

Children's Services

Service Improvement Plan 2024 – 27



Renfrewshire
Council



Welcome to our Service Improvement Plan

I am delighted to introduce Renfrewshire Council's Children's Services Service Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2027, my first as Director.

The plan sets out our vision for the three years ahead, and how we as a team will help ensure the organisation delivers on the strategic outcomes set out in the Council Plan.

Councils everywhere are facing a very challenging financial context over the years ahead, while the cost-of-living crisis and poverty-related inequalities will continue to affect our communities.

So that makes it all the more important we have a clear sense of direction on how to focus our resources to deliver on what's most important – helping deliver the best start to life for Renfrewshire's children and young people.

This plan will help us do that. I have been impressed by the commitment and great work already being delivered by colleagues across the service, and the plan sets out where we can continue and build on that over the next three years.

Our areas of focus will include putting children and young people at the heart of our services, tackling the impact of poverty, protecting the most vulnerable, raising attainment for all, and creating the best possible environment for our children and young people to thrive.

That will mean a team effort across the service, the wider council and our partners. I look forward to working with all you to do that.

Janie O'Neill
Director of Children's Services

Our Children's Services



Primary

Primary education in **50** schools, **23** of which have an early learning and childcare (ELC) class.



ASN

Commitment to children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) through **2** schools, mainstream and flexible learning resources.



ELC

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is provided across **15** centres.



Secondary

Secondary education in **11** schools.



Children's Houses

4 residential children's houses and supported accommodation for young people leaving care.



Children and Families Social Work

Front-line social work services in our local area, including specialist provision and delivering The Promise.



Justice Social Work Services

Providing services for children, young people, and adults with convictions through a range of fieldwork and specialist teams.



Central Education Team

Literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, data literacy and research.

Children's Services - about us

Children's Services are responsible for the delivery of early learning and childcare, primary and secondary education, social work services to children and families, and justice social work services.

Children's Services provides universal services such as education, and targeted and specialist services for specific identified needs.

Our specialist provision includes child protection services, providing education to children and young people with additional support needs, mental health and addictions services for children and young people, and management and rehabilitation services for people who have committed offences.



The Director of Children's Services is the Council's Chief Education Officer and is supported by three Heads of Service: two Heads of Education and the Head of Children and Justice Social Work.

The Head of Children and Justice Social Work is also the Chief Social Work Officer for the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Our Resources and Risks

BUDGET

On 29 February 2024, the 2024/25 General Service budgets for the following were approved:

- Revenue budget £519m.
- Capital budget £450m (2024/25 to 2028/29).

The Children’s Services revenue budget for 2024/25 is approximately £254m, equating to almost half of the Council’s General Services budget.

As part of the capital budget, over £56m will be invested in 2024/25 as part the investment in Schools and Early Years establishments, with £155m to be invested over the period 2024/25 to 2028/29.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council’s risk management arrangements are well established with all strategic, corporate and service risks being reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. Children’s Services risks are detailed below:

Risk Level	Strategic	Corporate	Service
Very High		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful Cyber Attack	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic sustainable planning for people and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of the Dargavel solution• Organisational learning from Dargavel investigation	
Moderate			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portfolio Management - Unintended delays in progress in each of the three<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment;2. Inclusion; and3. Families and Communities• Availability of Alternative Care Placement (Foster Care and Residential Care)

Renfrewshire Council's Service Improvement Context



Workforce innovation and wellbeing

The Council launched its people strategy [“Our People, Our Future”](#) in 2021, which was updated in 2023 with the following 3 priorities:



**Improving our
Employee Experience**



Workforce Planning



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

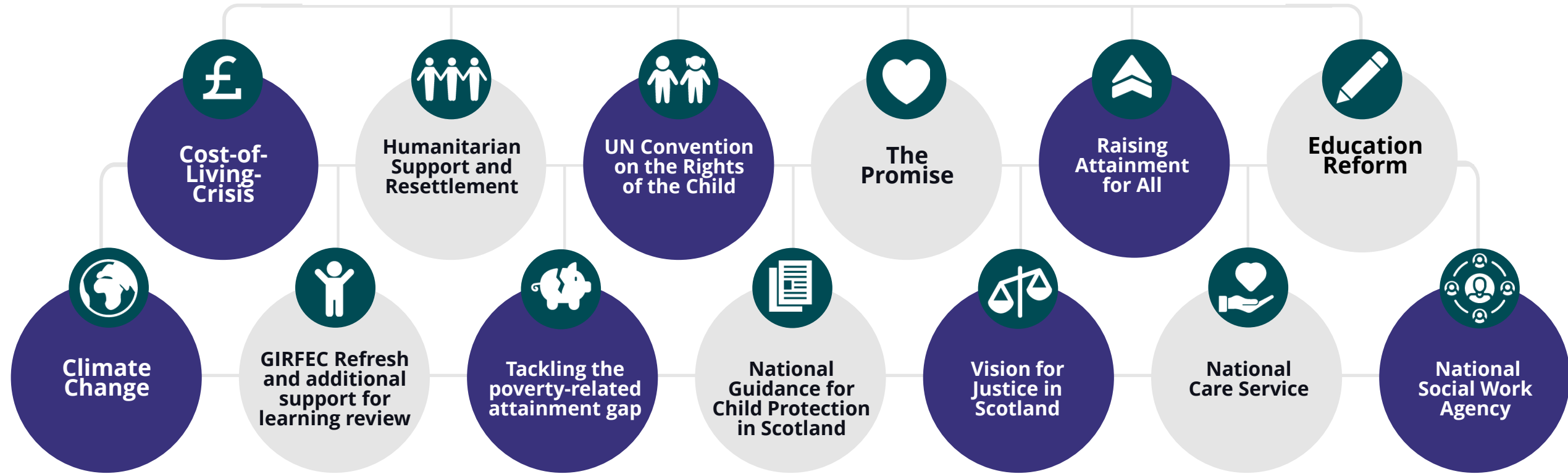
The strategy describes the Council’s organisational development vision and workforce planning activities under three strategic outcomes – **improving our employee experience, workforce planning and equality, diversity and inclusion.**

The strategy is aligned with the Council Plan and is focussed on the Council improving our employees’ experience whilst at work, looking at living our values, employee voice and recognitions which all positively impact on the culture within our workplace. There is a focus on workforce planning, there are many changes and challenges facing the Council in the coming years and this will ensure the right workforce and right skills are in place to deliver this. The last priority is focussed on inclusion, the council wants to be a place where everyone feels included and has a richness of diversity.

Children’s Services will ensure these priorities are reflected in both our strategic and day-to-day operations. High-level actions are embedded in our Service Improvement Plan, with a particular emphasis this year on supporting our teams following service re-designs. These re-designs have been – and will continue to be – collaborative and people-centred, reflecting our values with regular workshops and catch ups.

We also continue to actively promote health and wellbeing policies and initiatives alongside managing absence.

National Policy Context



Local Policy Context



Our Values

Our Values describe our promise to our communities, staff, and partners. They guide how we deliver services and make decisions.



Council and Community Plans

Our Council Plan and Community Plan set the strategic framework for our organisation and describe what we want to achieve for Renfrewshire



Fairer Renfrewshire Programme

Brings together existing programmes of work focused on achieving fairness and equity, and tackling the inequalities that exist across Renfrewshire's communities.



Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Every area of work within the Council has a role to play in promoting equality and diversity. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unfair treatment and asks public bodies to show how they make a positive difference to equality groups.



Best Value

Aims to ensure good governance; manage resources effectively; focus on improvement; and, most important of all, deliver the best possible outcomes for local people.



Community Mental Health & Wellbeing

Every area of work within the Council has a role to play in promoting equality and diversity. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unfair treatment and asks public bodies to show how they make a positive difference to equality groups.



Gaelic Language Plan

Renfrewshire Council is committed to providing Gaelic education opportunities for our residents and those who wish to undertake this in future, with our Gaelic Language Plan 2024 – 2029 approved for publication in January 2024.



Learning Estate Management Plan

This involves assessments and prioritisation to ensure that a programme of improvement or replacement for our buildings can be designed and submitted for Elected Members to consider within the context of available resources.

