

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025****Report by Chief Social Work Officer****Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2024/25****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The report presented to elected members is the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2024/25. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. The Council is asked to comment and approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

**BACKGROUND**

3. In compliance with Chief Social Work Officers statutory functions under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, they are required to produce an Annual Report. This is based on a template agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (OCSWA). This year OCSWA have requested a particular focus on anti-racism and anti-discriminatory practice and staff health and wellbeing.
4. The report provides a narrative of statutory social work and social care activity. The template outlines the current pressures being experienced across the service and describes:
  - Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions
  - Service Quality and Performance
  - Resources
  - Workforce
  - Looking Ahead
5. Performance data and analysis is set throughout the report and reflects the operational delivery of services for childrens services, criminal justice, mental health and adult services including social care.

**CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

6. The Chief Social Work Officers role is key in a number of partnership arrangements including the Health and Social Care Partnership, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), East Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee, East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection Committee as well as being the professional advisor to the Council.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

### Finance

7. There are no financial implications arising from this report; however, the report does refer to the significant financial challenges facing the delivery of social work and social care services for the Health and Social Care Partnership.

## CONCLUSIONS

8. This report provides an overview of the professional activity for social work and social care within East Renfrewshire for 2024/25 through the delivery of the statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer.
9. The report highlights the high standard of work undertaken across the reporting period but recognises there continues to be a number of significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care within East Renfrewshire, financial instability and uncertainty being core pressures.
10. At the heart of the social work profession lies a commitment to enabling and supporting vulnerable individuals to make positive, sustainable changes to their lives to achieve the best outcomes for them, their families and communities as a whole.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

11. The Council is asked to comment and approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

## REPORT AUTHOR

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October 2025

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24](#)



# **EAST RENFREWSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP**

## **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025**



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## **Introduction – Reflection on the Past Year**

It is with gratitude and honour that I introduce this annual East Renfrewshire Chief Social Work Officer's report 2024/25. The report highlights how social work is aligned to and builds on East Renfrewshire's strategic long term aims and ambitions in "A Place to Grow".

The role of social work professionals is to support, care for and protect children and adults across the whole of the life course, to enhance wellbeing and improve their outcomes. Our staff crucially assess, respond to and manage risk and play a key role in managing public protection. All of this is vital in ensuring we meet our long-term aims and evidence how the social work and social care workforce are key in delivering this.

This report will also highlight East Renfrewshire's intention and commitment in keeping The Promise, working in partnership with children, young people, and their families to achieve the best for our care experienced community. In doing so we will ensure children's rights are upheld and maintained. Similarly, all our social work services across the Health and Social Care Partnership ensure we continue to strive to innovate, listen to and respond to those with lived experience.

