

Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2024

Reporting period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024

Biennial Report on Mainstreaming the Equality Duty and Mid-term Report for the
Equalities Outcomes Plan 2022 to 2025



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1. Introduction

This report provides an update on the progress that North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership has made to advance our Equalities Outcomes and to mainstream the equality duty within the day to day running of the organisation. The report covers the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership published its [Equalities Outcomes Plan 2022 to 2025](#) in March 2023. Outcomes need to be developed every four years; however, this plan covers a three year period in order to align with North Ayrshire Council outcome reporting cycles and our strategic plan.

The previous [Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report](#) for activity carried out in 2021 to 2022 was published in May 2023. Public bodies are required to publish progress towards mainstreaming the equality duty every two years.

1.1 Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brought into force the Public Sector Equality Duty for all public authorities in the UK. The public authority must have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 outlines a duty for Scottish Public Authorities to publish equality outcomes and report progress, and to report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty.

Due to legislative structure of Integration Joint Boards (IJB), Health and Social Care Partnerships are exempt from certain specific duties as they are not employers, and all staff members remain employees of either NHS Ayrshire and Arran or North Ayrshire Council. These duties are related to gender pay gap information, equal pay statements, and employee information.

2. Mainstreaming the Equality Duty

This section outlines the progress the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has made towards embedding equality into the day to day running and work of the partnership. By doing so, we ensure that people can access services in a way that best suits their needs and can share their experiences to support the development and progression of the way our services are delivered.

2.1 Integration Joint Board

The North Ayrshire Integration Joint Board is the decision-making Board for all functions delegated by North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran in terms

of health and social care services. The Board meets monthly, and minutes and reports are published on the North Ayrshire Council website for transparency.

Equalities is considered in all of the decisions made by the Board through the implications sections of all papers presented to the Board. Anyone presenting a report, proposed policy, proposed service or service change, or anything else requiring Board decision-making, is required to explain how they have considered the Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty under section 4.4 of the cover report.

2.2 Ayrshire Equalities Partnership

The Ayrshire Equalities Partnership meets quarterly and brings together Equalities officers from across different Ayrshire organisations in the area for the purpose of shared learning and planning. This includes officers from North, South and East Ayrshire's councils, each of the HSCP's, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, University of the West of Scotland and Ayrshire College.

This partnership has developed broad shared outcomes for the area:

1. In Ayrshire, people experience safe and inclusive communities.
2. In Ayrshire, people have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services.
3. In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life.
4. In Ayrshire, public bodies will be inclusive and diverse employers.

These high-level outcomes helped inform more specific local outcomes, which are reported on in section 3.

2.3 Transformation

The [NAHSCP Transformation Plan 2024 to 2027](#) is an ambitious programme of change consisting of a range of improvement and reform projects to improve the quality of our health and care services and was approved by the Integration Joint Board on 14 March 2024. Transformation is a planning process that sets out to achieve our high aspirations of health equity, improved social circumstances, and long term sustainability for the people of North Ayrshire by making the best use of available resources to transform products and services to achieve better outcomes and experiences. The Transformation Plan is aligned to our Strategic Priorities and promoting equality, and the principles of equality and fairness, are central to the plan, and the approach.

The governance structures required to effectively manage the programme of work have been reviewed and updated to support robust planning and effective and consistent monitoring, with an increased focus on benefits realisation, user-centred design and a move to more data driven and value based approaches. This is to ensure we deliver what people want and need, and that this is evidenced. The impact on equality is a consideration from the beginning, and screening is part of the project proposal process. Once approved, an equality impact assessment is carried out, along with user research and stakeholder engagement. The end-to-end process, from initial proposal to post-project evaluation, is designed to ensure each project

delivers improved outcomes and experiences, contributing to a more equal and more sustainable North Ayrshire.

2.4 Strategic Planning

North Ayrshire HSCP's Strategic Plan, [Caring Together 2022 to 2030](#), was published 17 March 2022, and is the first time the partnership has developed a plan that outlines our longer term ambitions for local health and care. The plan outlines the priorities of the partnership to be:

- enable communities
- develop and support our workforce
- provide early and effective support
- improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
- take inequalities

In addition to the final priority being specifically regarding inequality, the five priorities are delivered in a holistic way to ensure equalities are considered every step of the way. We aim to enable communities by involving groups in developing our priorities and supporting them to improve local capacity and resilience which can enable different equalities groups. We support our workforce to understand equalities through training and learning, and to use that understanding in their everyday jobs. We also seek to understand how different groups use our services in different ways and ensure that service design considers these differences.

Although the current strategic plan is in place until 2030, it will be reviewed by March 2025 to ensure it is still for purpose, which will be the same time the HSCP will publish our revised Equality Outcomes. These plans will be developed in partnership to ensure equalities goals are embedded within the strategic plan. Additionally, our locality work will be reflected in this update, which means the feedback and ongoing conversations we have with people in localities, will be reflected in the overall planning for the whole of North Ayrshire.

2.5 Working in localities

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that a lot of face to face meetings and engagement were suspended temporarily or moved online. Prior to the pandemic we had five established Locality Planning Forums, which worked in smaller areas across North Ayrshire which were supported by a lead officer within the partnership. However, these were impacted by the pandemic and the partnership felt that we should reinvigorate the process by establishing a new process led by the Senior Management team and with more involvement from local communities within each area.