Key Priorities

Reduce child poverty in Renfrewshire and improving outcomes for children and families currently living in poverty

Place children and young people's human rights at the heart of the planning and delivery of services that affect them

Protect the most vulnerable members of our communities, including children and young people who are at risk

Support and nurture our children, families and communities

Create the best possible learning estate to allow children and young people to thrive

Raise attainment and enhance learning and teaching in an inclusive environment

Our Focus 2024/25

- Playing a critical part in our **local response to poverty**, sharing data and insight to direct resources to areas of greatest impact
- In accordance with UNCRC, ensure that **voices of children and young people** are heard and included, and their human rights are respected
- Ensure that robust **child protection** responses are in place and implement our updated local procedures
- Continuing the progress of Renfrewshire's response to **Keeping The Promise**
- Enhance our approach to the **whole family wellbeing** model, promoting early and preventative intervention
- Work collaboratively with our key partners to ensure our children and young people enjoy good **physical and mental health**

Our Focus 2024/25

- Supporting children, young people and their families to prepare for the **move into adult services** and greater independence
- Through the Learning and Teaching Strategy, close the attainment gap with a focus on **improvement in literacy and numeracy**
- Strengthen our approach to planning and future proofing our **learning estate**
- Supporting the review of our **Equally Safe Strategy**
- Continuing to support vulnerable young people to **achieve and sustain positive pathways** after leaving school; and
- Continue to develop our service models and to enable effective delivery of our key workforce priorities to **support the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.**

Other plans, strategies and reports

Governance

A wide range of reports are presented to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board. Papers and access to video recordings of board meetings can be found [here](#).



Delivering the Council Plan

Children's Services Action Plan and
Performance Indicators

Delivering the Council Plan – Place

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
<p>Progress development work in relation to the priority schools identified in the Learning Estate Management Plan –</p> <p>a) Paisley Grammar School Community Campus b) Thorn Primary School</p>	<p>Pupils and staff enjoy a modern, fit for purpose, learning estate which supports learning and achievement.</p>	<p>Education Manager (Learning Estate & Resources)</p>	<p>a) 31 August 2026 b) 31 March 2026</p>
<p>Undertake an evaluation of the roll out of full Wi-Fi across the school estate</p>	<p>Ensure that we have good connections which supports flexible learning and allows that is aligned to current technology trends.</p>	<p>Digital Learning and Link Manager</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>

Delivering the Council Plan – Place

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Refresh Renfrewshire's Equally Safe Strategy	Preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls.	Justice Services Manager	31 December 2024
Continue to implement 'Equally Safe at School' policy	A whole school approach to preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, with staff and students working together with a shared understanding and commitment to equality and safety for all.	Justice Services Manager Education Manager (Quality Improvement and Health & Wellbeing)	31 March 2027
Implement the priority actions from the National Strategy for Community Justice with our Community Justice partners	Enhance intervention at the earliest opportunity by ensuring greater consistency, confidence in and awareness of services which support the use of direct measures and diversion from prosecution. Enhance community integration and support by increasing and promoting greater use of voluntary throughcare and third sector services.	Justice Services Manager Community Justice Lead Officer	31 March 2027

Delivering the Council Plan – Economy

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, West College Scotland, Invest in Renfrewshire and Developing the Young Workforce West, we will ensure planned robust approaches to supporting our most vulnerable learners into positive destinations	This will provide a coordinated approach to ensuring that all young people, particularly the most vulnerable, are given the best opportunities and supports to move into positive future pathways.	Education Manager (Developing the Young Workforce)	31 March 2025
Contribute to the Council's Workforce Plan and Strategic Recruitment and Talent Management Plan to enable us to meet workforce demands particularly in relation to Teaching and Social Work	Creating a high performing and sustainable workforce capable of meeting the Council's future challenges.	Education Manager (Leadership & Professional Development) Strategic Manager (Children and Justice Social Work)	31 March 2027

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy that clearly articulates the vision for planning and delivering high quality learning, teaching and assessment	<p>All staff will be aware of the Renfrewshire Vision for learning, teaching and assessment and features of highly effective practice and will begin to use them in their practice.</p> <p>All practitioners are provided with the opportunity to learn from and share highly effective practice.</p> <p>All staff will be empowered and supported to strengthen their practice through collaboration and professional learning.</p> <p>Learners' experiences will improve as the vision for highly effective practice is realised in each establishment.</p>	Education Manager (Assessment & Moderation)	31 March 2027
Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, families in need of support will be diverted away from social work and offered assessment and time-limited intervention from Barnardo's	<p>More children will be able to safely remain within the care of their families.</p> <p>Families' capacity to safely meet the needs of their children is increased. Fewer children will require statutory social work intervention.</p>	Children's Services Manager (Front-Door)	31 December 2024

