



Highland Children's Service Plan 2023 - 2026

Plana Sheirbheisean Chloinne Amalaichte na Gàidhealtachd 2023 -2026



Geography

Highland covers a third of the land area of Scotland, including the most remote and sparsely populated parts of the United Kingdom. The Highlands has the 7th highest population of the 32 authorities in Scotland (235,540) while having the lowest population density at 8 persons per square kilometre.

The total land area including all islands at low water is 26,484 square kilometres. This is 33 per cent the land area of Scotland and 11.4 per cent of Great Britain. It is 10 times larger than Luxembourg, 20 per cent larger than Wales, and nearly the size of Belgium.

Our Partnership



The Highland Community Planning Partnership brings together public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups to work collaboratively with the people of Highland to deliver better outcomes.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership works strategically at a Highland level, through a series of nine geographical local Community Partnerships as well as regional thematic groups. Ultimately these deliver our Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The Highland Outcome Improvement Plan sets out the vision, purpose and focus for the Highland Community Planning Partnership from 2017-2027. The five core outcomes have been chosen and agreed upon with communities. The partnership believes working towards these outcomes will have a significant impact on reducing inequalities in Highland.

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

This Plan has been developed in collaboration with public sector bodies and third sector organisations and is informed by both the voice and testimony of children, young people and families and the needs of our communities as articulated through our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2023).

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

Our Commitment



Keeping the Promise

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

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

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

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

SAFETY
CHOICE
COLLABORATE
EMPOWER
TRUST

Our Commitments in Practice

Our partnership will reflect our commitment in our:

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

Our Principles

- Our partnership is committed to developing a trauma informed and responsive approach to supporting children, young people and their families.
- We will develop services that are informed and shaped by people with lived experience and place the voice of infants, children, young people and families at the heart of service improvement.

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

• We will strive to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is the global “gold standard” for children’s rights. It sets out the rights that all children have to help them to “be all they can be”. They include rights relating to health, education, leisure, play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard.



In order to fully understand the needs of our children, young people and families in Highland, and to strategically inform Integrated Children's Service Planning, in 2023 our partnership undertook a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Continually assessing and analysis Highland need will be integral to our future planning, ensuring we are data informed and evidenced based in our approach to reshaping service for Highland which meet the needs of the present and set us on a path to improve the outcomes for the future. The full JSNA can be found [here](#)

Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023

Key findings

Around 2% of children under 15 have a Child Protection Plan and 0.9% of Highlands Children are care experienced.

1 in 3 children under the age of 18 live in remote and rural areas

1 in 5 children are affected by poverty

34% of infants are breastfed to at least 8 weeks offering them the best start in life

Highland teenage pregnancies have fallen however preventative activity pre-conception and during pregnancy needs to be strengthened

In our 2021 Lifestyle Survey 70% of young people felt their wellbeing needs were being met through the GIRFEC approach

In our 2021 Lifestyle Survey 30% of young people did not feel they were achieving to their potential

73.5% of children measured starting Primary 1 had a healthy BMI.

75% of referrals to CAMHS are for young people between 12 and 17 years.

In 2021 43% of children were identified as having an additional support for learning needs.

There is an increase in the number of infants with developmental concerns recorded at the 27 month health visitor check

Need to strengthen pre-conception and antenatal support where 11.2% per 1000 maternity cases were using drugs during pregnancy.

46.8% of young people leave school to higher or further education with 43.7% to employment.



Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023 Summary Analysis

Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment tells us

- Many of our families are suffering the physical, social, emotional and developmental impacts of the pandemic. Our supports need to be reshaped to meet the need of the present and to be sustainable into the future
- Our focus need to be on early protection, prevention and intervention and to empower whole families to be resilient, self-sustaining and healthy
- Some of our families are living in poverty, one of the most significant determinant of health and wellbeing outcomes
- Our support to care experienced children and young people, and those at risk of harm, needs to be flexible, trauma informed recognising the impact of adverse childhood experience.
- The mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people is under pressure and we need to take a whole system approach to ensuring staged support is available and accessible for all children and young people when they need it.
- Our services need to be delivered in a more local, collaborative and coordinated way to ensure access to support, particularly in remote and rural Highland
- Our services and supports need to be inclusive of the needs of families with protected characteristics
- Outcomes are better for families when they are supported to stay together wherever it is safe to do so



The Voice and Participation of Children and Young People



Our Partnership recognises the necessity for greater active participation of children, young people and families in all aspects of planning and service delivery.