North Ayrshire is comprised of six localities which are used for local service delivery planning, by the Health and Social Care Partnership as well as the wider Community Planning Partnership. These are:

- Arran
- Garnock Valley

- Irvine
- Kilwinning
- North Coast and Cumbrae
- Three Towns

Within each locality on the mainland, there will be a biannually locality conversation which will be established to maintain ongoing dialogue with service users and ensure their voices are continually involved in the strategic planning process within their communities. These will be followed up by a meeting of the Locality Planning Review Group, which will analyse the results of the conversations, local data, community planning priorities and local knowledge of services within the locality.

Work to develop this new locality planning process began in spring 2023, since when we have developed a new process to better integrate with community planning processes, involve a wider group of service users, and make more use of existing data and knowledge about each area. Initial scoping Locality Conversations took place in April 2023, and the start of the new Locality Planning Process is being kicked off by the first set of Locality Conversations in April 2024, and Locality Planning Review Groups in June 2024.

Locality plans will be developed in late 2025 after two years of data gathering and ongoing dialogue with the community. In this time, work will be ongoing to involve people from different equalities groups to gain their viewpoint as we develop priorities and actions for each area.

2.6 Understanding our communities

As outline above, a new locality planning model is being implemented in order to maintain ongoing dialogue with our communities and develop plans important to them for each area. This work will feed directly into the review of the Strategic Plan, as well as the development of a new Equalities Outcome Plan, both to be developed by Spring 2025. The Locality Conversations will be a continued route for the community to feed into this planning work, but there is also a great deal of work that has occurred to understand more about our communities, particularly those with additional challenges, barriers, or shared characteristics. For example:

How We See Ourselves

The 'How We See Ourselves' exhibition took place at the Harbour Arts Centre in Irvine in September 2023. The project used poetry, visual art and animation to highlight the lives, interests and talents of people with learning disabilities as well as raising awareness of the challenges they face. The project brought together collaborative partners from Trindlemoss Day Opportunities, Neighbourhood Networks and local artists across North Ayrshire. A short film was produced as an outcome of the project, so that experiences of those involved can be shared on a continuing basis.

Mental health and wellbeing service in Primary Care consultation

This engagement took place in January 2023 and involved a public and a staff survey to understand people's current experience with the service and exploring self-

care and wellbeing. This engagement process involved targeted engagement with different equalities groups, including focus groups for people with lived experience of mental health and long term health conditions, people with learning disabilities, and the local gypsy-traveller community. The surveys were made in a range of alternative languages and work was carried out with the New Scots team within North Ayrshire Council in order to encourage and support individuals new to the area with different language or cultural backgrounds to engage with the forms or attend a focus group.

Mental health and wellbeing digital consultation

A pan-Ayrshire engagement project led by North Ayrshire HSCP in March 2023, this examined the usage of mental health and wellbeing apps and digital resources relating to mental health. The aim of this consultation was to gain further insight into online activity in the hope of improving engagement with digital mental health and self-care resources in the future. This piece of work contributed to wider digital transformation plans within mental health services.

Gypsy Traveller engagement

Following the engagement work with the gypsy traveller community related to the mental health and wellbeing service outline above, the group was identified as a priority group to encourage additional engagement in order to understand the potentially unique needs of the community. A gypsy traveller engagement working group was established, and an engagement event was organised to be part of a local gypsy traveller mission event. The event took place on 21 August 2023 at Eglinton Country Park and was well attended with approximately 200 community members camped on site. The outputs from this engagement event supported the development of an engagement plan for the mental health and wellbeing of this group and there are currently plans for a further engagement project exploring male mental health and suicide prevention.

Neurodevelopment Differences engagement

Over the past year, North Ayrshire HSCP has been working jointly with South and East Ayrshire HSCP's and NHS Ayrshire and Arran to redesign neurodevelopmental diversity specification and supports. North Ayrshire HSCP led work to carry out different phases of engagement with different groups including individuals and parents and carers of those with a suspected or confirmed neurodevelopmental difference (NDD). Phase two of this work is underway with further engagement being conducted with parents and carers of children and young people with possible or diagnosed NDD to explore support available in our communities.

2.7 North Ayrshire Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service

This is an integrated health and social care service that works with clients who have complex and dependent substance use, who are supported by a range of different professionals to develop a recovery care plan.

This service is used by a range of people with different shared characteristics, and equality and diversity is important to the service which has prioritised embedding it

into their daily practice and strategic priorities. The service developed its own Equality and Diversity Improvement Plan for 2023 to 2024 with the following aims:

- develop and sustain a diverse, skilled and committed workforce able to deliver equitable, diverse and inclusive services to meet the needs of local people
- raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion to promote that the service is safe and accessible for LGBTQIA+ individuals and trans communities
- ensure all new Local Operating Plans, Standard Operating Plan or any guidance are reviewed to ensure that unlawful discrimination is eliminated, and equality of opportunity promoted

The plan had a set of actions including staff training and education, awareness raising resources, and inclusive guidance that were achieved by March 2024.

2.8 Communication and Accessibility

A brand new NAHSCP website was launched in April 2023 as the first step in helping the Partnership meet its commitments under the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No.2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#).

