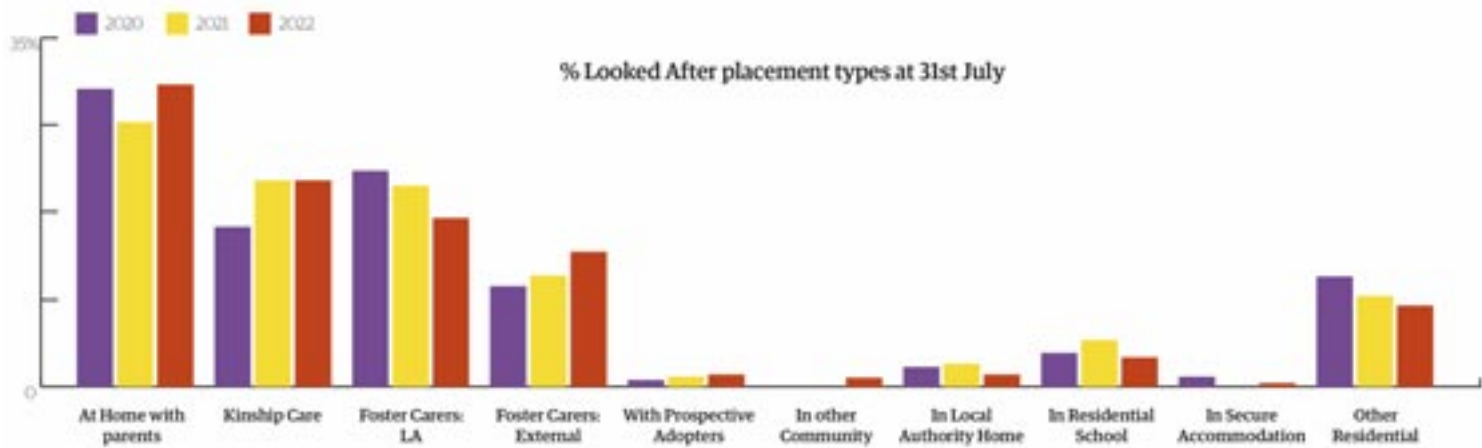


Scottish Government, 2021

Children Looked After by rate per 10,000 population at 31st July

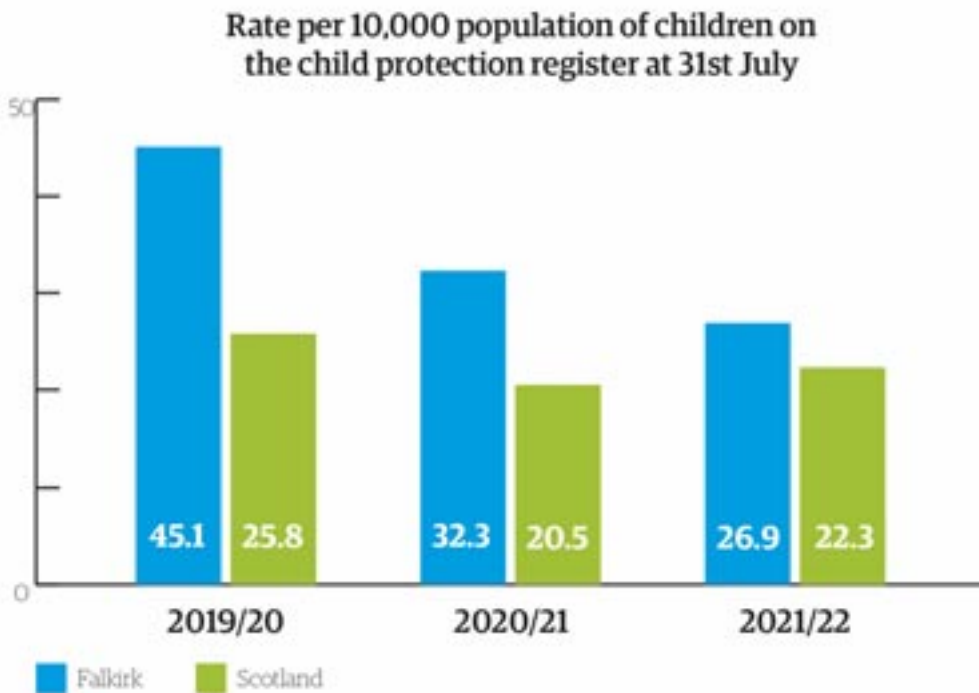


Scottish Government, 2022



Falkirk Council, 2022

Child Protection



Child Protection Register, Scottish Government, 2022



486
Police Scotland
Wellbeing Concerns
(January 2023)



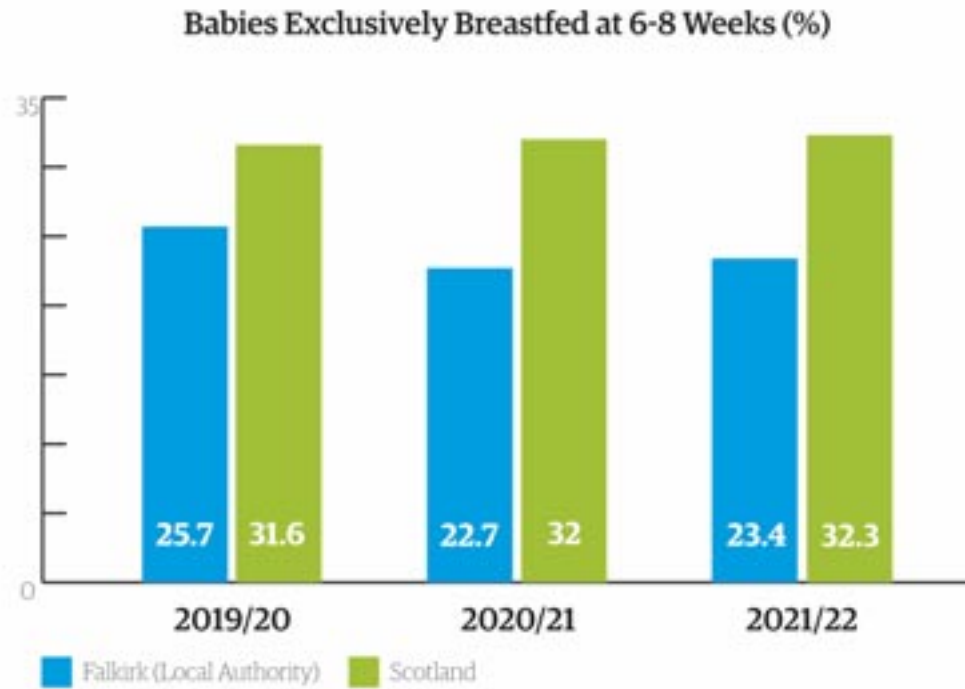
75
Children on Child Protection
Register (July 22)