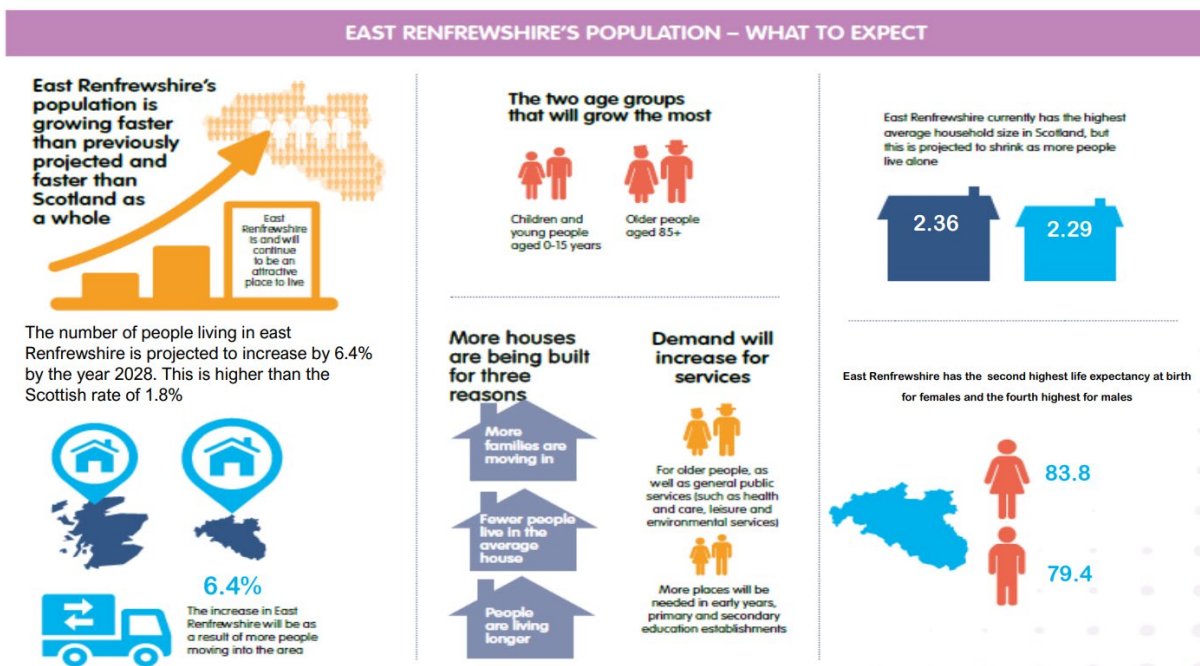
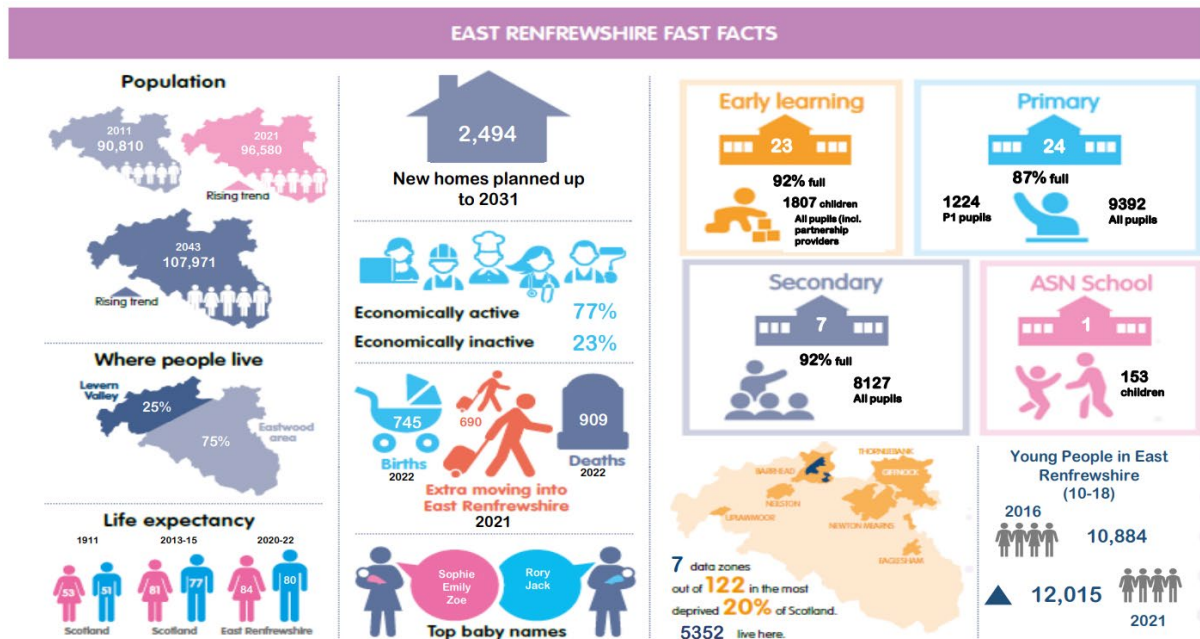
Our commitment in tackling racism, discrimination and inequalities are threaded throughout the report as is our resolve to support the health and wellbeing of, not only those in receipt of our services, but also of our employees. We continue to see complex presentations across our communities be it the emerging numbers of neuro-divergent children and adults in receipt of services or of those children transitioning into adult services.

Domestic abuse continues to be the main public protection concern across children and adults' services, and we continue to support victims and their families, crucially ensuring synergy across all areas of service. We are committed, once again, to provide consistent support and effort in this area to protect all who are affected.

Our workforce in East Renfrewshire are dedicated in supporting our residents and we are fortunate to have staff that are reliable, passionate and committed to those they support. It is important however, to consider the context in which services operate. Our Health and Social Care Partnership financial situation remains challenging and potentially precarious. Difficult financial demands have real consequences for residents and communities impacting on our ability to provide timely support when it is needed. This means real focus is required to ensure we are minimising and mitigating risk to our residents as best we can.

As Chief Social Work Officer I continue to be immensely proud of our staff and honoured to represent them in their professional roles. I hope this report provides helpful insight and narrative into their work over the past year. We are committed to continue to provide the best service we can to our residents and to do so with trust, kindness, compassion and understanding.

