



SCOTTISH BORDERS

INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



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Introduction

Welcome to the 2021-22 Progress Report of our Integrated Children & Young People's Plan for the Scottish Borders. The report reflects progress made in relation to the delivery of shared partnership priorities as set out in the [2021-2023 plan](#).

The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is committed to safeguarding, supporting, and promoting the well-being of all children and young people across the Scottish Borders. We translate this commitment into action through the work of the Children and Young People's Leadership Group (CYPLG).

The plan is informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as well as a range of legislation and national policy.

Under the Children & Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 3 - Children's Services Planning) there is a duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report.

The report should set out progress on:

- Children's services in a one-year period (April to March) provided in accordance with the Integrated Plan
- What that provision has achieved
- Aims of Children's Services planning
- Outcomes focused on the wellbeing of children and young people in the area.

The CYPLG brings together partners from Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, and the Third Sector. The group has a key role in linking the work and plans of partners to achieve the best outcomes we can for our children and young people.

The CYPLG works with shared priorities to deliver meaningful and sustainable improvements to the lives of all our children and young people, to ensure that *everyone* can reach their full potential, and the report outlines progress on the following agreed priorities -

1. Keeping children and young people safe
2. Improving health and well-being and reducing inequalities
3. Targeting support to maximise life experiences and opportunities and ensuring inclusion
4. Increasing participation and engagement

The partnership has strong links across other strategic groups and governance arrangements e.g. Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Public Protection Committee, Integrated Joint Board, which ensures the work being progressed by the partnership supports the work of other groups, and that other groups have an awareness of their responsibility regarding children, young people, carers and families.

Priority 1 Progress

Priority 1: SAFETY: Keeping children and young people safe

Outcome: More children and young people will be protected from abuse, harm or neglect and will be living in a supportive environment, feeling secure and cared for.

Whilst the CYPLG does not have formal delivery or governance responsibilities for child protection, there are close links between the Public Protection Committee, Child Protection Delivery Group and CYPLG, with shared representation across the groups.

The Public Protection Committee Annual Report, which includes child protection, is in the process of being agreed by the Chief Officers Group and will be published once formally approved. The report will be accessible via the Scottish Borders Council website once published.

Theme A: Addressing Child Poverty

The Partnership is responsible for monitoring progress on child poverty via the Child Poverty Planning Group.

Reports relevant to Child Poverty, including the annual report, are via:

[Strategies, plans and policies directory - Child Poverty | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/strategies-plans-and-policies-directory-child-poverty)

Theme B: Trauma Informed Practice

During the reporting period, trauma enhanced training was provided for 51 social work practitioners, delivered by Epione Trauma Training and Consultancy.

NHS Borders appointed a Transforming Psychological Trauma Implementation Coordinator and a work plan has been developed for implementation.

As part of this work plan, two local Trauma Champions have been appointed, one of whom is a senior leader within NHS Borders and the other being a senior leader within Scottish Borders Council.

A partnership steering group has been established to help drive forward this agenda and promote trauma informed practice within local services for all children, young people, and adults with lived experience of psychological trauma.

As well as the aforementioned roles, the steering group includes experts by experience.

The three key aims of the group are to:

- Destigmatise trauma and advocate that all people in contact with services receive a compassionate response.
- Be a focal point to provide information, resources and guidance on trauma training which is evidence based, has a robust governance and is informed by people with lived experience.
- Provide leadership and direction for promoting Trauma Informed Practice.

Priority 2 Progress

Priority 2: WELLBEING: Improving health and well-being and reducing inequalities

Outcome: Inequalities in the health and wellbeing of children and young people are reduced.

Theme A: Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

A Project Board oversees the delivery of the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework.

Key Achievements during the reporting period include:

- Introduction of Kooth and Togetherall, digital platforms covering 11-18 year old age group & 16+ age group
- Enhancing trauma recovery services
- Piloting additional capacity for mentoring for 16-25 year olds
- Engaging underserved populations including BAME through the commission of Action for Children
- Working to better understand the needs of young people at community level through the commission of participatory social research
- Enhancing services for Young Carers and LGBT young people
- Development of an asset map/directory

Scottish Borders are the first local authority in Scotland to commit to taking a whole authority approach and are working with partners across Scottish Borders to deliver a number of projects, including work on See Me Mental Health Awareness, Self-Harm Awareness and Growing Confidence.