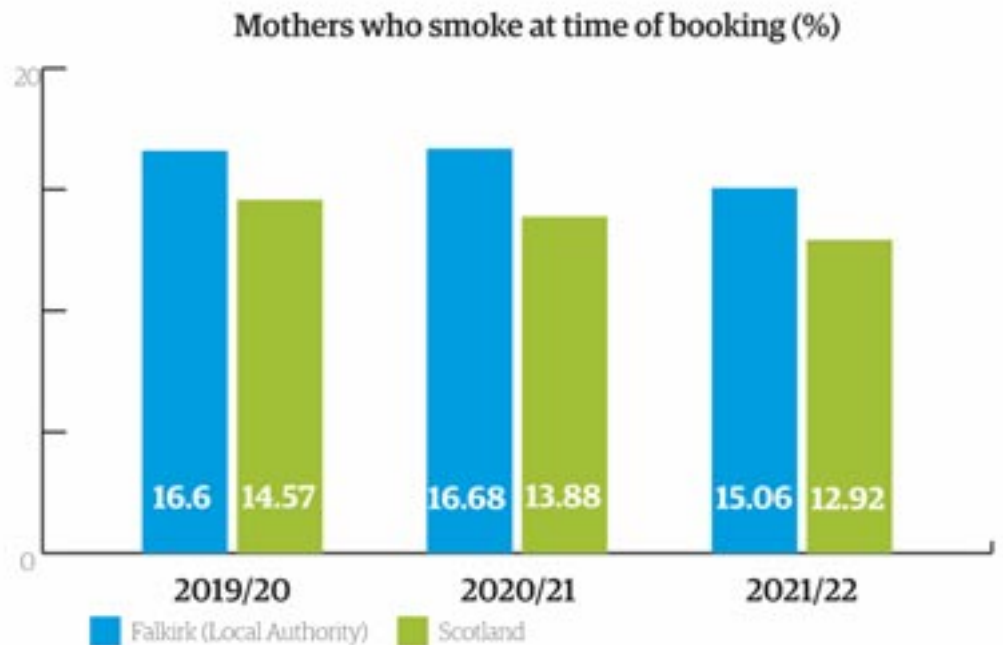
Alongside the work of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and as part of our ongoing commitment to quality assurance and improvement work using the Care Inspectorate QI 1.1 Framework, we have reviewed and updated our data in Falkirk across the Partnership to help inform planning which reflects the local challenges and priorities. This has provided us with a range of up-to-date information and local insight on how Falkirk is comparing nationally.

Early Prevention and Early Intervention

This theme focuses primarily on health statistics affecting children and young people.



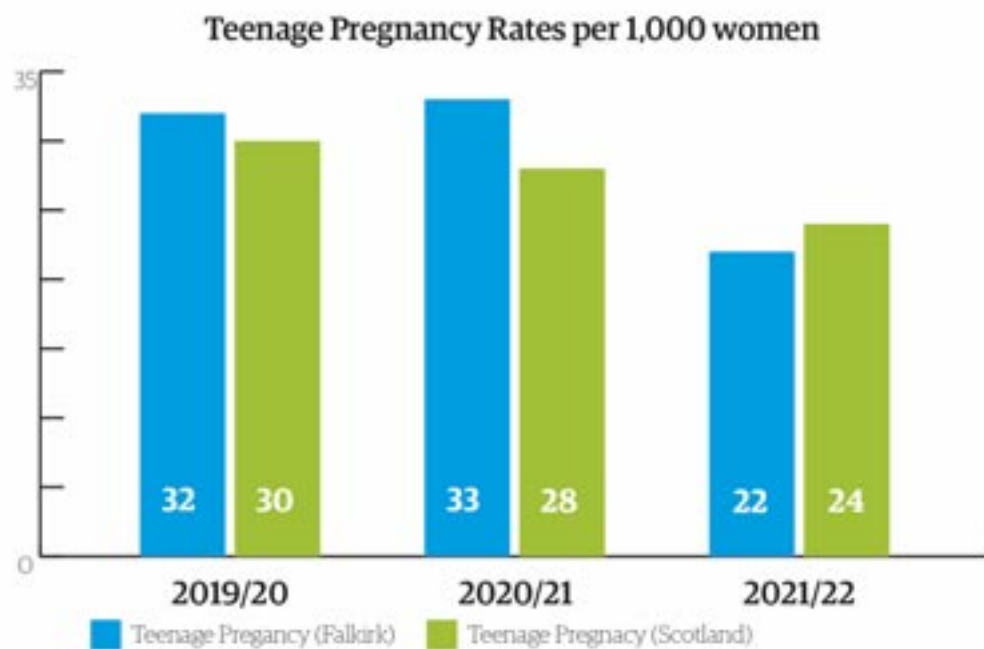
Babies Exclusively Breastfed at 6-8 Weeks (%) by Intermediate Zone, ScotPho, 2022



ScotPho, 2023

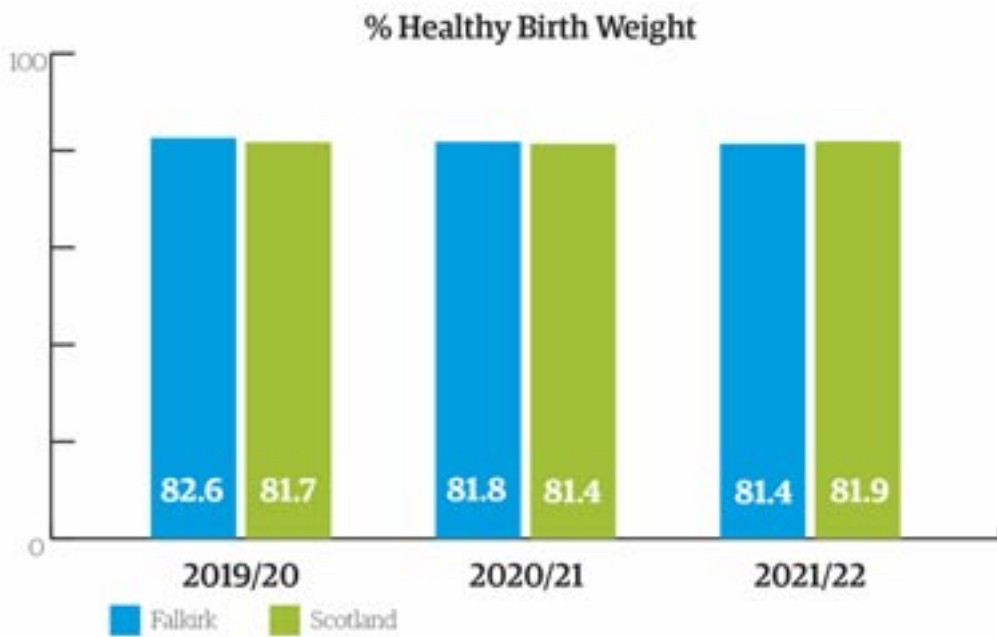
Improvements in Outcomes for Children And Young People

This theme focuses primarily on additional health statistics affecting children and young people.