The work carried out so far has been to improve access to health and social care information for North Ayrshire residents, particularly those with a visual impairment, making the site easier to read on a mobile device and navigate using a keyboard, improving colour contrast, and moving away from the use of PDF documents in favour of uploading content as HTML pages to ensure compatibility with screen-reading software. Where documents require to be included on the site in PDF format, then these are being created in a more accessible way, with the web team having run a series of well-attended staff drop in sessions throughout 2023 to demonstrate the process of creating accessible documents.

A number of Accessibility Champions were identified and trained across Partnership services in 2023, giving staff a point of contact for advice and support when creating documents. In addition, any staff member creating a document for the website who requires further information on how to solve accessibility issues can also now book a one to one session with a member of the web team through the IT portal on the intranet.

The work carried out so far has increased the website's accessibility score on SiteImprove to 99.9%, however improvements will be ongoing in the long term as we strive to ensure fairer access to information for all and adapt to any changes in the legislation. Further manual testing of the site is necessary to identify user experience barriers that individuals with a disability may encounter while using the site, with work also required to improve the readability of the site in terms of the complexity of language used.

2.9 Staff understanding, development and training

The Health and Social Care Partnership places a great deal of value on developing our staff and ensuring that there are progression and training opportunities. The Learning and Development service published a new strategy [Be the best you can be 2023 to 2028](#), approved by IJB on 12 October 2023.

The strategy considers the professional and technical learning and development needs of the social work/social care workforce operating within the Health and Social Care Partnership, aiming to achieve improved outcomes for people through a competent and educated workforce.

In addition to outlining the aims in terms of policy and practice, the strategy outlines the organisation's commitments to values, principles and ethics, specifically outlining goals for equality and diversity. It includes commitments to design and deliver anti-racist practice in Social Work training (which will begin this year), protected space to explore ethical dilemmas through forum opportunities, and to design and deliver promoting equality training with essential attendance for social work students and newly qualified social workers (NQSW) which is now in place.

Total numbers for different staff training delivered from April 2022 to March 2024:

- Adult mental health awareness – 32 trained (new course)
- Autism awareness – 6 trained
- British Sign Language eLearning – 31 trained
- Adult Support and Protection Scotland Act – 41 trained
- Adult Support and Protection eLearning – 111 trained
- Adult Support and Protection overview – 67 trained
- Adults with incapacity act – 29 trained
- Adults with incapacity refresher – 37 trained
- Promoting equality awareness – 86 trained (new course)
- Child protection awareness face to face – 101 trained (new course)
- Child protection awareness eLearning – 62 trained
- Child protection investigation, five days training – 16 trained
- Child protection refresher – 18 trained
- Deaf awareness eLearning – 21 trained
- Deafblind awareness eLearning – 15 trained
- Domestic abuse understanding (ASP) – 19 trained
- Equalities awareness eLearning – 1195 trained
- Introduction to Neurodiversity – 244 trained from 28 April 2023 (new course)
- Learning disability awareness – 34 trained
- LGBT awareness – eight trained (new course)
- ASIST suicide prevention, two full days – eight trained
- Ask Tell Save a Life suicide prevention – 64 trained (new course)
- Parkinsons awareness – 56 trained (new course)
- Palliative/end of life care – 57 trained
- Care at home induction which includes adult support and protection and child protection and other conditions – 530 trained
- Safe and together overview – 254 trained
- Safe and together core – 74 trained
- Signs of safety – 207 trained

2.10 Embedding Equality in Procurement

In the previous Equalities Mainstreaming Report for 2021 to 2022, it was reported that our procurement process had recently had work carried out to embed equality into the process. This included:

- mandatory compliance for bidders with the council's Equality Certificate for all tenders
- a mandatory section for Fair Work Practice included within the tender award criteria aligned to promoting equality of opportunity and developing a workforce which reflects the population of Scotland in terms of protected characteristics, and a fair and equal pay policy that includes a commitment to supporting the Living Wage
- a commitment to the Charter for Involvement, which reflects 12 statements aligned to Human Rights in relation to how people who use support services want to be involved in the services they get, in the organisations that provide their services and in the wider communities
- involving users of services and/or significant others in the procurement process. They are invited to take part in the award of contracts through designing quality questions in the award criteria and sitting on evaluation panels that select preferred bidders for award

These commitments have continued to be taken forward, and we are currently working on how to involve service users in the evaluation of commissioned services, in order to inform service improvement requirements.

2.11 Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments are used to assess any proposed policy, plan or service, whether the proposal is a new or suggested change.

Since the launch of the partnership in 2015, we have applied the same Equality Impact Assessment process to both North Ayrshire Council and NHS budget proposals that affect the partnership. This has afforded the HSCP to achieve a greater level of consistency in equality impact assessments across the wider partnership. This has been a useful mechanism to both embed equalities practice in the partnership and further the process of integration.

Amendments to the assessment process in the past few years include the addition of further elements to assess the impact of both equality and inequalities. The HSCP now uses the NAC Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment process which includes:

- Children's rights
- The Fairer Scotland Duty
- Island proofing
- Care experience as a protected characteristic

Equality Impact Assessments are published on the HSCP website. However, as mentioned above, the website was recently revised to ensure accessibility, and the

impact assessments require to be accessibility checked in order to be uploaded to the new website. This will be done as soon as possible, but in the meantime people can request copies of impact assessments.