In addition to the work of the Project Board, the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people is supported by on-going and enhanced commissioning of a number of services, including Quarriers Resilience for Wellbeing Service, Action for Children Young Carers and support for children and young people impacted by parental substance use, and Children 1st Abuse and Trauma Recovery Service.

Theme B: Trusted Adults

The Partnership commissions universal community-based youth work services ensures that there are opportunities for young people to access trusted adults in their community. This investment is enhanced by the Scottish Borders Strategic Youth Work Partnership delivery of youth work support through the [Stepping Stones](#) project.

There is an increasing awareness amongst partners of the role of Trusted Adults as a protective factor to emotional health and wellbeing.

There is strategic agreement to commission an awareness raising campaign on Trusted Adults commencing in January 2023. Baseline data from the Scottish Borders Health and Wellbeing Census Data (March 2022) indicates that 91% of both primary and secondary aged pupils have an adult in their life who they can trust and talk to about any personal problems. This data gives us insight to inform the planned awareness raising campaign activity on the availability and role of trusted adults.

Priority 3 Progress

Priority 3: INCLUSION: Targeting support to maximise life experiences and opportunities and ensuring inclusion

Outcome: Life experiences and opportunities are improved for children and young people who require our targeted support.

Theme A: Delivering The Promise

Over the past year, there have been a range of developments to support implementation of the Promise in the Scottish Borders.

In Summer 2021 Scottish Borders Council appointed a Promise Implementation Officer. This officer works in partnership with children, young people and their families and across services.

At the same time, Scottish Borders Council also appointed a Lead Young Person to develop and embed a Champions Board Approach in the Scottish Borders.

A group of Corporate Parents in the Scottish Borders are working on a collaborative project with Who Cares? Scotland to create multi-agency corporate parenting training.

Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers is a key focus of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

We are committed to working with statutory and non-statutory partners to assist them in identifying creative and innovative ideas to enable them to address their Corporate Parenting duties and implement The Promise successfully.

The Virtual School Head Teacher, funded through the Attainment Scotland Fund, offers support and challenge to school leaders, monitors and tracks attainment, attendance and destinations data and works closely with partners to ensure improved outcomes for children and young people with care experience.

New monitoring and tracking procedures with secondary schools, Skills Development Scotland and Borders College have been established to ensure learners have a positive and sustained destination on leaving school. As a result of this and other work, 88% of care experienced school leavers in 2020-21 are in a

Theme B: Supporting Transitions

The main focus of the work supported by the partnership has been in relation to ensuring that children and young people's experiences of educational transition should be well planned, coordinated and supported, working in partnership with children, young people, their families and community.

The work supported by the partnership during the reporting period focused on secondary to post-school, and young people with an additional support need.

Directed by the Young Persons Guarantee Partnership, secondary schools completed an audit of school to post-school transition meetings to evaluate current practice and effectiveness.

The results were used to shape engagement with key partners including school, Skills Development Scotland, and Developing the Young Workforce to refresh processes including updated protocols and procedures and sharing best practice. To ensure earlier and effective intervention, the cohort was widened from 16+ to 14+.

A follow up audit highlighted a positive impact on practice, improved consistency across all schools and person-centred approaches. The impact is evident in local authority positive initial and follow up school leaver destination figures.

Partnership working has also focused on tracking young people withdrawing from college and a monthly report helps to identify young people who leave college early or were unsuccessful in their application in order that a Skills Development Scotland adviser can contact individuals to offer support.

An Additional Support Needs Learning Network, funded by South Of Scotland Enterprise and facilitated by Inspiring Scotland, was established during the reporting period.

positive destination, an increase from 71% at the start of the academic year - this places Scottish Borders within the top 5 local authority areas in Scotland.