PHS, 2022

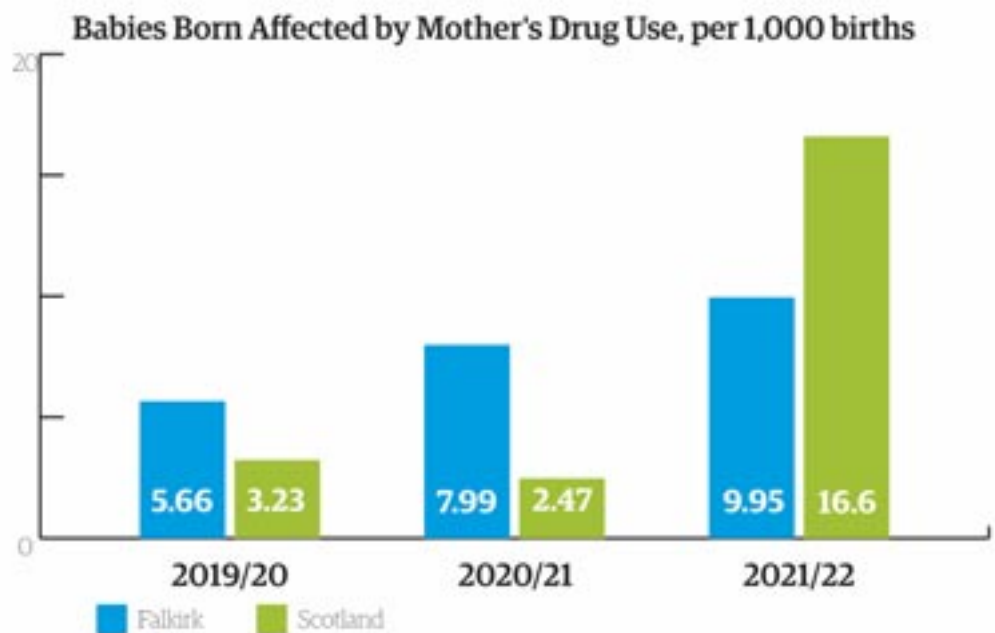




Public Health Scotland, 2023



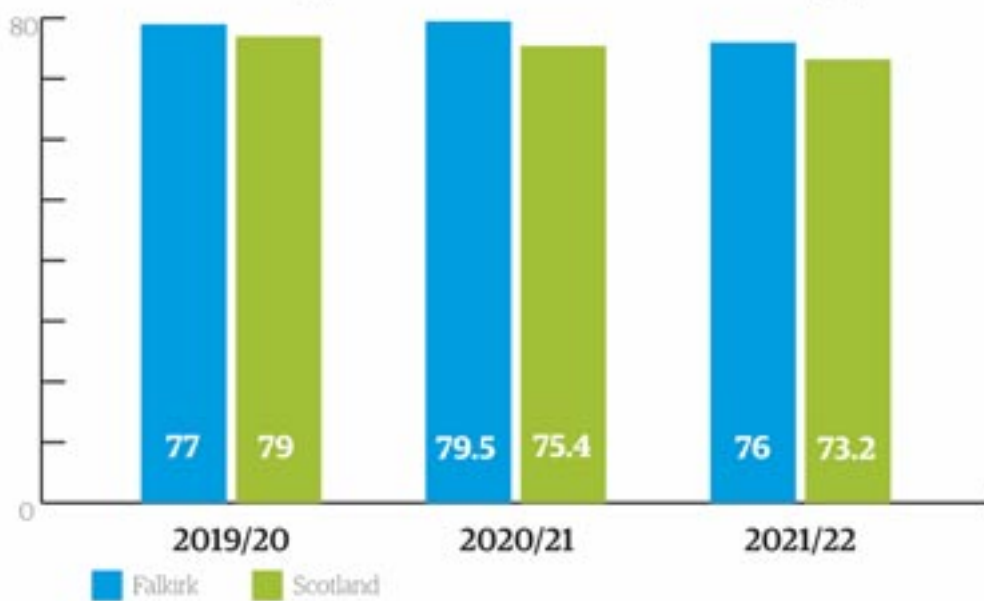
Low birth weight babies 2021/22
6.40%



Public Health Scotland, 2023



Developmental Concerns at 27-30 months (%)



ScotPho, 2023

Children Achieving Expected Levels in Literacy and Numeracy

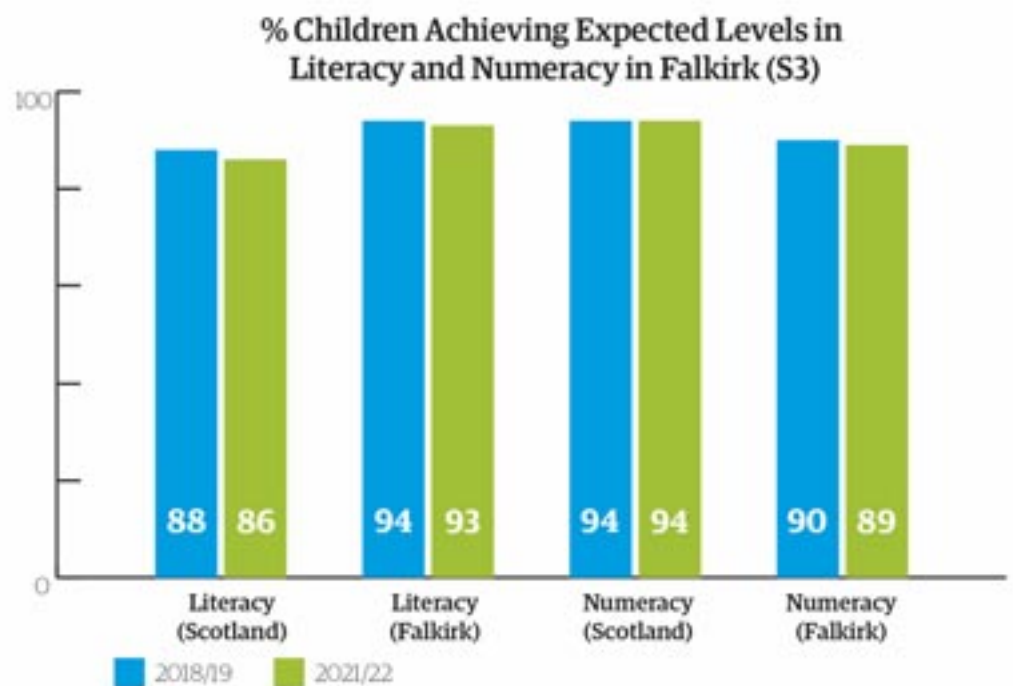
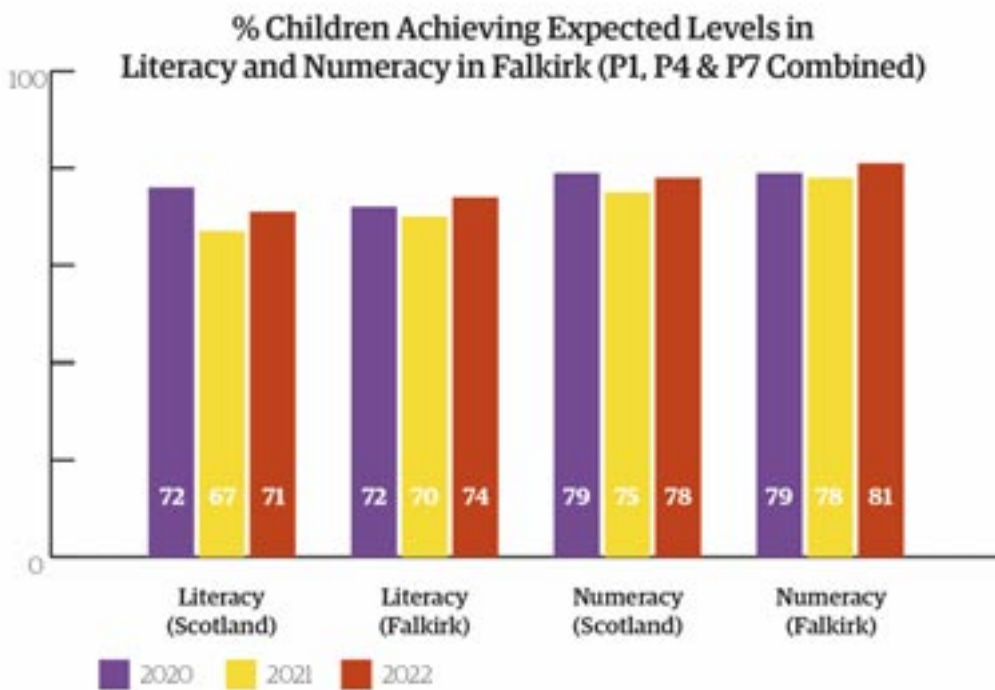
Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy by stage and local authority, Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Level 2020/21, Scottish Government, 2023