There requires to be a culture shift which secures the Voice and testimony of Highland's families at each place and stage of planning across the whole system.

Through listening to our families, across the lifetime of this plan we will develop a whole system strategy to support the culture change needed, for the benefit of Highland's children, young people and their families.

What is participation?

Participation is the meaningful involvement of children and young people in decision making and planning.

Participation takes many forms but must always be inclusive, ensuring that the voices of all children and young people - no matter the challenges they face in their lives - are raised, heard and acted upon.

Why will we take an active participation approach to improving outcome for Highland's families?

We believe that Highland families know what their own and the needs of their communities are.

CYP participation is a fundamental human right. Article 12 of the UNCRC states that CYP have the right to be listened to and taken seriously in decision making processes and given all the information they need to form their opinions.

With the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots law, we have an obligation to ensure that CYP becomes part of policy and practice in Highland.

How will we make the change?

We will develop our CYP Participation Strategy with associated Implementation Plan is underway and will be completed during year one of ICSP 23 – 26.

The participation strategy will be dovetailed with the priorities as set out by the Rights and Participation Improvement Group, embedding participation in practice will be a commitment across all themes in the ICSP.

How will we know we've made a difference?

The Implementation Group will be tasked with coordinating and resourcing support for implementation and will also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of CYP participation in practice across the partnership in Highland in 2024 – 26.

We will drive forward our plan and evaluate our systems, practices and processes to ensure meaningful participation becomes embedded in all Highland family support.

Integrated Planning Our Themes



Poverty



Child Protection



Corporate Parenting



Rights and Participation



Health and Wellbeing



Drugs and Alcohol

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

Priorities have been developed for each of our Integrated Planning Themes and key change ideas articulated within this plan.

In order to deliver on our commitments and planning for Highland families, a number of strategic oversight boards and committees will be accountable for delivery of the priorities and plans using the life course approach. These are:

- Highland's Poverty Group
- Highland's Child Protection Committee
- The Promise Board (Corporate Parenting)
- Highland's Rights and Participation Group
- Highland's Health and Wellbeing Board – including mental health
- Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership Group

Performance and Outcome Management:

All outcomes within this plan are linked to Highland's Outcome Improve Plan Performance will be measured through the Integrated Children's Service Performance Management Framework and monitored by Highland Integrated Children's Service Planning Board. This Board will provide an annual update to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

Our Life Course Approach



GETTING STARTED



GROWING UP



MOVING ON

Our objective is to improve outcomes for Highland's Infants, Children and Young People through robust integrated planning, local delivery of services and support and by considering the needs of their families across a life course from pre birth to young adulthood.

In taking a life course approach we can more readily identify opportunities to minimise risk and enhance the protective factors through evidence-based interventions.

A life course approach capitalises on the potential to deliver an inter-generational approach to reducing inequalities from generation to generation and improve conditions for daily life.

In this plan we call the period from preconception to school age **GETTING STARTED**

The time when children are at Primary School age we call **GROWING UP**

The secondary age young people and young adults are considered to be **MOVING ON**



Our Priorities

Getting Started: Pre birth – 5 years



Poverty

We will reduce financial barriers on families and mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis



Child Protection

We will ensure that unborn babies, infants and children in early years get the right help at the right time and are protected and safe



Corporate Parenting

We will honour The Promise by developing a family centred trauma informed approach to support



Rights and Participation

We will ensure children's rights are evident in practice



Health and Wellbeing

We will enable and empower families to good health and develop approaches to codesign support



Drugs and Alcohol

We will develop a whole family approach to drugs and alcohol which effectively recognises and support parents, unborn infants and babies affected by drugs and alcohol



Our Priorities Growing Up: Primary Years



Poverty

We will reduce financial barriers on families and close the poverty related attainment gap



Child Protection

We will support the development of prevention and early intervention approaches to protect children through their primary years



Corporate Parenting

We will ensure Whole Family Support to ensure all Highland's Children are supported in their local community, to stay with their families wherever possible



Rights and Participation

We will ensure children's rights are evident in practice



Health and Wellbeing

We will support a whole family, whole community, whole system approach to improving the health and wellbeing and develop our partnership workforce in mental health and wellbeing.