Other improved outcomes for care experienced learners include an increase in attendance and reduction in exclusion rates, increasing attainment in literacy for school leavers and a higher proportion of learners achieving qualifications in the Senior Phase than the national average.

Our care experienced funding has been used to support children and young people who are in crisis and require extra support to stay on track with their learning. Funding is used for Additional Needs Assistants to deliver 1 to 1 or small group interventions focussed on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and readiness to learn.

Berwickshire High School used care experienced funds to deliver a peer mentoring transition programme with learners moving into S1 from primary 7. Outcomes were extremely positive with improved relationships and confidence for all learners in their transition to high school.

As well as the specific examples provided, work has been progressing during the reporting period to ensure The Promise is central to delivering services for children, young people and families in Scottish Borders, including revised governance arrangements.

Further information regarding corporate parenting can be found at:
[Corporate parenting | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/corporate-parenting)

The network focus is on sharing practice and innovation in Additional Support Needs transition and employability policy, peer to peer support, identifying gaps in provision and providing insight and lived experience to influence the redesign of support. A Professional Support Directory has been produced, as well as the development of an interactive leaflet produced by the Young Persons Guarantee partnership highlighting all post school support and options available.

A wide network of partnership working has been established, and reporting mechanisms have been established to ensure the partnership maintains oversight of progress.

Priority 4 Progress

Priority 4: PARTICIPTION: Increasing participation and engagement

Outcome: All our children and young people will be encouraged to be involved in the planning, provision and delivery of services and their rights will be respected.

Theme A: Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy

During the reporting period there have been a number of approaches which have contributed to supporting positive progress, and these include the development of a Champions Board, engagement with Student Councils and Pupil Voice, engagement work with Young Carers, work with young people around the Health and Wellbeing priorities and asset map.

The important role of the 3rd sector is much valued by the partnership, especially in supporting children and young people to come together and raise issues, which influences partnership decision-making.

It is also noted that the work being progressed around delivering The Promise is focused on the voice and experience of children and young people.

Children's Rights are central to the work of the partnership and the Children's Rights report can be found at:

[Children's Rights Report 2021-23 | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](#)

Theme B: Communication and Social Research with Children, Young People and their families.

In 2021/22 there have been a number of noteworthy developments linked to the development of Scottish Borders Youth Voice.

Scottish Youth Parliament elections were held in November 2021, and successful candidates have been engaged at a local and national level on various issues such as Education, Substance Misuse, Mental Health, cost of living crisis, better education on Neurodiversity and other health issues, and LGBTQ+ rights. Our local MSYPs also met with their MSP, MP and Councillors to discuss local issues such as transport, climate change, food access, and the local young person's Participation Strategy.

In the lead up to COP26, six young people from the Scottish Borders engaged through national youth agencies. Young people met online at a Youth Summit to create the COP26 Scottish Youth Climate Declaration, attended a weekend residential course, and established Make, Do and Mend Workshops in the Scottish Borders.

The Youth Ambassadors for Sustainability group was established to be the voice of young people on the Scottish Borders Council Sustainable Development Committee and look at ways to highlighting climate change issues in the Borders and how they could educate young people and others. They completed a presentation to Council on single use plastic bottles in schools, as well as creating a video and challenging councillors and others to make one small change by making a 'Promise to the Planet'. There have also been partnership opportunities such as meetings with local green organisations, local MP discussion, and food growing initiatives.

Young people are represented at Scottish Borders Council Education Sub Committee and have their voices heard on issues.

Young people have attended election counts at Springwood in Kelso to see how the process works and engage with candidates. They have been a part of the consultation on the National Planning Framework, transport discussions and UNCRC strategy.

Conclusion

The Children and Young People's Leadership Group are proud of the work done in 2021/22 under the Integrated Children and Young People's Plan for 2021/2023.

Working in partnership, Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, and the Third Sector have delivered key actions to support each priority and achieve outcomes which have made and will continue to make a difference to the lives of all our children and young people.

The Children and Young People's Leadership Group are in the process of developing a new Integrated Children and Young People's Plan for 2023/2026.

We shall continue to work towards enhancing the lives of our children, young people and their families.