School Roll

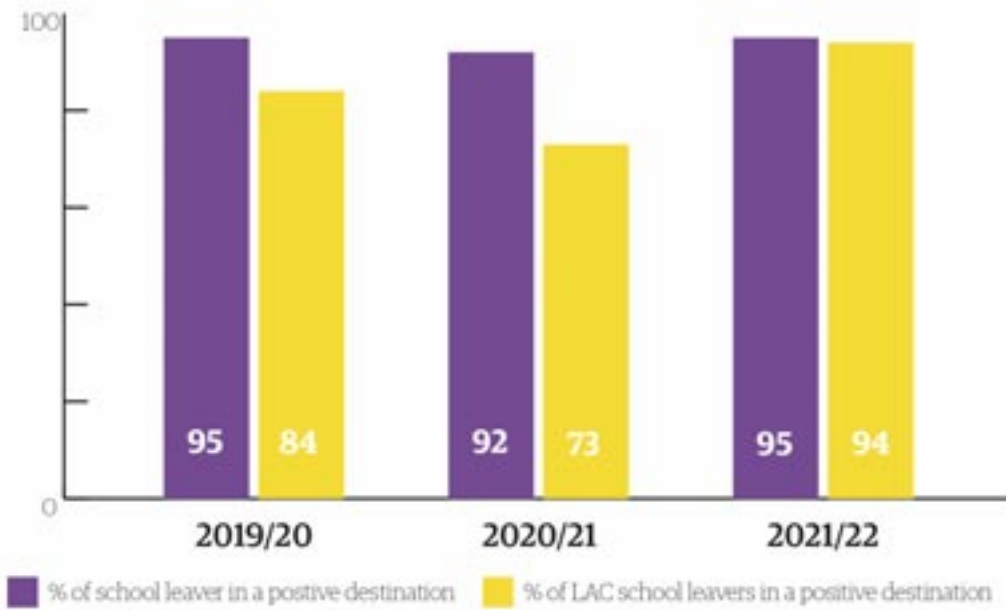
Primary
11795

Secondary
9667



School Leavers

% Positive School Leaver Destinations

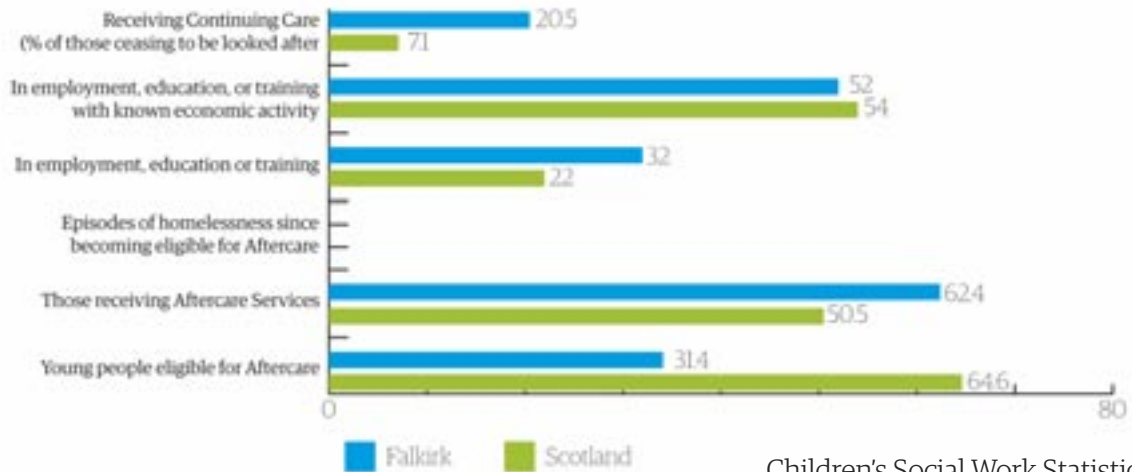


Falkirk Council, 2022.



Improvements in the Life Chances of Vulnerable Children and Young People

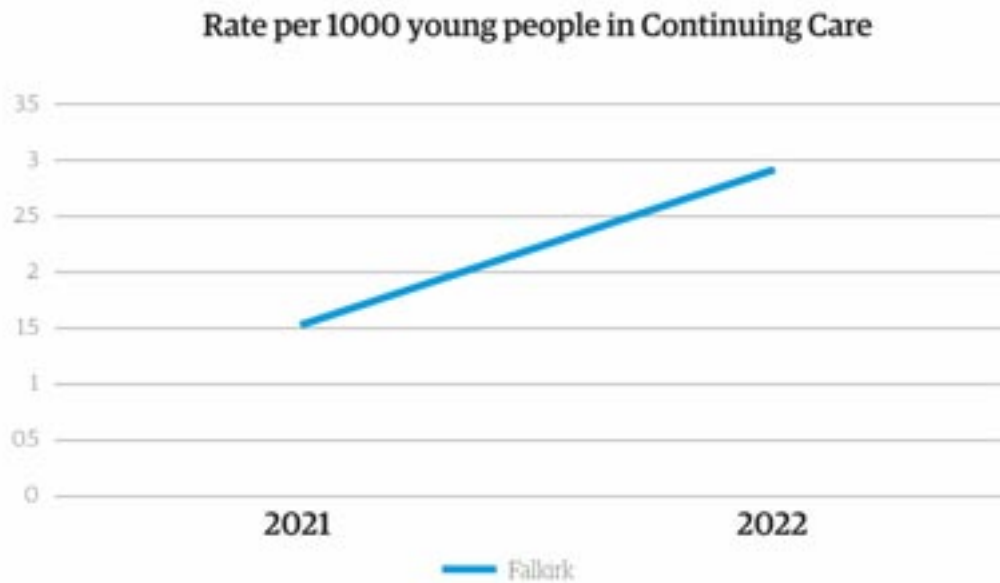
% Care Leavers by destination type on 31st July 2022



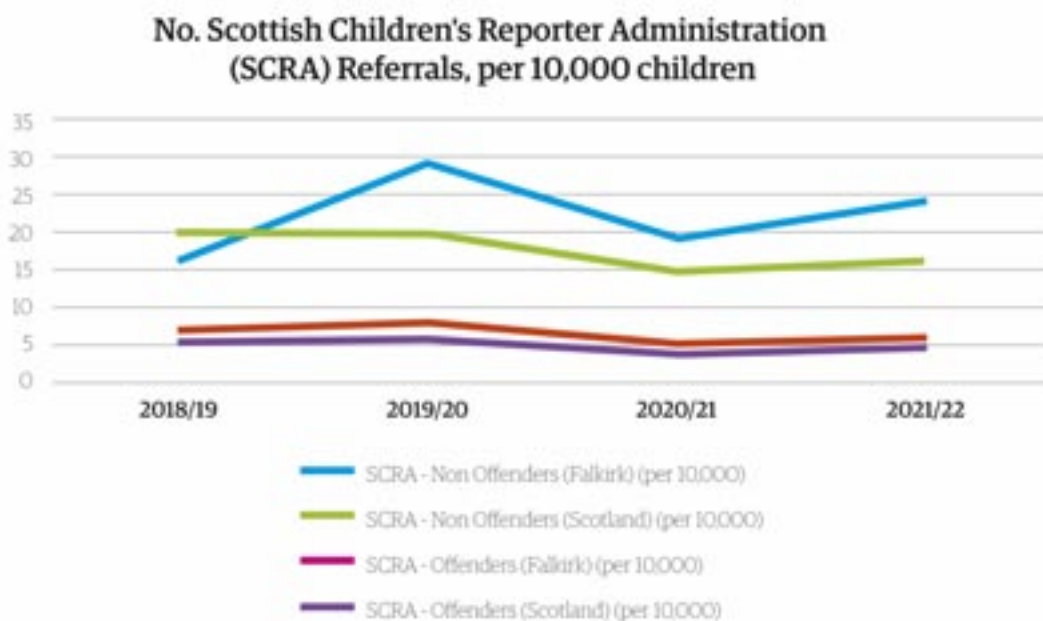
Children's Social Work Statistics 2021-22,
Scottish Government, 2023