Drugs and Alcohol

We will revise and improve the programme of substance use education and prevention in schools and wider settings to ensure it is good quality, impactful and in line with best practice



Our Priorities

Moving on: secondary to young adulthood



Poverty

We will reduce financial barriers on families and mitigate the cost of living crisis



Child Protection

We will ensure young people are protected and their needs and voices are considered particularly those at risk from community harm.



Corporate Parenting

We will ensure there is robust support for care experienced young people to move into adulthood



Rights and Participation

We will ensure children's rights are evident in practice



Health and Wellbeing

We will enable empower and support healthy choices for young adults particularly supporting self management of their own mental health and wellbeing



Drugs and Alcohol

We will support early intervention amongst young people who are at higher risk of developing problem alcohol and drug use due

Integrated Children's Service Alcohol and Drug Partnership Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

<p>Priority: We will develop a whole family approach to drugs and alcohol which effectively recognises and support parents, unborn infants and babies affected by drugs and alcohol</p>	<p>Priority: We will revise and improve the programme of substance use education and prevention in schools and wider settings to ensure it is good quality, impactful and in line with best practice</p>	<p>Priority: We will support early intervention amongst young people who are at higher risk of developing problem alcohol and drug use due</p>
<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>
<p>Develop policy and increase awareness across Highland re FASD</p>	<p>Develop the Highland Prevention and Intervention Model and pilot elements of the Icelandic Prevention Mode</p>	<p>Strengthen treatment and support services for young people affected by their own or another's alcohol or drug problem</p>
<p>Develop pre conception information supports</p>	<p>Increase access via the H-SAT to quality and evidence based online resources for young people, parents and professionals</p>	<p>Develop opportunities to support culture change within schools and communities through active sport, nutrition and lifestyle healthy choice</p>
<p>Provide additional support to antenatal care through specialist midwifery D&A post</p>	<p>Develop the role of Highland's Advanced Nurse (Schools) to support Drugs and Alcohol</p>	<p>Develop assertive outreach approach for schools and communities in need</p>

Integrated Children's Service Child Protection Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

<p>Priority: We will ensure child protection practice is of a high standard and keeps unborn babies and infants in their early years safe from harm.</p>	<p>Priority: We will develop prevention and early intervention opportunities to protect all children</p>	<p>Priority: We will ensure the needs of older children and young people are met, particularly those at risk of Community Harm</p>
<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>
<p>Review the Child Protection Assessment and Planning Process</p>	<p>Scope, develop and deliver abuse prevention work in Highland</p>	<p>Develop new approach for those involved with Youth Justice Support and at risk of Community Harm</p>
<p>Develop approaches which enable the wider family to be more involved in the child protection planning process</p>	<p>Co-produce child protection materials with children and young people</p>	<p>Ensure the workforce is competent and confident in responding to the needs of older children within the child protection process</p>
<p>Ensure the voices of children in their early years are heard as part of the child protection process</p>	<p>Support the development and roll out of early intervention projects</p>	<p>Strengthen the links between child and adult support and protection, ensuring processes are dovetailed and families and communities remain safe</p>

Integrated Children's Service Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

<p>Priority: We will enable and empower families to good health.</p>	<p>Priority: We will support the development of a whole family approach to health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Priority: We will enable, empower and support healthy choices for young adults</p>
<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>
<p>Embed our financial inclusion pathways across Highland</p>	<p>Refocus roles to provide targeted support to support health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Develop early intervention to health and wellbeing initiatives in schools</p>
<p>Develop our workforce in the use of alternative methods of listening to the voice of infants</p>	<p>Refresh Highland's Supporting Parents Strategy</p>	<p>Develop the workforce through establishing core health and wellbeing learning</p>
<p>Develop mechanism which ensure the identification of need at key points of transition</p>	<p>Develop Highland's play strategy</p>	<p>Develop health and wellbeing outreach initiatives for young people out of mainstream school and/or interrupted learners or hard to reach groups</p>

Integrated Children's Service Health and Wellbeing (Mental Health) Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