3. Progress Against our Equalities Outcomes

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership agreed the following equalities outcomes for 2022 to 2025:

1. People with complex care needs are supported to live independently at home for as long as possible.
2. People and communities who make North Ayrshire their home can effectively access the Health and Social Care services they need.
3. Children and families in need are supported to live healthy and safe lives.
4. Through improved engagement practices and access to a greater range of health and social care opportunities, people with a learning disability, or those with complex health conditions, achieve better health outcomes.

The below table outlines progress against achieving our equality outcomes through the identified supporting actions. These equalities outcomes will be reviewed in 2025.

3.1 Equality Outcome 1: People with complex care needs are supported to live independently at home for as long as possible

Equality Outcome 1.1

Supporting Action

Reduce the waiting list for Social Work Assessment and Review.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Waiting list information is reported quarterly to our performance audit committee. This refers to Single Shared Assessments for adults over 65 with a physical disability. Since April 2022, the waiting list length has been:

Year	Goal	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2022 to 2023	150	229	224	247	226
2023 to 2024	150	198	226	227	To be confirmed

Over this period the number of people waiting on an assessment has fluctuated with a high of 247 and a low of 198 during the reporting periods but remains consistently around the 225 mark.

Efforts to reduce the waiting list have been made over the last two years, such as additional social work staff in early 2023 within the locality teams which saw a reduction reflected in Quarter 1 of 2023 to 2024. The Community Link Worker service continues to offer support to people on a wide range of issues that can affect people's health and wellbeing, such as money worries, unemployment, social isolation, bereavement, alcohol and drug use, managing stress and living a healthier lifestyle. The service can also support people to manage low mood and anxiety and assist people to access the resources they need to keep them well.

Ongoing challenges remain, and the service continues to experience significant challenges related to workforce, recruitment, and an increasingly complex demand for services. During the most recent quarter, there were 37 new starts to the service and 23 leavers, which causes some delays in terms of gaps and training. However, our health and social care staff continues to provide high quality interventions and a

number of pilots and service reviews, with the goal of continually improving our service delivery.

Equality Outcome 1.2

Supporting Action

Reduce the waiting list for Care at Home services (both at home and in the hospital).

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Waiting list information for Care at Home is also reported quarterly to our performance audit committee. Since April 2022, the waiting list length for those in the community has been:

Year	Goal	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2022 to 2023	90	157	174	243	174
2023 to 2024	90	191	189	195	To be confirmed

Over this period the number of people waiting in the community for Care at Home services has been consistently higher than the target and, with the exception of a spike then drop between Quarter 3 and 4 in 2022 to 2023, has been gradually getting higher over the reporting period.

Since April 2022, the waiting list length for those in hospital has been:

Year	Goal	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2022 to 2023	12	19	11	26	24
2023 to 2024	12	21	22	26	To be confirmed

For people waiting in hospitals for Care at Home, the number has fluctuated over the last two years with a high of 26 and a low of 11.

A number of interventions have been planned in order to address the waiting lists. The Reablement Care at Home service commenced in Quarter 2 of 2023 to 2024, which included a review of the waiting lists for people in the community awaiting a Care at Home service, utilising a reablement focused approach, aiming to deliver an assessment of outcomes for each service user identifying strengths, actions, and interventions to encourage independence, reduce reliance on formal care services, and improve overall individual outcomes. This review was completed in early 2024 and will be further expanded in Quarter 4 with a four week initiative around accessing Care at Home supports.

There have been ongoing recruitment challenges, staff absence, and increasing community demand in this reporting period. Additionally, a number of external providers have continued to review their positions in the market which led to a major provider ceasing their contract in March 2023. The partnership has continued to increase capacity for in-house services over this time with plans to bring all Care at Home services in-house over Quarter 1 of 2024 to 2025.

The waiting lists will continue to be monitored quarterly to measure the impacts of the interventions.

Equality Outcome 1.3

Supporting Action

Remobilise day services for older people, enhancing options to include both at home and residential provision.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

All mainland day services have reopened with targets set to ensure full capacity is reached within day services, and waiting lists are managed effectively. All staff vacancies have now been filled and funding for four outreach posts has been approved and will be advertised shortly. All day services are currently offering outreach within their current establishment of services, and this will be increased once outreach workers are appointed. A Care Inspectorate variation was submitted for all day services to facilitate this, and a day service project plan and working group has facilitated ongoing improvements and developments within the service.

Equality Outcome 1.4

Supporting Action

Review local models of respite provision.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)

- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Anam Cara Dementia Respite Centre temporarily transferred to Taigh Mhor, Beith following significant damage to the building, which ensured continuity of eight respite care beds. Extensive repair and development of the Anam Cara site took place, with the service returning to Anam Cara in March 2024. This return has facilitated the reopening of nine respite beds in Anam Cara.

A review of the current staffing model is being undertaken, alongside a review of emergency respite placements requested throughout North Ayrshire to determine capacity and requirement for additional respite provision within Anam Cara.

Equality Outcome 1.5

Supporting Action

Reduce waiting list for people needing an Occupational Therapy assessment and improve access to aides and adaptations to support independent living.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The Community Occupational Therapy services within NAHSCP provide assessment and interventions to children, adults and older adults who experience barriers to independence. Interventions include provision of equipment and adaptations (both minor and major), advice, signposting, and support to obtain charitable funding, blue badge assessment, input into Self-Directed Support, and assessment and care management.