## East Renfrewshire Population Facts



## Section 1: Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

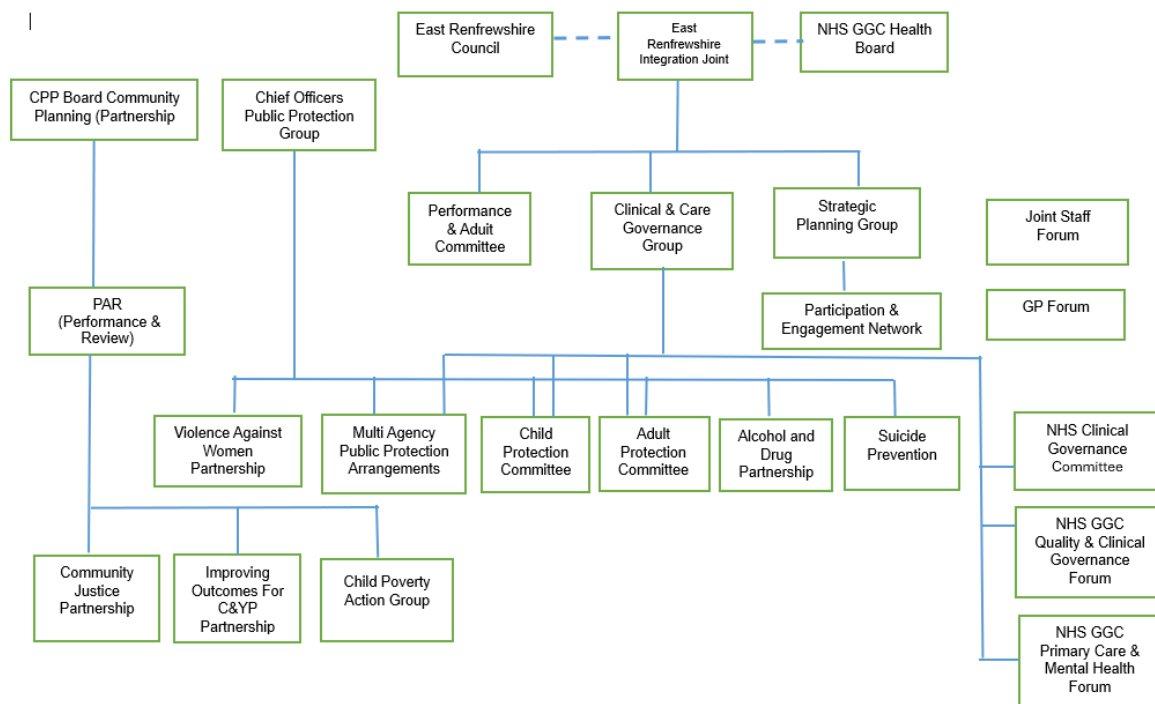
East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in 2015 under the direction of East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board (IJB), and it has built on the Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP), which NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and East Renfrewshire Council established in 2006.

Our Partnership has always managed a wider range of services than is required by the relevant legislation. Along with adult community health and care services, we provide health and social care services for children and their families and justice social work.

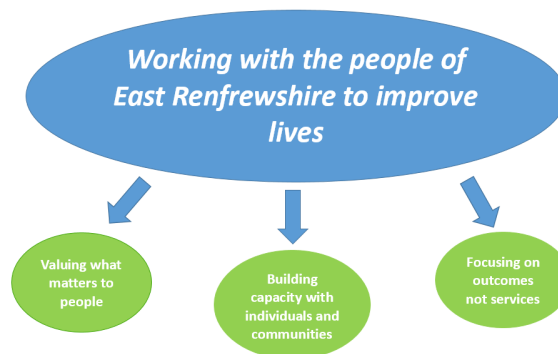
During the last nineteen years our integrated health and social care management and staff teams have developed strong relationships with many different partner organisations. Our scale and continuity of approach have enabled these relationships to flourish. We have a history of co-production with our third sector partners, and we are willing to test new and innovative approaches.

This Chief Social Work Officer report reflects the tenth year of the move to a Health and Social Care Partnership and whilst it outlines the key statutory social work functions, it also explains how they are delivered within the spirit of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 legislation. The Chief Social Work Officer provides the Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Council with professional advice, leadership and oversight of all social work and social care functions. The Chief Social Work Officer is responsible for the scrutiny and quality assurance of all public protection services in East Renfrewshire and reports to the Chief Executive for East Renfrewshire Council in this role. East Renfrewshire Council's Chief Executive chairs the Chief Officer Public Protection Group. The group meets twice a year and the Chief Social Work Officer acts as their professional advisor.

The chart below shows the governance, relationships, and links with partners.



## **Our Strategic Vision and Priorities**



Our vision statement, “*Working together with the people of East Renfrewshire to improve lives*”, was developed in partnership with our workforce and wider partners, carers, and members of the community. This vision sets our overarching direction through our Strategic Plan. At the heart of this are the values and behaviours of our staff and the pivotal role individuals, families, carers, communities, and wider partners play in supporting the citizens of East Renfrewshire.