<p>Priority: We will develop approaches to codesign support and interventions with families</p>	<p>Priority: We will support the learning of our workforce in mental health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Priority: We will support young people to self manage their mental health and wellbeing</p>
<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>
<p>Mandatory learning for all staff on the impacts of trauma, adverse experience and brain development</p>	<p>Develop a one stop shop, quality evidence based tool kit for mental health</p>	<p>Support staff through additional training to understand the teenage brain with links to emotional literacy and distress.</p>
<p>Develop a programme of support for parents with young children including skill with mental coping strategies</p>	<p>Develop a mental health knowledge and skills framework for staff supporting families in Highland</p>	<p>Co-design initiatives and interventions with young people which enable ongoing conversations about mental health</p>
<p>Develop the pathways for onward support for families in private nurseries, playgroups and early years settings</p>	<p>Refresh and implement the positive relationships guidance in schools</p>	<p>Create a champion model for mental health for highland</p>

Integrated Children's Service Promise Board Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

Priority: We will develop Whole Family Support for our families who experience care	Priority: We will ensure there is good support for experienced children to thrive in their childhood	Priority: We will ensure there is good planning for young people as they move into adulthood
Change Idea	Change Idea	Change Idea
Develop relationships across the partnership between the workforce, children, young people and families.	Develop a shared trauma informed approach across the partnership	Develop single point of contact support for care experienced young people moving into their new home
Empower families through family group decision making	Promote, extend and evaluate "Better Meetings" The practitioners guide.	Improve support at time of transition to further and higher education or employment
Develop imaginative and varied support and prevention for mental health for care experienced infants and families	Develop the Promise ambassador approach across the partnership	Improve partnership working to enable trusted relationships through HECM Model

Integrated Children's Service Rights and Participation Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

Priority: We will ensure rights of unborn babies and infants are protected and evident in practice	Priority: We will ensure rights of children are protected and evident in practice	Priority: We will ensure rights of young people are protected and evident in practice
Change Idea	Change Idea	Change Idea
Implement the Voice of the Infant Best Practice Guidelines and Infant Pledge	Embed children's rights in the curriculum with diversity through picture books, gender bias, decolonisation and differentiation	Track the improvement in views being listened to through the Highland Lifestyle Survey
Support infant's rights through a play strategy and early years pedagogy	Support practice to ensure children's views are included in all Childs Plans	Support young people to co-design and/or create guidance to further children's rights
Track the recover from covid through developmental data	Ensure all children are involved in policy decisions	Improve access to free period products in schools

Integrated Children's Service Poverty Delivery Plan



Getting Started



Growing up



Moving on

<p>Priority: We will reduce the financial barriers in order to increase participation, raise aspirations and address impact of poverty</p>	<p>Priority: Mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis</p>	<p>Priority: We will raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap</p>
<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>	<p>Change Idea</p>
<p>Develop flexible models of childcare in rural areas</p>	<p>Increase the uptake of sanitary products in schools</p>	<p>Raise aware of the impact of poverty amongst children and young people</p>
<p>Implement the Whole Family Approach to mitigate the impacts of poverty</p>	<p>Develop system for weekend food support</p>	<p>Roll out the Family First approach</p>
<p>Develop financial inclusion pathways</p>	<p>Roll out the cost of school day tool kit</p>	<p>Identity way to provide targeted support within universal services</p>

A Whole System Approach to Family Wellbeing



Cohesion



Coordination



Collaboration



Through the timeline of this plan, we will develop community scaffolding for our supports through our community-based whole family wellbeing approach.

This programme aims to reduce inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of the Highland Population through improving cohesion, co-ordination and collaboration of whole family support within Highland's Communities. Working to the founding principles of this plan, communities will be supported by a partnership programme team to:

- Develop cohesion to local support, robust coordination of planning and close collaboration with all stakeholder across the whole locality
- Identify need, build on successes and develop local initiatives
- Strengthen universal and early supports, being needs led and evidence based

Our partnership recognises through our joint strategic needs assessment, and having listened to the voices of our communities, the impact of the Covid Pandemic on Health and Wellbeing. It also recognises some of the strengths and unique challenges to Highland life. We believe the enablement and empowerment of local solutions across the wider geography of Highland will deliver on the aims and objective of this programme and our overarching Highland Outcome Improvement Plan ensuring that Highland is the best place for families to live and thrive.

Governance

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

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

- ❖ The Highland Council, and the NHS Highland Board through The NHS Highland Health and Social Care Committee and The Highland Council Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee.
- ❖ The Public Protection Chief Officer Group, who undertake their statutory responsibility ensuring that appropriate assurance on the development and progress of the plan is received.
- ❖ Highland Child Protection Committee and Highland's Joint Monitoring Committee.

Membership of Highland Integrated Children's Service Board :

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