Continuing Care



Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)



Summary Findings From Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

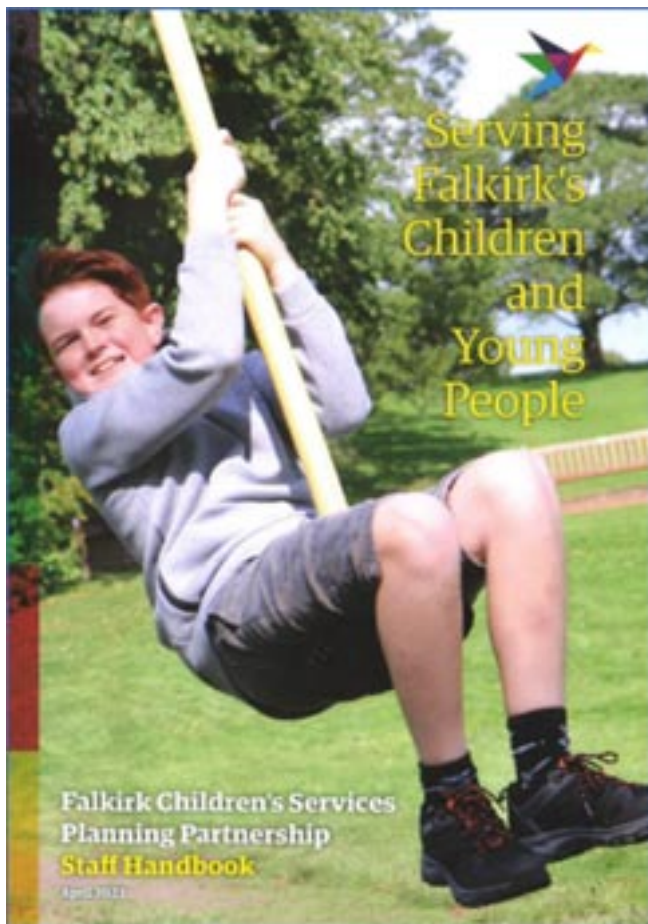
- The overall attainment of primary school pupils in Falkirk is above the Scottish average. Closing the poverty related attainment gap remains a priority.
- Reported S3 educational performance decreased in Falkirk but so did the attainment gap.
- In 2021/22, attainment for primary school pupils increased in both literacy and numeracy by 4% and 3% respectively from 2020/21. The national average also increased by the same margin during this time, however Falkirk remains higher than the Scottish picture.
- Falkirk's Looked After children rate is lower than Scotland's. Also, according to official publications, Falkirk's child protection registration rate is higher than the Scottish average. However, this rate has decreased to below the national figures through more recent unpublished reports.
- The educational attainment for care leavers in Falkirk is much higher than the national average. However, COVID 19 has likely impacted recent findings as the attainment in Falkirk has decreased since 2020.
- The proportion of people in Falkirk affected by drug and alcohol use in Falkirk is higher than the national average.
- Relative poverty has increased across Falkirk annually. The gap between our most and least affluent wards is 14.1% - this is an increase of 3.5% since 2019/2020.
- Domestic abuse incidents across Falkirk have steadily increased throughout the pandemic, and there were 170 more reported incidents in 2021/22 than in 2018/19.
- Falkirk is higher than the national average for maternal smoking.

The overall attainment of primary school pupils in Falkirk is above the Scottish average...

Health & Wellbeing Survey

A Scottish Government (2022) survey of school age pupils was undertaken anonymously focusing on aspects of children and young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. The results across the Falkirk area provided useful data which detailed areas for future intervention in relation to diet; poor sleep patterns; increased screen time and digital online activities as well as an increase in reported use of vapes and alcohol consumption.

Further investigation and interrogation of this as a collective partnership will help us to shape and develop age-appropriate interventions that are timely and proportionate in addressing unmet needs.



Workforce Survey

As part of our continuous improvement work in 2022, the partnership undertook a staff survey which provided a rounded picture of the health of the Children's Services Planning Partnership. Whilst the workforce recognised some of the macro issues over which they have little control which impacted on families, for example the cost-of-living crisis and post pandemic recovery, the collective responses provided an encouraging view on the progress of work being undertaken.

Across the workforce, staff were asked their view on whether 'the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people at risk of harm are getting better' and 'the GIRFEC approach is having a positive impact on the lives of children and young people at risk of harm at we work with', both statements were met positively with two thirds of staff responding that they agreed or strongly agreed.

Sixty two percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed when responding to 'I am confident that effective intervention processes are in place to prevent or reduce incidences of accumulating signs of child abuse, neglect or exploitation'.

An overwhelming 95% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that 'I have the knowledge, skills and confidence to assess the risk and needs of children and young people that they work with'. When asked 'I know the standards of practice expected of me' 98% agreed/strongly agreed with 82% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they received 'regular supervision or opportunities to speak with their line manager and get support from colleagues to achieve high standards of practice'.

86% agreed/strongly agreed to 'having the learning and development opportunities to increase confidence in working with children at risk of harm'.

89% reported they were "proud of the contribution that they made to improve the wellbeing of children and young people at risk of harm and their families".

69% agreed that "leaders have a clear vision for the delivery and improvement of services we provide for children and young people at risk of harm".

In response to the staff survey the partnership developed a Staff Handbook for the CSPP workforce to illustrate and contextualise the 'bigger picture', provide detail around the key priorities and outline how individual partners come together to progress a shared agenda.