The Scottish Government published an updated version of the [Guidance in the Provision of Equipment and Adaptations](#) on 17 January 2023 to support Health and Social Care Partnerships to deliver a more equitable and accessible service.

Community Occupational Therapy has historically had high waiting times for service due to the volume of referrals coming through the service, which was not sustainable and North Ayrshire HSCP carried out a review increase efficiency across the service. Developments were made throughout 2023 to address waiting lists and pressures on the service. This included:

- increased staffing resource – the recruitment of additional posts including two Occupational Therapists and three Occupational Therapy Assistants
- two new posts were created and recruited, including one permanent Occupational Therapy Team Manager and one Adaptations Officer.

- a change of referral intake pathway via Enhanced Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation Hub which commenced on 5 June 2023
- completion of a Transformation Project to streamline processes and identify areas for development

The most significant change to the service has been the change of referral intake process. This has moved away from referrals being received directly into the Occupational Therapy service CareFirst baskets to enable a greater level of control and autonomy of what referrals are being received into the service.

These actions have successfully resulted in reduced waiting lists. Between March 2023 and March 2024, the waiting list in the North locality (aged 65 and over) went from 192 to 90, a reduction of 52%, and in the South locality (aged 65 and over) from 349 to 88, a reduction of 75%. The waiting list for the ages under 65 team (authority wide) went from 176 to 47, a reduction of 73%.

The maximum wait time went from 550 days to 227 days, and the average wait time has gone from 163 days to 60 days.

This action will be reported at the end of the outcomes plan period, but it has been successfully delivered.

Equality Outcome 1.6

Supporting Action

Review day services on Arran for older people.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

A pilot to review the day service for older people on Arran was carried out between May 2023 and August 2023. This first phase of the review was to look at the potential for an outreach based day service based in smaller villages around Arran. This first phase found that although some good outcomes were achieved there were only a small number of service users who benefitted. A second phase began in December 2023 and ran until March 2024. This was based in Stronach Day Unit at Montrose House in Brodick and there were six users in the pilot who attended one day per week. Feedback from families and carers were included in the review. This is now being evaluated with a report due at the end of April with recommendations based on both aspects of the review, which will then determine the next steps for day services for older people on Arran.

Equality Outcome 1.7

Supporting Action

Continue to develop community based multi-disciplinary teams to ensure appropriate support for people in communities to support them to remain at home.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) to support people with complex care needs are now in place across all localities, which meet monthly.

One MDT is still outstanding for the Irvine area, which is currently being developed and will be in place and operational by October 2024.

Equality Outcome 1.8

Supporting Action

People who have received a period of care within Acute will have access to a range of services to support their transition back home.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Prior to discharge from hospital a comprehensive assessment is undertaken by the Care at Home hospital based team. At this time referrals will be made to community based services including Care at Home, Community Alarm, Appetito meals, Community Connectors as well as Primary Care services to facilitate a safe discharge home. If required, the hospital team will undertake further visits to support the person on their return home or liaise with community colleagues to provide support to the person returning home. This may involve follow up visits from Reablement team occupational therapists and/or social work assistants to support the person home, enabling them to be as independent as possible in their home environment. The hospital team may also link with Red Cross to request initial services to support transition home.

Equality Outcome 1.9

Supporting Action

Apply the principles of the Ayrshire end of life and palliative care model.

Protected groups:

- age (older people)
- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

This action is currently under development and will be reported at the end of this plan period in March 2025.

3.2 Equality Outcome 2: People and communities who make North Ayrshire their home can effectively access the health and social care services they need.

Equality Outcome 2.1

Supporting Action

Develop a plan to support the transition of new Scots away from Refugee Taskforce support and onto mainstream health and social care supports.

Protected groups:

- race and ethnicity

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The HSCP has an established Resettlement team which supports the health and social care needs of refugees and asylum seekers, primarily Syrian and Afghan. With the arrival and coordination of the new Ukrainian scheme in 2022, the pre-existing Resettlement Team, which includes both HSCP and housing colleagues, mainstreamed support into existing health and social care supports for new Scots.

The Resettlement Team, providing health, housing and wellbeing assessments and screening, ensured the delivery of long-term council tenancies and registration with GP practices. It is through this GP registration that the new Scots can access suitable early years, public health screening, mental health, immunisation, dental services, and other health/social care supports as required, and that access to mainstream health services is as timeous and efficient as possible.

In May 2023, a new nursing team was established to support the initial health assessment and screening of Ukrainian Displaced People, including physical and mental health assessments, migrant screening, and immunisations. The team empowers individuals and families to access mainstream health supports as quickly as possible, only remaining open to new Scots for a short initial period. This team has now been expanded to include asylum seeker arrivals, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children, and trafficked young people.

The HSCPs role in the North Ayrshire Council led Refugee Task Force ensured a positive partnership approach with Housing, Connected Communities and Education colleagues to ensure a whole system holistic approach was put in place to support new Scots, for example social clubs and language classes.

Equality Outcome 2.2

Supporting Action

Undertake a needs assessment of the possible long term health and social care

Protected groups:

- race and ethnicity

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

With the arrival and coordination of the new Ukrainian scheme the HSCPs contributed to the North Ayrshire Refugee Task Force position statement. This position statement engaged with all services and GP clusters to be developed. The position statement highlighted the current service pressures, specific locality issues, gaps and opportunities faced by HSCP services in accommodating additional new arrivals. The new Scot long term health and social care needs have been met locally.

