

Children's Services

Service Improvement Plan 2023 - 26



Renfrewshire
Council

Welcome to our Service Improvement Plan



As Director of Children's Services in Renfrewshire, I am delighted to introduce our new Service Improvement Plan.

This plan describes how our teams will focus our efforts to deliver the strategic outcomes described in the Council Plan 2022 to 2027 of Place; Economy; Fair; Green and Living Our Values.

Within the Council Plan we have identified a cross-cutting theme which I feel captures what we are working towards - loving and happy lives for Renfrewshire's children, **working together to get it right for children, families and communities.**


All Council Services continue to operate in a challenging context. Our communities face a cost-of-living crisis, health and wellbeing challenges and we will continue to respond by providing services and addressing the causes of inequalities. These challenges are experienced in our early year centres, schools and social work services.

Children's Services will continue to listen and target our resources to the areas and programmes that need it most, complementing the activity outlined in the Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership Plan, the Education Improvement Plan, and the Fairer Renfrewshire Programme.


Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues across Children's Services for continuing to bring their passion and enthusiasm to the absolutely critical work that they do, supporting children, young people and their families across Renfrewshire.

Every day you make a difference. Thank you.

Children's Services – our service



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 through our **2** ASN schools, mainstream and flexible learning resources.



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



Secondary
Secondary education in **11** schools.



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



Children and Families Social Work
Social work services, including specialist provision, in **4** locality area teams.



Justice Social Work Services



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.

Director of Children's Services



Steven Quinn

Head of Education
(Curriculum and School Infrastructure)



Julie Calder

Head of Education
(Inclusion and Quality Improvement)



Tracy McGillivray

Head of Child Care and
Criminal Justice



John Trainer

The Director of Children's Services is the Council's Chief Education Officer and is supported by three Heads of Service: the Head of Education – Curriculum and School Infrastructure; the Head of Education – Inclusion and Quality Improvement; and the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice.

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

Our resources and risks

BUDGET

For 2023/24, the Revenue budget approved for General Services on 2 March 2023 was **£483m**.

The capital budget approved for General Services on 2 March 2023 was **£424m** for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

The Children's Services revenue budget for 2023/24 is approximately **£230m**, accounting for almost half of the Council's General Services budget.

As part of the capital budget, over **£2m** will be invested in 2023/24 to improve school kitchen facilities to accommodate the expansion of Free School Meals for primary pupils, while **£87m** will be invested for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 as part of the schools and early years estate programme.

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:

Risks	Evaluations
Our strategic risks	
None	N/A
Our corporate risks	
Cyber Attack	High
Our top service-specific risks	
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	Moderate
Integrated service arrangements	Moderate
Early intervention and prevention in Children's Services	Moderate
Failure of major providers	Moderate
Continuous improvement	Moderate
Property – school estates	Moderate
Implementation of new case management system for justice social work	Moderate

Transformation and financial sustainability

The Council's financial outlook remains subject to significant uncertainty. The most recent analysis reported to Council on 2 March 2023 suggests that Renfrewshire Council will experience a funding deficit in the range of £40m-£45m in the three years following 2023/24, unless mitigating action is taken.

The Council continues to explore ways to transform how we deliver our services – to improve the experience of our customers and service-users but also to ensure the Council's financial sustainability.

Children's Service's continues to support this through:

Developing Children's Services **Portfolio Approach** to support prioritisation, integration and joint-planning, reducing duplication and over-reporting

Supporting with the cross-service **Financial Sustainability** workstreams led by the Corporate Management Team

Workforce development and wellbeing

The Council launched its people strategy "[Our People, Our Future](#)" in 2021, which identifies three priority areas:



health and wellbeing



new ways of working

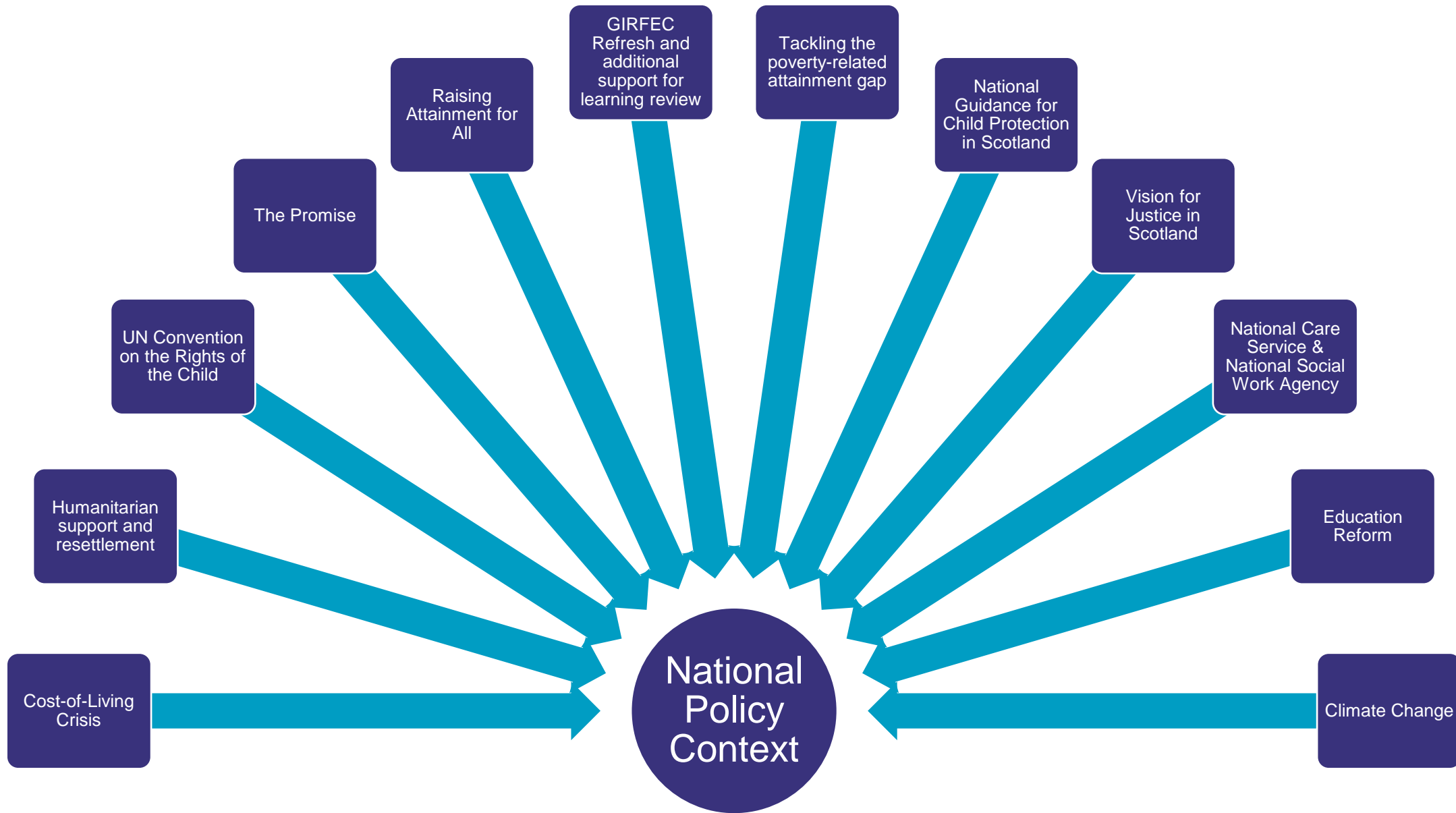


staff communication and engagement

The strategy also integrates the Council's organisational development vision and workforce planning activities into three strategic outcomes - **our approaches improve; our skills strengthen; and our culture evolves.**

The strategy is aligned with the [new Council Plan](#) and ensures focus on supporting staff through service transformation, changing culture norms, embedding our values within decision making and improving staff and service user experiences of the Council.

Children's Services will ensure these priorities are reflected in our workforce. High-level actions arising from the people strategy are embedded in our Service Improvement Plan and will be monitored through this.



Our 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.

Alcohol and Drugs Change Programme

- Takes forward projects to deliver the recommendations from Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drugs Commission to reduce drug and alcohol-related harms and promote recovery.

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.

School 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.

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 2022 – 2027 approved for publication in November 2022

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.

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing (Ren10)

- Our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for children, young people and their families, bridging the gap between universal services, which deals broadly with wellbeing, and the highly specialist support for severe mental health conditions.

Our key priorities

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

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

Supporting and nurturing children and families, with particular focus on early intervention and prevention

Supporting and nurturing children and families with a particular focus on mental health and wellbeing

Placing the rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of our decision making and service delivery

Promoting a shared vision and refreshed understanding of inclusion for our children and young people

Raising attainment while ensuring equity for all our children and young people

Enhance learning and teaching, delivering a meaningful, relevant and progressive curriculum

Our Focus for 2023/24

Playing a critical part in our **local response to poverty**, sharing data and insight to direct resources to areas of greatest impact

Continuing the progress of **The Promise** in developing Renfrewshire's response to national aims and priorities

Further improving engagement to ensure **voices of children and young people** are heard and included, and their rights are respected

Developing our approach to the **whole family wellbeing** model, promoting early and preventative intervention through strong partnership working and community engagement

Continuing the delivery of targeted interventions to **support improvement in literacy and numeracy**, underpinned by new and innovative approaches to enhance the quality of learning and teaching

Supporting children and young people and their families to prepare for the **move into adult services and greater independence**