Our Outcome Focused Plan

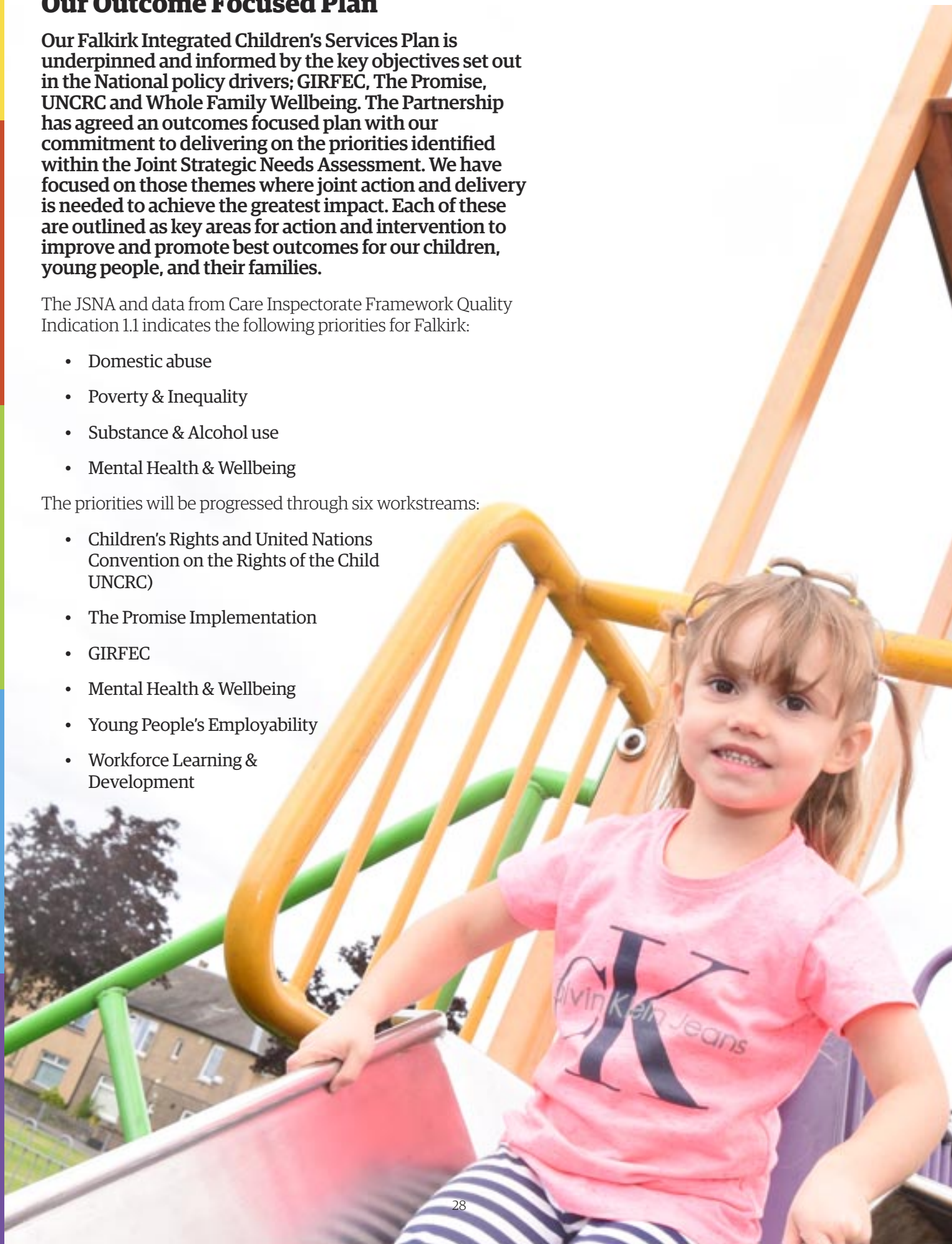
Our Falkirk Integrated Children's Services Plan is underpinned and informed by the key objectives set out in the National policy drivers; GIRFEC, The Promise, UNCRC and Whole Family Wellbeing. The Partnership has agreed an outcomes focused plan with our commitment to delivering on the priorities identified within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. We have focused on those themes where joint action and delivery is needed to achieve the greatest impact. Each of these are outlined as key areas for action and intervention to improve and promote best outcomes for our children, young people, and their families.

The JSNA and data from Care Inspectorate Framework Quality Indication 1.1 indicates the following priorities for Falkirk:

- Domestic abuse
- Poverty & Inequality
- Substance & Alcohol use
- Mental Health & Wellbeing

The priorities will be progressed through six workstreams:

- Children's Rights and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Promise Implementation
- GIRFEC
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Young People's Employability
- Workforce Learning & Development



Children's Rights and UNCRC

Falkirk's Children's Services Planning Partnership will ensure that children and young people are supported to participate in decision making that will affect them, other children and young people, whether that be at local, regional, or national levels. We will promote and embed their rights and improve the outcomes for all our children and young people to ensure that they reach their full potential.

We respect the right of children and young people to family life and to grow up loved, safe and respected. We also understand our responsibilities to protect the rights of our most vulnerable groups of children and young people who experience barriers due to the impact of abuse and poverty.

We will incorporate the UNCRC into our policies and procedures and work together to ensure that the values and ethos are fully implemented. We will actively include the views of children and young people by ensuring that they have greater opportunities to contribute and participate in planning and service design. We will do this by being creative and expanding on the existing networks of Falkirk's Champions Board, Falkirk's Advocacy services and Falkirk's Youth Voice.

The Children' Rights and UNCRC Group aims to ensure that our children and young people are empowered participants at the heart of decision making across the partnership. This is in line with the UNCRC incorporation into Scots Law.

In future years, we have agreed as a Partnership, to include and report on the progress of Children's Rights, within our annual report.

Children's Rights and UNCRC		
We will ensure UNCRC is fully implemented, highlighting that the rights of children and young people are respected and embedded in practice across Falkirk's Children's Services Planning Partnership.		
To make it happen	How will we make it happen?	Who is leading the changes needed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in activities which support children and young people to exercise their rights. • Increase organisations/services awareness of their responsibilities around UNCRC incorporation and how this will impact on their practice. • Launch of 'Falkirk Youth Voice' • Develop a child friendly complaints process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children/young people participating in Falkirk's Champions Board. • Children/young people participating in Falkirk's Youth Voice. • Schools becoming Rights Respecting Schools 	Children's Rights and UNCRC Subgroup

The Promise Implementation including Corporate Parenting, Family Support and Whole Family Wellbeing

Following the Independent Care Review, the Scottish Government has made a commitment that nationally we must 'come together and love its most vulnerable children to give them the childhood they deserve.' We are committed to these ambitions for children, young people and families living here. These ambitions are set out in **The Promise - The Promise**.

The Promise Plan 21-24

The Promise requires all local authorities, NHS boards and their partners to ensure every care experienced child will have access to intensive support that ensures their educational and health needs are fully met. In Falkirk this will be delivered through our The Promise Implementation Subgroup and its delivery plan.

The Promise Implementation Delivery Plan is being developed with engagement and participation of children and young people and all partners in Falkirk. The delivery plan will reflect the following elements:

- A Good Childhood including Council Family
- Whole Family Wellbeing Support
- Workforce Development and Support
- Future Planning

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines Corporate Parenting as 'the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people, and care leavers.' As a partnership we are fully committed to building upon our Corporate Parenting responsibilities.



The Promise Implementation (Corporate Parenting, Family Support and Whole Family Wellbeing)

We will strive to ensure that Falkirk is one of the best places to grow up so that children are loved, safe, and respected and realise their full potential.

To make it happen	How will we make it happen?	Who is leading the changes needed?
<p>Involve Falkirk's Children and Families and the Partnership workforce in deciding our priorities moving forward in our work to realise the Promise within the Falkirk area</p> <p>Develop and adapt our approach as we progress in our work, taking account of the feedback we receive from Falkirk's children and families and the Partnership workforce, as well as emerging guidance and advice from COSLA, Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland, and the Care Inspectorate</p> <p>Make data driven/ evidence informed decisions. Taking a Service Design (Co-design) approach to our thinking and methodology</p> <p>A shift towards a preventative/early intervention approach will underpin our work with regards to service design and funding bids, with investments made now being justified by costs avoided into the future.</p>	<p>Feedback loop of what children and families in Falkirk tell us in terms of what is effective in meeting their needs.</p> <p>Adoption and use of Promise Mapping tool which outlines all action required under Plan 21-24. This can help evidence progress for Falkirk and how Falkirk compares nationally with other local authorities in relation to progress complying with The Promise.</p> <p>Feedback from children and families and the Partnership workforce.</p> <p>Decisions made are grounded in what Falkirk children and families/ the partnership workforce/ emerging research and evidence in the field tell us.</p> <p>Gearing our services to reduce dependency on more specialist/ crisis driven approach in line with the ask of the Promise to have more services based on the principles of early intervention.</p>	<p>Promise Implementation subgroup.</p>

...we must 'come together and love its most vulnerable children to give them the childhood they deserve.'