Equality Outcome 2.3

Supporting Action

Deliver locally the actions to support new Scots as identified in the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland's Equality Outcome Plan 2021.

Protected groups:

- disability
- race and ethnicity

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The Equality and Human Rights Commission engaged with the HSCP Strategic Planning and Equalities lead to ensure that new Scots were captured as part of their Scotland's Equality Outcome Plan 2021. The action is regarding engagement with diverse communities, including ethnically diverse communities, gypsy/travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, LGBT people, disabled people, older people.

As part of the Refugee Task Force, the pre-existing Resettlement Team, Connected Communities and Education colleagues continue to engage with new Scots on a regular basis to meet their needs effectively.

Additionally, the HSCP has a programme of engagement with diverse communities. Currently, there is ongoing engagement with the gypsy/traveller community, particularly around male mental health, an identified issue for that demographic.

3.3 Equality Outcome 3: Children and families in need are supported to live healthy and safe lives.

Equality Outcome 3.1

Supporting Action

Implement Signs of Safety approaches to improve how we work with families to develop meaningful childcare plans.

Protected groups:

- age (children)

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The HSCP is implementing the Signs of Safety strength and safety organised approach to social work case work that analyses detailed information for a balanced risk assessment. It is a relationship based model working within the context of child welfare and protection and will provide a practice framework that revolves around balanced risk assessment, risk management and effective safety and care planning.

Signs of Safety integrates professional knowledge with knowledge from families and their wider networks to rigorously explore harm and complicating factors alongside existing strengths and safety.

It involves partnership working with families to reduce risks and increase safety by building upon the family's strengths, resources and networks to change the everyday lived experience of the child so that we are confident the child is safe. As a consequence of working in a risk sensible approach with families more children will be supported to remain within their family network.

Preparation for implementation commenced in April 2022, with a two year intense implementation period which will conclude in October 2024, fully embedding the approach in every day social work practice for future years.

Equality Outcome 3.2

Supporting Action

Improve the quality and accessibility to services for children and young people who themselves (or parent/caregivers) are at risk due to the harmful effects of alcohol or drug use, by establishing a speciality support team in partnership with the ADP.

Protected groups:

- age (children)
- sex

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The Child and Adolescent Specialist Substance Team has been in place since February 2021, working with five to 21 year olds affected by their own or parental drug and/or alcohol use. Currently, the CASST team is running with a collective caseload of 60. The team is based within the Three Towns Locality, but the team covers all of North Ayrshire and works closely with Children and Family Social Work, Justice Services and NADARS (adult alcohol services). The team has done a number of things over the reporting period to improve the quality of the service, including:

- In August 2023, recruitment of a care experienced modern apprentice on an 18 month contract to complete their SVQ3, revitalising the ethos of the group, morale, and team spirit. It has also been wholly successful thus far, with the modern apprentice now also undertaking their HNC in social care on day release at college
- Continuing to utilise CORRA funding for diversionary supports with the overall purpose of preventing CASST service users or their parents from using drugs or alcohol and/or for access to treatment. The funding has been used to build skills and promote social activities and interests/hobbies for young people and provide them with alternate experiences to encourage aspirational growth. This has included gym memberships, equine courses, participation in sports and more.

During the 2023 Summer holiday period, the team ran a hip-hop dance therapy summer scheme for children and young people affected by trauma and impacted by their own or parental drug or alcohol use, teaching dance classes to aged five to 11 year olds as well as 12 and older. The aim of the dance therapy sessions was as an intervention to help with attention and focus, to improve communication, and to reduce feelings of isolation, social anxiety, and chronic pain. Overall, 24 children and young people attended across the summer holidays. Feedback was gathered from young people and their parents/carers using evaluation forms and was overwhelmingly positive. 100% of the children and young people who attended reported as enjoying the dance therapy classes and expressed that if given the option, they would attend again. Three of the parent's feedback was anonymously as follows: "While home life is very difficult and her sister's needs tend to take up most of my time, it has been great for her to have something so positive that is just hers. The positivity and energy of the class has really given her a much-needed boost", "I love that X has her own thing, has made friends (which she normally finds difficult) and dance improves her balance and coordination", "Y is so happy and gets so excited when it comes to a Thursday, she said this is the best thing about the Summer holidays". Due to the success of this, plans are in progress to commence further dance therapy sessions for age groups 12 months to five years, five to 10 years and aged 11 and older. The dance therapy sessions will be starting again in March 2024.

CASST and Children 1st have recently established a groupwork programme supporting primary school aged children in St Mark's Primary School offering weekly sessions focussing on early intervention, reducing stigma, and educating children around the risks of alcohol/drug use. There is also an afterschool group due to start

in the coming weeks which will work with children and young people directly affected by parental drug/alcohol use. This will include educational/informative sessions as well as activity based opportunities to promote social and emotional inclusion.

Equality Outcome 3.3

Supporting Action

Enhance early intervention and prevention provision within the established Infant Mental Health Service.

Protected groups:

- age (children)
- sex
- disability

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Ayrshire and Arrans Mini Minds Matter (Infant Mental Health Service) is currently under development.

In 2019, the Scottish Government committed to implement and fund a Scotland wide multi-agency model of Infant Mental Health provision: “to meet the needs of families experiencing significant adversity, including infant developmental difficulties, parental mental illness, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and trauma.”

