

All children, young people, adults and families in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This is achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity and inclusion.

Community Priorities

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) draw together public, voluntary and private sector bodies, and local communities to deliver a shared 'plan' to improve the lives of local people based on evidence. In Midlothian, the plan is called the Single Midlothian Plan (SMP). This is a shared partnership plan of how we will meet the needs of our local communities and brings together all the priorities for Midlothian into one place. Our outcomes for the next five years are:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes,
- No child or household need live in poverty,
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In Midlothian the Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the subgroups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023-2026, is a statutory three year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families. The new 3 year plan has now been approved towards the end of 2023.

The plan has 12 shared priority themes, outcomes and actions which sit within 4 subgroups, namely:

1. Children & Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

We are fully committed to realising a children’s rights approach to all of our work and ensuring that we embed the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside our Promise commitments.

Progress and Achievements

The Promise

The Promise work continues to drive forward our children's service improvements.

Plan 24-30: was launched on 20 June 2024 on a dedicated website to partners. The plan is intended to be visual and interactive to make it accessible and easy to use. Partners are being asked to feedback on their experience of looking at this draft version before it goes live at the end of 2024.

The website is structure around the five foundations highlighted below:

- A Good Childhood
- Whole Family Support
- Supporting the Workforce
- Planning
- Building Capacity

Referrals:

Over the past year the work we undertook to better ensure that referrals coming into social work were appropriate is paying off with a 50% reduction in referrals from Q1 last year. This said the number of child protection referrals remains high. Child protection is both complex and challenging and requires workers with experience to undertake assessments and manage and understand the risks. Given the ongoing workforce issues around being unable to recruit experienced workers, we continue to find it challenging with regard to the allocation of this work. The lack of experience across children and families social work practice is becoming more challenging. Newly qualified workers are unable to take child protection work although they can be a good support in helping out in very complex cases with an experienced worker taking the lead. We shall continue to review this position as a senior officer group to ensure workers are supported and to offer reassurance that we are managing risk.

Number of referrals by Quarter

22/23				23/24				24/25
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
2,155	2,212	2,023	2,626	2,353	2,067	1,436	1,324	1,170

Family Wellbeing Service

The service is now well established and working hard to engage with schools and early learning centres to identify families who may require additional support. The team shall move to Easthouses Primary School at the start of the school term. The new facilities will benefit both the staff and more importantly the parents as they shall have rooms where they can do some 1:1 work and have meetings in what is a lovely new building. The family wellbeing service has a dedicated worker who deals with financial requests, this approach means that financial request do not come into the very busy duty system. A framework for recording referrals is currently being worked on.

Looked After away from home population

The data evidences that our looked after population is fairly static bearing in mind data changes on a daily basis. The differences in the data relate to one or two families coming into care, therefore this needs to be considered within this context. Overall across the past year the data has had no significant change, generally fluctuating from 140 – 152 children. The introduction of Family Group decision making, supports families to devise a plan which promotes families staying together with support from extended family. It is too early to advise if this is reason for the fairly static numbers.

The number of children's names on the child protection register has also remained fairly consistent across the past year however once again a cautionary approach when looking at this data as a large family can skew the figures. The main reason for registering a child's name on the register is the risk posed by domestic abuse. This is both a local and national theme.

Rate per 1,000 of Midlothian Looked After and Accommodated Children

22/23				23/24				24/25
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
6.9	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.6	7.2	7.4	8.6

*Scotland Average for 22/23 is 9.7

Disability Service and Self-Directed Support

We have recruited a new service manager who shall start on the 2nd September who shall lead on this area of work. They are a very experienced service manager who shall be looking at creating a seamless transition between children, education and adult services for our service users. The work will also include having a good overview of which service users shall require ongoing support into adulthood, so that we can plan and have a greater awareness of the impact on our budgets going forward. This service shall also have overall responsibility for self-directed support work ensuring that assessments are undertaking and reviews are happening so that families are supported to access their own supports or if required ask for support from ourselves.