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Getting it Right for Every Child is the Scottish Government's approach to supporting children and young people. In September 2022, Scottish Government launched a refresh of the GIRFEC guidance at a National level, GIRFEC values and principles which have been strengthened and underpinned by UNCRC ensuring that policy and practice is aligned to fulfil children's rights.

Across our partnership, we will promote early intervention through multi agency working at an early stage. This remains a key priority to support early and effective intervention. When it is identified that children and young people may require additional supports, we hold a Team Around the Child meeting to share information and seek to work alongside families using a strengths-based approach. We want to promote resilience and work together to improve outcomes for our children.

We will ensure that we are implementing the new guidance robustly and consistently across the Children's Services Planning Partnership hence the need for a subgroup to drive forward this key agenda.

As part of informing the workforce a programme of learning events is planned throughout the year to ensure that the refresh guidance is embedded in practice and service delivery.

Through the implementation of Scotland's National Performance Framework, we are working together to deliver The Promise within the principles of GIRFEC by ensuring that all children and families have access to the right support when they need it, for as long as it is needed. For most children their needs will be met by their parents, families and community resources in health and education. For those children who require additional help, we aim to provide this based on the principles of early and effective intervention delivered through a planned and coordinated rights-based approach. The guiding principles of GIRFEC underpin our approaches with children and their families.

The voice of the child and their views will be at the heart of our decision making and we will remove barriers to active and meaningful participation with families. One way in which we achieve this is through the Family Group Decision Making model which provides support to families to be inclusive and active in the decisions that affect them. This has been successful in promoting choice and encouraging families to share their views and opinions.

In Falkirk we have developed one Integrated Lead Professional Assessment and Child's Plan which includes a child's chronology and action plan. This replaced our previous paperwork and was developed in response to feedback from children, young people, and families.

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)		
We will ensure that all of Falkirk's children to grow up to be loved, safe and respected to reach their full potential.		
To make it happen	How will we make it happen?	Who is leading the changes needed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and promote a common understanding of wellbeing across the Children's Services Planning Partnership and promote the GIRFEC principles and refreshed materials. Ensure that the GIRFEC principles are firmly embedded in practice so that children in Falkirk grow up to be loved, safe and respected. We will ensure that our policies, procedures, and guidance are updated to reflect the GIRFEC refresh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate GIRFEC refresh multi agency training provided across the partnership. Gather feedback and learn from children, young people, and parents/carers on their views of how they feel loved, safe, and respected and able to reach their full potential. Gather feedback from staff to assess how training and other sharing of information has impacted on their practice. 	GIRFEC Subgroup.



“ We want to promote resilience and work together to improve outcomes for our children. ”

Mental Health and Wellbeing

In Falkirk we will continue to focus on improving the mental health and wellbeing of all our children and young people as a key priority. We aim to achieve this through:

- supporting children to thrive and become resilient.
- developing a whole systems approach: right intervention at the right time.

We know from our data within the JSNA that there is a growing trend of substance and alcohol use within our teenage population which can impact on mental health and wellbeing, and that this is a current issue for the partnership to address and for us to get right. The impact of the effect on mental health and wellbeing has been further compounded by the pandemic. We want services to be responsive and flexible to the needs of our children and young people and ensure that they have access to the right support at the right time, when they need it. We aim to reduce the likelihood of children and young people experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing and promote the ability and confidence of our workforce to support those who require it.

We identified four actions to support improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of our children, young people, and families:

- Develop universal services to support positive mental health and wellbeing
- Increase the voices and contributions of our children and young people to design and shape services
- Staff development
- Work with parents to enable them to support their children effectively

Given the identified gaps in our service provision there is a need to further develop and create 24-hour digital provision for mental health, out with attendance at A & E. We are working in partnership with Aberlour, Barnardo's and Falkirk & District Association for Mental Health (FDAMH) to provide a range of early intervention and wellbeing supports which are flexible, personalised, and adaptive for our children, young people, and their families.

We recognise the importance of supporting our front-line staff to deliver services and have access to the appropriate level of training. We are equipping our workforce with a good understanding of working from a trauma informed approach which is based on the six principles of safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment; voice and choice; and cultural issues. We are developing our trauma informed policy and guidance to equip the workforce to deliver services adopting this approach.




Mental Health and Wellbeing

We will aim to reduce the likelihood of children and young people experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing and increase the capacity of our workforce to support those who are in need.

To make it happen	How will we make it happen?	Who is leading the changes needed?
<p>Alongside our partners we will continue to develop our services to ensure that our children and young people have access to the right support at the right time.</p> <p>We will promote the services available and ensure good communication across the partnership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use our data to develop or change our services as required, to ensure they continue to meet the needs of children and families. • Extend opportunities for feedback from our children, young people, and families to help us improve service design and delivery. • Review the universal provision in schools through the Personal and Social Education programme. • Continue to work closely with colleagues from health, education, social work, and the 3rd sector. 	<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Subgroup</p>





We will remove barriers to positive destinations and provide them with the opportunities to promote good outcomes across the life course.

Employability

We recognise how important it is to work with those children and young people who are the most disadvantaged and hardest to engage. We will remove barriers to positive destinations and provide them with the opportunities to promote good outcomes across the life course.

We aim to engage our young people in education, training and apprenticeships, employment, or volunteering opportunities, particularly those young people identified as most needing our help. In addition to this, the subgroup works with young people in the in the design and delivery of our services to ensure we meet a range of specific needs, including:

- All young people (aged 12 to 24)
- Care experienced young people (under 25 years) and care leavers (up to 26 years)
- Young people with additional support needs (ASN)
- Most disengaged (aged 12+)

We will continue to build on established robust data sharing methods to facilitate identification of potential participants and aid referral to relevant service(s) - with all partners working on Skills Development Scotland Data Hub inputs to improve recording and reporting measures, facilitate benchmarking and enable accurate targeting and monitoring of resources, outputs, and outcomes.

We will use the findings from the participatory research project established (mental health and employability) working with young people on the co-

design and co-production of employability services. By providing enhanced in-school support, to ensure warm handovers and data sharing to the most appropriate next stage in employability journey. In keeping with the Scottish Government, No One Left Behind (NOLB) Principles and aimed at improving participation and positive destinations.

In addition, we will work with focus groups and lived experience panels to co-design and co-produce improved services and support mechanisms (careers and employability) - improving service delivery, participation, and outcomes for all and directly impacting against four out of six Themes and Outcomes of The Falkirk Plan.

By working with employers to break down perceptions around employing any young person with a disability or other additional support need - Local Employability Partnership to support this piece of work via Fair Work agenda and incentive.

Employability		
Our focus and aims are to increase the engagement of our young people in education, training, apprenticeship, employment, or volunteering, with particular focus on those young people identified as our priority groups. In addition, we plan to implement a more robust co-design and co-production model that will inform, enhance, and focus services on meeting the needs of the individual.		
To make it happen	How will we make it happen?	Who is leading the changes needed?
We will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All young people (aged 12 to 24) • Care experienced young people (under 25 years) and care leavers (up to 26 years) • Young people with additional support needs (ASN) • Most disengaged (aged 12+) 	Improve against current Participation Measure data towards or above Scottish average of 92.7% (Falkirk 91.5%) Improve educational outcomes and attainment for care experienced young people. Improve post-schools' outcomes for young people with ASN, aiming to close the gap on participation rates and improve employability outcomes to age 24 and beyond Close the participation gap between those in the 20% most deprived areas and 20% least deprived areas - in 2022 the Scottish average for 16-19-year-olds was a 9.3% gap.	Employabilityt Subgroup

Workforce Learning & Development

We have developed our Learning and Development Strategy and Framework to guide and inform the necessary practice changes across our services, to support consistency and deliver culture change and to build capacity in our multi-agency workforce.