Our Focus for 2023/24

Continuing to support vulnerable young people to **achieve and sustain positive pathways** after leaving school by developing a strengthened framework of support with partners

Implementing the refreshed **GIRFEC policy and training** to support practitioners

Delivering a comprehensive programme of **staff training and development**, including activity to address the specific challenges relating to social work

Continuing to embed the innovative and interactive **alcohol and drug education training programme**, to develop self-confidence and support the healthy and informed choices of children and young people

Creating a **request for assistance referral system**, which ensures timely support across a variety of services for children, young people, parents and carers

Supporting the review of our **Gender-Based Violence Strategy**

Other plans, strategies and reports

Governance

For Children's Services, 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 - PLACE

Actions

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Progress development work in relation to the priority schools identified in the School Estate Management Plan a) Paisley Grammar School Community Campus b) Thorn Primary School	Pupils and staff enjoy a modern, fit for purpose, school estate which supports learning and achievement.	a) August 2026 b) Pending
Progress plans for the roll out of full Wi-Fi across the school estate, understanding the benefits that can be baselined and measured.	Funding in place and programme developed and underway.	December 2023

Delivering the Council Plan - ECONOMY

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it 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.	March 2025

Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Actions

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
<p>Develop and extend bespoke pathways and programmes on literacy and numeracy to support all establishments through a differentiated approach.</p>	<p>Attainment data will demonstrate improvements in literacy and numeracy attainment.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
<p>In collaboration with Health partners, the West Partnership and the voluntary sector, continue to develop consistent, effective & preventative approaches to support recovery and improve the mental, social and emotional wellbeing of children, young people, staff and parents across education establishments.</p>	<p>Through delivery of high-quality professional learning, almost all practitioners have an enhanced knowledge and understanding of programmes, resources and strategies available to support their own wellbeing and that of children and young people (CYP). All practitioners have the skills to effectively support CYP. Almost all practitioners across all sectors use evidence-based programmes and preventative approaches in the learning and teaching of mental, emotional and social wellbeing. All CYP requiring specialist health and wellbeing (HWB) services. All CYP are supported to have positive, healthy and mutually respectful relationships.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
<p>Ensure Renfrewshire is a "child friendly" place where children's rights are at the centre of policy decision making.</p>	<p>All children in Renfrewshire rights should be protected and promoted in all areas of their life.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
<p>Roll out the Safe and Together model across Children's Services Social Work and embed the Safe and Together principles in practice.</p>	<p>Reduce risk of significant harm to children affected by domestic abuse. Children and adult survivors of domestic abuse will feel safer. Children and adult survivors of domestic abuse will recover from the impact of domestic abuse.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>

Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Actions

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Further embed the recommendations of The Promise in service delivery.	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.	March 2025
Development and 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>	June 2023
Building on the Ren10 interface, create a request for assistance referral system which ensures timely support across a variety of services for children, young people, parents and carers and staff.	Early and effective interventions will lead to improved outcomes for children and young people.	June 2023

Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Actions

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
<p>Finalise Parenting Strategy, launch and deliver on key actions through portfolio.</p>	<p>Parents will have access to the right support at the right time which will lead to improved outcomes for children and young people.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
<p>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>	<p>More children will be able to safely remain within the care of their families. Families' capacity to safely meet the needs of their children is increased. Fewer children will require statutory social work intervention.</p>	<p>January 2024</p>
<p>Develop and design an Early Interventions service within justice social work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion • Structured deferred sentences • Bail supervision • Voluntary throughcare 	<p>Less disruption to family life. Improved employment opportunities for families.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
<p>To update and refresh the staged intervention framework through a shared vision & improved integrated working across all services including education, health, social work, voluntary sector & employment, and training.</p>	<p>A refreshed, clear, agreed policy will be in place which will be mirrored across all agencies. The policy will be robust, simplified, and will have connecting processes in place across all services. (Education, Health and Social Work and other partners e.g., Police Scotland) The language of the policy will centre around the United Nations Rights of the Child and The Promise Action Plan 21-24.</p> <p>The school tracking system will be used consistently alongside SEEMIS to provide a local authority overview. This allows for improved monitoring of the stages of intervention and Additional Support Needs (ASN) for all children and young people (CYP).</p>	<p>March 2024</p>

Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Council Plan Actions

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
<p>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.</p>	<p>Care experienced young people will have better outcomes and a more positive experience of care; feel listened to and valued; and can build and maintain good relationships.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
<p>Build local capacity for transformational whole systems change and to scale up and drive the delivery of holistic whole family support services.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
<p>Progress the design and delivery of the Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment; the Families and Communities; and the Inclusion Portfolios within Children's Services.</p>	<p>Each portfolio is tasked with developing their own plan to deliver on our agreed service priorities. Portfolios are unique, delivering on clear actions related to their context and are also linked by cross-cutting actions, and this is evident in each plan. Portfolio planning teams are responsible for evaluating and reporting at regular intervals throughout the year.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
<p>Deliver mental health and wellbeing support, including Ren10 mental health and wellbeing network to support children, young people and their families.</p>	<p>Ensure key staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support families around mental health and wellbeing by establishing a training programme. By accessing appropriate training, staff will be better equipped to support children and young people with regards to their mental health.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>

Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators - financial year	Frequency	Last Update	Target	Q3 2022/23 Value	Current Value
Percentage of Looked After Children cared for in the community	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	89.9%	91%	90%
% of NEW unpaid work orders/requirement complete by the required date	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	75%	94%	96%
The percentage of NEW clients subject to a new supervision order seen by a supervising officer within 1 week	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	85%	86%	76%
Percentage of NEW unpaid work clients seen within 1 working day of the order	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	70%	59%	65%
Percentage of NEW unpaid work clients receiving an induction within 5 working days of the order	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	75%	75%	71%
Percentage of NEW unpaid work clients beginning work placement within 7 working days of the order	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	65%	82%	71%
Percentage of accommodated Looked After Children placed with families	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	83%	88.1%	86.9%
Percentage of care leavers participating in employment, training or education	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	55%	54%	52%
Percentage of care leavers who have had a period of homelessness in the last 6 months	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	0%	6%	4%

Delivering the Council Plan - FAIR

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators– academic year	Frequency	Last Update	Target	Previous Value	Current Value
% of Leavers attaining literacy SCQF Level 4	Annual	2021/22	98%	97%	96.10%
% of Leavers attaining numeracy SCQF Level 4	Annual	2021/22	94%	94%	93.30%
% of Leavers attaining literacy SCQF Level 5	Annual	2021/22	88%	90%	87.10%
% of Leavers attaining numeracy SCQF Level 5	Annual	2021/22	77%	80%	76.90%
Average Total Tariff Score of Looked After Children (school leavers)	Annual	2021/22	330	471	328
Gap between the Average Total Tariff Score of Looked After Children (school leavers) and that of the total Renfrewshire leavers cohort	Annual	2021/22	63%	58%	67.30%
Average Complementary Tariff (S4)	Annual	2021/22	320	320	311
Average Complementary Tariff (S5)	Annual	2021/22	570	628	604
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Literacy between pupils in 30% Most Deprived areas and those living in 70% Least Deprived areas (SIMD)	Annual	2021/22	7	12	15.4
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Numeracy between pupils in 30% Most Deprived areas and those living in 70% Least Deprived areas (SIMD)	Annual	2021/22	6	10	13.4
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Literacy between pupils entitled to Free School Meals and pupils not entitled	Annual	2021/22	14	18	20.7
Percentage Point Gap in % Pupils Achieving Expected Level for their stage in Numeracy between pupils entitled to Free School Meals and pupils not entitled	Annual	2021/22	14	14	17.3
% of School leavers in a positive destination	Annual	2021/22	95%	97%	96.60%
No of foundation apprenticeships accessed by Renfrewshire school pupils	Annual	2021/22	45	44	55
Percentage of pupils satisfied with establishments Education Scotland Survey	Annual	2021/22	95.5%	N/A	N/A
% of children attending school (Primary)	Annual	2021/22	95.5%	94.6%	92.55%
% of children attending school (Secondary)	Annual	2021/22	91%	87.9%	87.05%
% of young people choosing to stay onto S5 after January (as % of S4 roll at September previous year)	Annual	2022/23	92%	87%	92%
% of young people choosing to stay onto S6 (as % of S4 roll at September two years before)	Annual	2022/23	70%	70%	66%

Delivering the Council Plan - GREEN

Actions

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it 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.	March 2026

Delivering the Council Plan – LIVING OUR VALUES

What will we do?	What difference will we make?	When will we do it by?
Staff will be supported to collaboratively learn and develop across Children's Services.	The council has a workforce confident and capable of delivering its role.	March 2024
Engage and participate in trauma informed and responsive Renfrewshire programme.	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. 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.	March 2026

Delivering the Council Plan – LIVING OUR VALUES

Performance Indicator	Frequency	Last Update	Target	Q3 2022/23 Value	Current Value
% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	95%	91%	97%
% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within timescales agreed with customers	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	95%	71%	95%
% of FOI requests completed within timescale by Children's Services	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	100%	84%	68%

Management Information

Performance Indicator	Frequency	Last Update	Q3 2022/23 Value	Current Value
Percentage of children registered in this period who have previously been on the Child Protection Register	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	0%	3%
Number of children on the Child Protection Register at quarter end date	Quarterly	Q4 2022/23	86	80

Children's Services

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For more information, please contact:
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