Resettlement Team

Another key success has been the ongoing work that the resettlement team continue to do. Supporting families who have fled war torn countries such as Ukraine and Afghanistan by welcoming and offering ongoing support and advice so that they are fully integrated within their local communities. The team is very small but the impact of their work is significant.

Challenges and risks

National Care Service:

The 'Bill' is progressing to stage 2. There remains no information around whether or not children's services and Justice will be included within the NCS. Many different options are being considered. Over the summer there have been several consultation documents sent out to IJB's and local authorities around this area of work.

Workforce:

Midlothian continues to experience the same staffing issues encountered by other Councils. As already highlighted within this report a general lack of experienced and skilled staff across the sector is a concern. This has resulted in us having to increasingly rely on locum workers which are both expensive but also does not offer continuity to service users. As already reported in previous quarters this is both a local and national issue which is trying to be addressed via the National Social Work Agency.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

We continue to work with our Home Office colleagues to try to find a fairer way to share the distribution of UASC who arrive mainly in Kent on small boats. Most local authorities in Scotland are at capacity regarding having no more foster or residential capacity to accommodate these young people. We therefore must think differently around how we are all going to manage this ever-increasing demand.

Increased numbers of children impacted by the delay in neurodevelopmental waiting times:

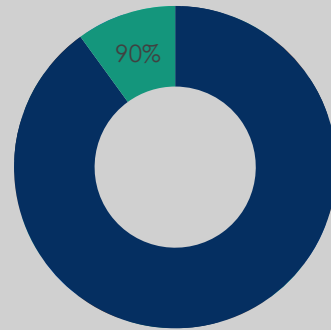
There is a significant delay in families waiting for an appointment with CAMHS regarding neurodevelopment concerns. Not all cases will require clinical input from CAMHS however we are looking at how we can work together to consider how we best support families whilst on the waiting list. We continue to work with partners to explore how best to meet the current demands and pressure whilst making sure we future proof our services to deliver sustainable options locally for children and young people with ASN and Complex and Enduring Needs. A neurodevelopmental pathway is in the early stages of development across the Lothians. At the last GIRFEC Board in June the number of children's names on the waiting list was circa 800, rising at around 200 names per quarter.

Financial Pressures

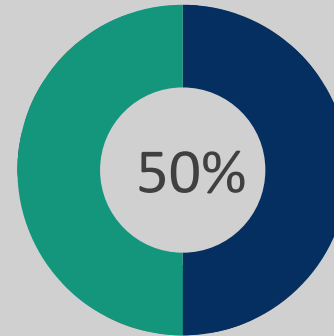
Finance is an ongoing challenge and we must ensure that we have sufficient capacity within our workforce and resources to meet the increasing demand faced by the service as the population continues to grow.

Service Priority 1 - Ensure the Midlothian Wellbeing Service is aligned with other family supports across Midlothian

Progress of actions to achieve priority



Develop transparent pathway to ensure 3rd sector partners have equitable access to funding resources within the Family Wellbeing Fund.



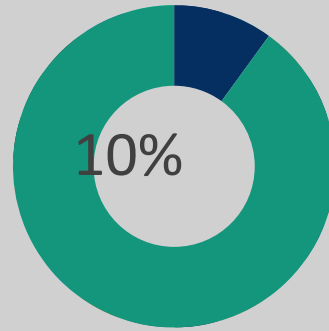
Develop a series of performance indicators and baseline figures to measure outcomes for Family Wellbeing Service

Key achievements this quarter:

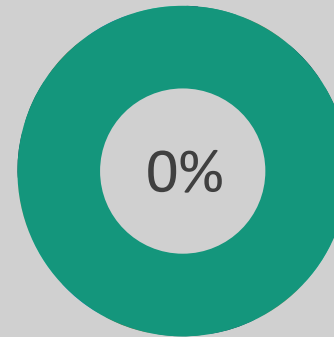
- Funding is now in place, services are established, small funding to be used for targeted commissioning.
- Performance indicators in development, work ongoing to create data dashboards and management information.