The service is an infant mental health system of support with Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) at the core as well as national guidance on highlighting the voice of the infant, the specific needs of infants outlined in “The Promise”, and UNCRC work on infants’ rights. Training is also being provided by NES Infant Mental Health training Plan. The service aims to promote emotional wellbeing for infants by supporting them and their important relationships with their parents and carers as well as working together with existing services to understand how, where and when the service can be helpful.

A pan Ayrshire steering group working on the ongoing development of the service, and a series of engagement sessions has been carried out through 2023 to ensure co-production from the outset. This has included focus groups with kinship carers, parents, and services, and identified Infant Mental Health champions.

Equality Outcome 3.4

Supporting Action

Work with leadership across HSCP, NHS and North Ayrshire Council to locally agree that people with Care Experience are considered as a protected characteristic.

Protected groups:

- age (children)

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

A motion was tabled at a North Ayrshire Council meeting on 29 March 2023, outlining that in recognition of the council's commitment to the promise and responsibility as corporate parents, the council should support adding "Care Experienced" to be treated as a protected characteristic in North Ayrshire's Equality impact assessments to ensure all decisions made by council give specific focus on how we can improve the lives of care experienced young people.

A [follow up report](#) was presented on 13 December 2023, seeking approval to adopt the following definition of 'care-experienced' for the purpose of Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessments:

"Anyone under the age of 26 years in the North Ayrshire area for whom North Ayrshire Council is, or has been, the Corporate Parent, or who is, or has been, looked after by North Ayrshire Council or any other local authority at any stage of their childhood, no matter how short. By 'looked after' we mean that the child or young person has been looked after by a local authority in foster care, kinship care or in residential care, or has been living at home subject to a compulsory supervision order made by the children's hearing or has been subject to a kinship care order made by the court."

New templates for ECRIA assessment and screening were produced for use across the Council and the HSCP in January 2024.

3.4 Equality Outcome 4: Through improved engagement practices and access to a greater range of health and social care opportunities, people with a learning disability, or those with complex health conditions, achieve better health outcomes.

Equality Outcome 4.1

Supporting Action

Undertake a Learning Disability Needs Assessment with all current LD service users to better understand long term need and resource requirements and consider processes for implementing the Annual Health check for all service users.

Protected groups:

- disabilities
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The support needs of clients are regularly reviewed and responded to as part of their ongoing involvement with the service and engagement information is currently being gathered in order to develop a Learning Disability Strategy. Work to develop the strategy began in late 2023 and has carried on into 2024, prioritising service user and carer engagement. Ongoing engagement has been framed around the question

of 'what makes a good life', but other engagement with clients has taken place on topics such as respite provision and mental health and wellbeing.

Arts based activity has been an important aspect of our development work, resulting in the delivery of the 'How We See Ourselves' exhibition (a piece of work in collaboration with Neighbourhood Networks and local artists), and ongoing work to explore transitions within the 'What Comes Next?' project.

Positive progress has been made around the implementation of Annual Health Checks, and it is intended to provide a light-touch report on that work in late April to early May. To date (2 April 2024), 68 checks have been completed, and the learning regarding their implementation, and the potential role of Primary Care moving forward, continues to accrue.

Work planned over the next year includes further development of the new Learning Disability Strategy. A critical aspect of the plan will be a commitment to finding a practical, meaningful, and sustainable way to involve clients and other stakeholders in an ongoing conversation regarding the development of the Learning Disability service, and inclusive communities more broadly.

Equality Outcome 4.2

Supporting Action

Undertake robust stakeholder engagement activity to identify the range of available support options to service users and their families.

Protected groups:

- disabilities
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The health and social care sectors rely on local providers of care from the third and independent sectors, and there is a lot of activity locally to ensure service users understand local services and local providers understand local need.

The commissioning team has regular communication with providers and currently complete biannual contract management meetings with services that are commissioned, annual visits, and daily communication where any concerns may arise within services.

Within these visits and meetings, we discuss outcomes for service users, reviews, concerns and discuss service action plans. Updated KPIs are also monitored for our meetings to capture progress of service delivery and if any gaps within service provision can be identified. The service also carries out regular provider's forums, most recently on 18 March 2024, in order to maintain communication.

The Community Link Worker (CLW) Service directs and refers service users to the local services they need and so have taken on the role of managing Referral

Partners, which led to improved knowledge of service provision across North Ayrshire and within NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

Guest speakers are invited to attend the CLW Steering Group meeting each month to update the team on service developments that can be shared with service users, and CLWs have attended a range of community events with the aim of promoting the CLW service and linking with service providers from across Ayrshire.

A community mapping exercise was carried out in 2023 which saw CLWs updating community guides for each of the localities that we work in. The follow up work from this exercise is still ongoing but we are confident that this will be completed by the end of May 2024.

A further community mapping exercise was carried out earlier this year and this has led to an A to Z list of support services being added to the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership website to make residents aware of the support options available to them. This is also accessible via the NAC Cost of living page to increase reach.

Equality Outcome 4.3

Supporting Action

Host regular informative drop-in sessions with service users and families to inform them of the range of local community opportunities available.

Protected groups:

- disabilities
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Following some recruitment challenges within the Community Link Worker service, it now has a full complement of staff and is planning to carry out drop-in sessions. The service is currently planning drop-in sessions to be carried out in all towns across Garnock Valley and North Coast between June 2024 and March 2025.