Falkirk's Learning and Development Strategy outlines our approach to create our ambition that Falkirk's children and young people will grow up feeling loved, safe, and respected, being able to realise their full potential.

The Strategy outlines the drivers, aims, ambitions and visions of Falkirk's Children's Services Planning Partnership, Falkirk Child Protection Committee and the Scottish Government while re-affirming the need for a responsive, innovative, trusted, and ambitious workforce.

The importance and priority we place on developing staff's knowledge, skills, and practice is supported by the pillars of leadership, culture, collaboration, and reflective practice. Our leadership aims to create a culture of facilitating workforce development in a way that demonstrates staff are valued and supported to actively engage in joint learning.

Falkirk's Learning and Development Framework outlines how Learning and Development activities are planned, delivered, and reviewed. We have an agreed language structure of developing practice levels to reflect those of NHS Education for Scotland (NES), which describes our workforce as 'Informed', 'Skilled', 'Enhanced', or 'Specialist'.

We will work collaboratively with Forth Valley partners to deliver learning and development opportunities. Shared delivery of additional learning opportunities through Forth Valley partnership working will represent best value. However, we will also have a Falkirk focus for our learning activities. Findings from our recent learning reviews have reinforced the need for professional relationships across the partner agencies to be enhanced and developed. This includes having increased opportunities to attend learning events 'in person'. This would allow our multi-agency workforce to increase their understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities, and perspectives. It is known that these relational connections will continue beyond the 'training room' and can lead to improved communication amongst partner agencies.

The next page highlights the key concepts of how we will implement our learning and development approach.



Learning and Development Strategy is supported by the pillars of leadership, culture, collaboration, and reflective practice.



Classification of Practice Levels capturing what workers in different service contexts can do to make a positive difference to people they are supporting



Workforce Learning & Development Across the Partnership

We will effectively implement the multi-agency Learning & Development Strategy that supports our workforce to be confident and competent in their practice.

To make it happen	How will we make it happen?	Who is leading the changes needed?
<p>Launch of the Learning & Development Strategy.</p> <p>Develop a Communication Strategy that supports participation, engagement, and full implementation.</p> <p>Develop a mechanism for two-way communication with each subgroup.</p> <p>Undertake a training needs analysis informed by the subgroup's objectives.</p> <p>Develop an Annual Programme of multi-agency Learning & Development.</p> <p>Provide skilled level, in person, learning & development opportunities to establish a solid foundation of joint learning across the workforce.</p> <p>Develop a locality-based model of learning & development delivery.</p> <p>Develop & embed peer group reflective support and supervision.</p>	<p>Delivering outcomes focused learning & development opportunities</p> <p>Feedback from across the workforce through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit & Dip Sampling • Case Studies • Surveys • Focus Groups • Supervision/ 1-1 Meetings • Data collection 	<p>Learning & Development Subgroup</p>

Evaluation and Reporting

Reporting on what impact we are having as a Partnership is crucial to demonstrating and evidencing the collaborative gain that we are achieving. To support this, we will produce an annual report that will detail the progress of our actions, outcomes, and targets. The Partnership's subgroups will each produce a plan, with clear actions. The Chair of each of the subgroups will report progress bi-annually to the Partnerships Strategic Leadership Group (SLG), who will be responsible for the scrutiny of the performance of each of the subgroups and, where necessary, provide support on any challenges. The Annual Report will be tabled at the Community Planning Partnership to ensure oversight of the work of the Children's Services Planning Partnership.

Measuring Success

We have developed a set of performance indicators that have been informed by national and local data sources to identify the collaborative gain we are able to evidence in improving the outcomes for children, young people, and

families. The set of indicators will enable us to measure improvement, identify strengths and highlight improvement actions. Aligned to the Plan, each of the subgroups have developed their own outcome measures, as detailed under each workstream, which will be further developed into a performance framework. Future annual reporting will include a detailed update on the progress against key priority outcome measures.

We will ensure that the voice of children, young people, and families and their lived experience is central to how we implement our Plan. To support this, we are committed, no matter how challenging this can be, to ensure that there are positive relationships, ongoing communication, and dialogue with Falkirk's children, young people, and families.

Aligned to the Plan, each of the subgroups have developed their own outcome measures which will be further developed into a performance framework. Future annual reporting will include a detailed update on the progress against key priority outcome measures.



Appendix 1

Subgroup Membership

GIRFEC	The Promise/ Corporate Parenting	Children's Rights/ UNCRC	Employability	Learning & Development	MH & WB
Social Work C & F Service	Social Work C & F	Young Carers	FC Leaving Care Team	Children's Services	Educational Psychology
Health Midwifery	SCRA	Quarriers	FC Children's Services	Workforce Learning & Development	CMHWP
Education PS & HS	Education	Education	Community Learning & Development	Education	Third Sector
Third Sector	Third Sector	The Champs	Employment Training Unit	Educational Psychology	CAMHS
Police Scotland	Police Scotland	LGBT	Job Centre Plus	Health	Trauma Informed Policy Officer
Educational Psychology	Scottish Prison Service	CLD	Skills Development Scotland	SCRA	Health Improvement
Workforce L & D	Forth Valley College	Third Sector	Link Living	Housing	Primary Care
Health HV & School nursing service	Residential Services	Go Youth Trust	Barnardo's	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	GP
Housing	Housing	Link Living	NHS FV		
	NHS FV		FDAMH		
	Falkirk Champs				
	Participation & Engagement Officer				
	Skills Development Scotland				

Appendix 2

Title	Data	Source
Total Population (0-21 years)	37,707 (23.4% of the total population of 160,700)	National Records of Scotland, 2021
Live Births	1,466	
0-4 years	7,504	
5-11 years	12,511	
12-16 years	9,340	
17-21 years	8,352	
Primary School Roll	11,795	Pupil Census, 2022
Secondary School Roll	9,667	
Black & minority ethnic schoolchildren	1,233	
Number of children aged 5 in local authority (March 2023)	509	
Low Birth Weight Babies (2021/22)	6.40%	PHS, 2022
Homelessness Presentations (Families)	52	Falkirk Council Housing Data, 2023
Homelessness Presentations (Single Parents)	257	
Homelessness Presentations (Other with Children)	6	
Homelessness Presentations (Other with Children)	90	
Single Parents (under 25) assessed as Homeless	39	
Teenage Pregnancies	22 per 10,000	PHS, 2021
Annual Participation Measure	91.50%	Skills Development Scotland, 2022
Children Affected by Domestic Violence (new registrations) (January 2023)	8	Falkirk Council, 2023
No. children referred to Children's Hearing (January 2023)	218	
Pupils with recorded additional support needs (ASN)	6,940	Pupils Census, 2022
Pupils whose home language is not English	1,370	
	9,081	
Secondary Free School Meals	1,784	
% of 0-19 year olds in poverty	16.30%	uk.gov, 2021
Under 25's in receipt of Out-of-Work Benefits (as of January 2023)	710	NOMIS, 2023
Police Scotland Wellbeing Concerns (January 2023)	486	Police Scotland, 2023
Children on Child Protection Register (July 2022)	75	Falkirk Council, 2023
Looked After Children (July 2022)	390	
Kinship Care Children (July 2022)	83	
Young Carers	188	
Children categorised as "Assessed Disabled"	243	



Falkirk Council