Service Priority 2 - Develop a transitions strategy and pathway across Children's Services, Education and Adult Health & Social Care

Progress of actions to achieve priority



Map and review existing interface to support the proposal for standalone disability/transitions team.

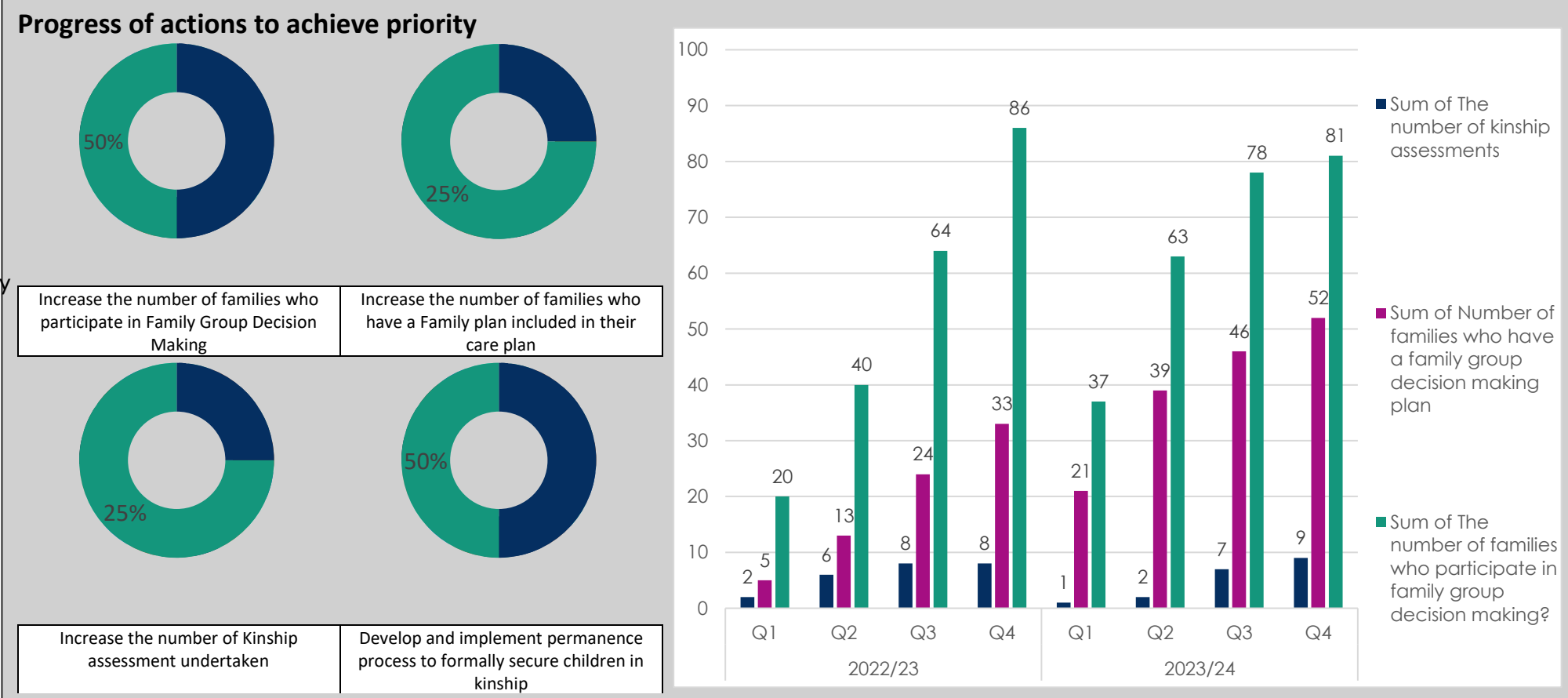


Develop a disability transition policy that supports children moving into adult services who have additional support needs

Key achievements this quarter:

- Service Manager (Disability) will take this on going forward. They take up this post at the beginning of September.
- Transitions policy is currently in review, being worked on by Transitions development worker. New Service Manager will take over as lead when they commence

Service Priority 3 - Maintain supports offered by Family Group Decision Making and Kinship staff to ensure children remain with birth/ kin families.