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Raise attainment and skills for learning, life, and work to enhance opportunities and choices for all our children and young people	<p>Close the educational attainment gap for our care experienced children and young people.</p> <p>Ensuring equality through targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing</p> <p>Improve attendance and provide help to parents and carers to support their children and young people to meet their educational needs.</p>	Heads of Education	31 March 2027
The Promise Strategic Oversight Board and workstreams will progress and ensure Renfrewshire ‘Keeps the Promise’ and delivers improved outcomes for individuals who are care experienced, wherever possible keeping children within their families	Care experienced young people have better outcomes and a more positive experience of care; feel listened to and valued; can build and maintain good relationships.	The Promise Manager	31 March 2025

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Build local capacity for transformational whole systems change and to scale up and drive the delivery of holistic whole family support services	Working with all stakeholders including professional associations to design a locality model to provide a framework for inclusion. Governance systems are clear, open, and transparent and ensure equity of approach, effective, efficient, and sustainable use of resources including the workforce, maximising funding across all localities. Inclusion offers through schools and specialist resources provide bespoke interventions to support children and young people from Early Years to Senior Phase.	Education Manager (Whole Family Wellbeing)	31 March 2025
Progress the design and delivery of the Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment; the Families and Communities; and the Inclusion Portfolios within Children’s Services	Each portfolio is tasked with developing their own portfolio plan to deliver on our agreed service priorities. Portfolios are unique, delivering on clear actions related to their context however they are also linked by cross-cutting actions, and this is evident in each plan. Portfolio planning teams have been established to support with the development and delivery of the portfolio plan. Teams are also responsible for evaluating and reporting at regular intervals throughout the year.	All Heads of Service	31 March 2025

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Deliver mental health and wellbeing support, including Ren10 mental health and wellbeing network to support children, young people and their families	Ensure key staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support families around mental health and wellbeing by establishing a strategic plan of training. By accessing appropriate training, staff will be better equipped to support children and young people with regards to their mental health.	Education Manager (Quality Improvement & Health and Wellbeing)	31 March 2025
Establish a dedicated team to support kinship carers in Renfrewshire	This will provide more focussed support to kinship carers and separate off the support provided to carers and the children they care for. This should reduce potential placement breakdowns and improve the overall experience of children in kinship care.	Children's Services Manager (Renfrewshire-Wide Services)	31 December 2024

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Introduce a new role of Independent Decision Maker within the Social Work Service.	<p>This role will be responsible for chairing Looked After Reviews and Child Protection Planning meetings.</p> <p>This will enhance the scrutiny and oversight of decision making for children who are accommodated or at risk of being accommodated therefore ensuring we keep as many children as possible living safely in their family home.</p>	Children's and Justice Services Manager (Assurance & Change)	30 September 2024
Establish a whole service Social Work duty team with responsibility for all new requests for assistance.	Standardise approach and improve practice in response to the first point of contact with Social Work.	Children's Services Manager (Front Door Services)	31 October 2024
Introduce whole service teams for cases which require medium- and longer-term allocation for Social Work support.	This will be separate from new requests for assistance. The Social Workers in these teams will not require to be on duty on a weekly basis therefore reducing firefighting and allowing them to focus on more planned interventions with children and families. Cases will be allocated on capacity rather than geographic location and transfers within the service will be minimised to promote best practice in terms of relationship-based practice.	Children's Services Manager (Children & Families Teams)	31 October 2024

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators – Financial Year	Last Updated	Value	Target
Proportion of children being looked after in the community	Q4 2023/24	90.9%	89.9%
Percentage of accommodated Looked After Children placed with families	Q4 2023/24	90.3%	83%
Percentage of care leavers participating in employment, training or education	Q4 2023/24	56%	55%
Percentage of care leavers who have had a period of homelessness in the last 6 months	Q4 2023/24	6%	0%
The percentage of NEW clients subject to a new supervision order seen by a supervising officer within 1 week	Q1 2023/24	64%	85%
% of NEW unpaid work orders/requirement complete by the required date	Q1 2023/24	96%	75%
Percentage of NEW unpaid work clients seen within 1 working day of the order	Q1 2023/24	53%	70%
Percentage of NEW unpaid work clients receiving an induction within 5 working days of the order	Q1 2023/24	62%	75%
Percentage of NEW unpaid work clients beginning work placement within 7 working days of the order	Q1 2023/24	58%	65%