The Mental Health Service has previously hosted events on a drop-in basis and has further plans to implement a regular event for informing service-users of local mental health services. The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival was established in 2007 and is run by the Mental Health Foundation annually, in order to explore how the arts can improve mental health and wellbeing, engage diverse communities and challenge stigma and perceptions. In October 2023 North Ayrshire ran a local Mental Health Arts Festival, organised collaboratively between the HSCP, NHSAA, NAC, RAMH North Ayrshire Wellbeing and recovery college, KA Leisure, and Arran CVS.

In addition to hosting arts shows and performances, partners presented their work to raise awareness of local services, including Beith Community Development Trust, in-patient mental health services, Tidelines, Trindlemoss Day Opportunities, and North Ayrshire Wellbeing and Recovery College – RAMH. This raised the profile of local

services on the launch night, before the three week festival consisting of over 30 local events commenced.

In addition to a second Mental Health Arts Festival being planned for October 2024, the Mental Health Service is hosting its first Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect event on Monday 29 April which will be attended by a range of services and supports available to North Ayrshire residents, including Carers Gateway North Ayrshire, VoiceAbility, NHS 24, and Community Link Workers, giving people in the community the opportunity to learn of local services.

Equality Outcome 4.4

Supporting Action

Undertake a review of respite provision, including engagement with LD services users and families on their respite/short break aspirations.

Protected groups:

- disabilities
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

Building on the service's involvement in the Promoting Variety programme in 2023 (led by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Shared Care Scotland), engagement work was undertaken with clients and carers in late 2023. The outputs of that work will form a key part of our continuing work around developing a broader perspective on respite provision. Red Rose House remains our main offer in this respect, and a greatly valued one. It has seen management changes in recent months, and Hansel (the provider) continues to be a key contributor to the ongoing discussions regarding respite.

Going forwards, we will build on the engagement activity undertaken so far and intend to establish a staff member linked to promoting short breaks activity within Carers Gateway. The service also continues to work with Hansel regarding further refining existing systems to ensure best use of the available resource, as well as taking on board learning generated by the engagement activity.

Equality Outcome 4.5

Supporting Action

We will review our Transition processes across Partnership Services. This will include undertaking meaningful engagement with service users.

Protected groups:

- age
- disability
- other – carers

Progress for April 2022 to March 2024

The HSCP is currently reviewing the Transitions Processes used within different services and teams, including health, education, and social care services, with a specific focus on mental health and the learning disability service. The term 'transitions' is used to refer to the process of young people moving from children's to adult's services, but transitions pathways within learning disability services can occur at different stages.

Different teams often operate using different criteria or processes, so this review aims to identify any differences, best practice, and inconsistency. To do this, a comprehensive period of engagement was planned and is currently on phase 4.

Phase 1 involved focus groups with targeted staff groups, implementing the Principles into Practice framework to explore a range of themes relating to our current transition process.

Phase 2 invited parents and carers of those with learning disability or mental health conditions to share their experience of transition. This was done with semi structured interviews.

Phase 3 involved focus groups with young people about their transition experience. This adapted the Principles into Practice framework, so the same questions were asked but in methods that were more accessible. Workshops were held in two parts; to build relationship with each young person to ensure meaningful engagement and a transition workshop explored the move from school into the future.

Phase 4 is currently underway, which is continued engagement and the formation of a transition parents peer group across North Ayrshire.

The engagement process is ongoing, after which the Chief Social Work Officer will report recommendations for improving the partnership's transition processes. There is scope for further ongoing engagement with young people to consider the transition process for young people in mainstream schools.

4. Next Equalities Outcomes Plan

The next Equalities Outcome Plan will be published in spring 2025. The current outcomes will be reviewed to ensure progress has been made and actions have been completed. New or reviewed outcomes will be developed following engagement with groups with shared protected characteristics about their experiences accessing health and social care in North Ayrshire.

The next plan will be developed alongside the review of the current Strategic Plan, to ensure that the voices of people with shared protected characteristics will be reflected in the overall strategic planning of the area, as well as reflected within our Locality Planning Structures.

Appendix: Equality Outcomes and our Strategic Priorities

HSCP Equality Outcome	Ayrshire Shared Equality Outcome	HSCP Strategic Priority
Older people with complex care needs are supported to live independently at home for as long as possible	3. In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable communities • Provide early and effective support • Improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
People and communities who make North Ayrshire their home can effectively access the health and social care services they need	1. In Ayrshire, people experience safe and inclusive communities 2. In Ayrshire, people have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services 3. In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable communities • Improve mental and physical health and wellbeing • Tackle inequalities
Children and families in need are supported to live healthy and safe lives	1. In Ayrshire, people experience safe and inclusive communities 3. In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable communities • Provide early and effective support • Improve mental and physical health and wellbeing • Tackle inequalities
Through improved engagement practices and access to a greater range of health and social care opportunities, disabled people or those with complex health conditions, achieve better health outcomes.	1. In Ayrshire, people experience safe and inclusive communities 2. In Ayrshire, people have equal opportunity to access and shape our public services 3. In Ayrshire, people have opportunities to fulfil their potential throughout life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable communities • Improve mental and physical health and wellbeing • Tackle inequalities