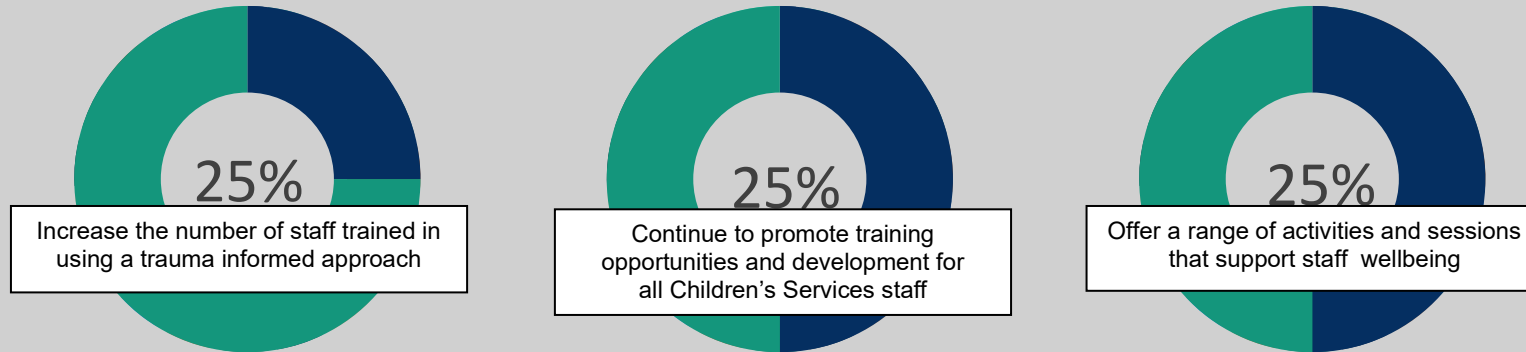


Key achievements this quarter:

- 26 family referrals during this quarter. During this quarter agreement to expand team by 1FTE to be recruited. 18 family meetings held in Q1. 8 New plans were agreed.
- We remain on target to increase the numbers of kinship assessments completed year on year. The increase in assessments will be linked to the increase in kinship placements made. Current plan to expand kinship assessment offered via Family Centred Care. Move to take place Sept 24.

Service Priority 4 – Strengthen the number of staff who understand the importance of trauma informed practice

Progress of actions to achieve priority



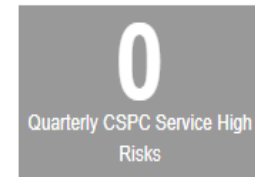
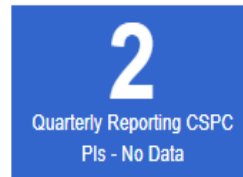
Key achievements this quarter:

- Of the 29 staff trained in Trauma informed practice in Q1, 13 were from Children's services.
- Further training sessions and Level 2 sessions are being rolled out in Q2. Agreed 17 people to do University level qualifications.
- To support staff wellbeing, staff consultation completed, with a view to a programme of events beginning in Q2. Contract signed for psychological supports.

Pentana Performance Dashboard

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - <https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login>)

Quarter 4 - Children's Services Partnership and Communities-



Quarterly Reporting Pls - Off Target

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
BS.CSPC.LPI.05 Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within 15 days fo...		86%	100%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
CSPC.MPI.07 % of internal/external audit actions progressing on target or complete t...		78%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q4 2023/24	
CS.SPSO.04.1 Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1		6	5	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
CS.SPSO.04.2 Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2		25	20	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
CS.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days		0%	95%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	

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