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator – Academic Year	Last Updated	Value	Target
% of Leavers attaining literacy SCQF Level 4	2022/23	95.7%	98%
% of Leavers attaining numeracy SCQF Level 4	2022/23	93.0%	94%
% of Leavers attaining literacy SCQF Level 5	2022/23	85.3%	88%
% of Leavers attaining numeracy SCQF Level 5	2022/23	75.3%	77%
Average total tariff score of all school leavers in Renfrewshire	2022/23	933	959
Average total tariff score of leavers living in SIMD 30% most deprived areas	2022/23	681	770
Percentage gap in average total tariff score of school leavers resident in SIMD 30% most deprived and those from the 70% least SIMD deprived Renfrewshire areas.	2022/23	36%	28%
Average Total Tariff Score of Looked After Children (school leavers)	2022/23	320	330
Gap between the Average Total Tariff Score of Looked After Children (school leavers) and that of the total Renfrewshire leavers cohort	2022/23	66%	63%
No of foundation apprenticeships accessed by Renfrewshire school pupils	2022/23	14	45
Percentage of pupils satisfied with establishments Education Scotland Survey	2023/24	82.7%	100%

Delivering the Council Plan – Fair

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator – Academic Year	Last Updated	Value	Target
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Literacy between pupils living in 30% Most Deprived areas and those living in 70% Least Deprived Areas (SIMD)	2022/23	16	10
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Numeracy between pupils living in 30% Most Deprived areas and those living in 70% Least Deprived Areas (SIMD)	2022/23	11	9
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Literacy between pupils entitled to Free School Meals and pupils not entitled	2022/23	22	15
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Numeracy between pupils entitled to Free School Meals and pupils not entitled	2022/23	18	14
% of School leavers in a positive destination	2022/23	96.4%	98%
% of children attending school (Primary)	2022/23	92.8%	95.5%
% of children attending school (Secondary)	2022/23	86.9%	91%
% of young people choosing to stay onto S5 (as % of S4 roll at September previous year)	2023/24	87.8%	92%
% of young people choosing to stay onto S6 (as % of S4 roll at September two years before)	2023/24	63.2%	71%

Delivering the Council Plan – Green

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Continue to work with other council services to deliver improvements to the school estate which offer a high degree of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.	Following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019, the delivery of this action will make a critical contribution towards Renfrewshire being carbon neutral by 2030.	Education Manager (Learning Estate & Resources)	31-Mar-2026

Delivering the Council Plan – Living Our Values

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Engage and participate in Trauma Informed and Responsive Renfrewshire programme	<p>We understand what trauma is, and how it affects people, so we will now work differently: Learning and working together to co-create fair and helpful collaborations to support healing and recovery with people affected by trauma.</p> <p>Progress towards, and achievement of, improvement outcomes for people, systems and services as detailed of five strategic themes and outcomes in Trauma Informed and Responsive Renfrewshire programme</p>	All Heads of Service	31-Mar-2026
Actively promote health and wellbeing support for staff	Our staff feel supported and are aware of the health and wellbeing support available to them.	All Heads of Service	31-Mar-2027

Delivering the Council Plan – Living Our Values

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	Who is leading this?	When will we do this by?
Place the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the heart of service planning and delivery (UNCRC)	Promote awareness of children's rights, not just amongst children and young people but also adults.	Strategic Manager (Children and Justice Social Work) Head of Education (Inclusion and Quality Improvement)	31-Mar-2027
Through engagement and participation, we will ensure the collective views, needs and aspirations of children, young people and families are met.	We take steps to ensure seldom heard voices are heard e.g., care experienced children and young people and those children involved in child protection. The participation and influence of care experienced children, young people and their families is recorded and evidenced.	Head of Education (Inclusion and Quality Improvement) Child Protection Adviser Children's Services Manager (Children & Families Teams)	31-Mar-2027
In partnership with the HSCP, closely collaborate with young people and their families to ensure a smooth transition to adult services.	Empower young people with disabilities and their families to make informed choices.	Children's Services Manager (Renfrewshire-Wide Services)	31-Mar-2027

Delivering the Council Plan – Living Our Values

Performance Indicators – Financial Year	Last Updated	Value	Target
% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers	Q4 2023/24	100%	95%
% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers	Q4 2023/24	91%	95%
% of FOI requests completed within timescale by Children's Services	Q4 2023/24	85%	100%

Management Information

Performance Indicators – Financial Year	Last Updated	Value
Percentage of children registered in this period who have previously been on the Child Protection Register	Q4 2023/24	11.1%
Number of children on the Child Protection Register at quarter end date	Q4 2023/24	61

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