## **Strategic Planning and Commissioning**

Our current strategic plan is the third iteration since our initial plan in 2015. The plan was developed in consultation with stakeholders and East Renfrewshire residents. For the 2022 – 25 plan, we also added a distinct priority focusing on protecting people from harm, reflecting the cross-cutting and multi-agency nature of this activity.

During 2024 – 25, we developed our next Strategic Plan for 2025 – 28. The new plan recognises the changing circumstances for the Health and Social Care Partnership and emphasises the broad partnership approach we are taking with third and independent sectors partners and our communities. The plan sets out three strategic outcomes for the years ahead:

- People are enabled to live healthy and fulfilling lives.
- Our communities are resilient and there are better opportunities for health and wellbeing.
- People are safe and protected.

## **Annual Performance Report**

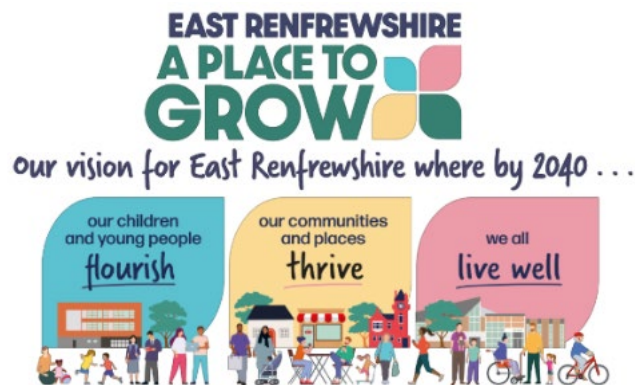
Our [Annual Performance Report 2024-25](#) has given us an opportunity to demonstrate how we have delivered on our vision and commitments over 2024 – 25. It provides information about the progress we are making towards delivering our strategic priorities and achieving the national outcomes for children, the national health and wellbeing outcomes and criminal justice outcomes.

## **Clinical and Care Governance Group**

The Clinical and Care Governance Group focuses on governance, risk management, continuous improvement, inspection activity, learning, service and workforce development, service user feedback and complaints. It continues to provide regular



scrutiny on the areas requiring development and improvement to the Integration Joint Board.



[A Place to Grow](#) is the long-term strategic vision and ambition for East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership. The strategic vision is built on three pillars:

- **Our children and young people flourish** – every child and young person, regardless of background or circumstance, will fully flourish on their journey to adulthood.
- **Our communities and places thrive** – we will be an inclusive, connected, and green place, with a fair, sustainable and healthy local economy, that our residents are proud to call home.
- **We all live well** – everyone can live well at all stages of life and communities will take the lead in driving change for good health and wellbeing.

The [Place to Grow delivery plan](#) outlines the priority outcomes, actions and measures that will help to achieve the vision and tackle inequalities. A Place to Grow will be the overarching strategic plan that will inform all other plans and policies.

## **Section 2: Service Quality and Performance**

### **2.1 Children's Services**

#### **Early Identification and Intervention**

The Request for Assistance team ensures that children and their families receive a prompt response to any referrals or enquiries for a child or young person. We support our partner agencies at the earliest opportunity by sharing information and offering advice that strengthens our preventative approach to children, young people, and their families.

From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, the Request for Assistance team completed a total of 2,713 enquiries, a 7.4% decrease from the previous year and 275 initial assessments, a decrease of 24.2% than previously. Of these 275 initial assessments, 40.4% required targeted intervention.

#### **Children and Young People's Mental and Emotional Wellbeing**

East Renfrewshire has recognised the extent of mental health concerns among our children and young people's population. In response to this, a multi-stakeholder Healthier Minds Service aligned to school communities continues to identify and ensure delivery of mental wellbeing support to promote children and families' recovery. This Healthier Minds service works alongside our existing Children First Family Wellbeing Service to support children and families in need.

The Family First service has good relationships with and is well utilised by minority ethnic families (31% of notifications) because it is a universal service with no stigma attached to access.

#### **Healthier Minds Team**

The Healthier Minds service is East Renfrewshire's framework for supporting and nurturing the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people, and families. It is also a resource for staff across the children services partnership.

The Healthier Minds hub has representatives from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Work, Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH), Educational Psychology, Community Learning & Development and Children First. Hub members meet weekly to consider referrals and the needs of the child or young person to determine the route for provision of the optimal support.

The three key elements of the service are:

1. Strategic mapping and support to maximise school community capacity to be trauma responsive.
2. Provision of direct services to children and families to build on strengths.
3. Emotional and mental wellbeing and strengthening of the existing school counselling model.

Within this reporting period 410 children & young people have been referred to the Healthier Mind service, with 20% diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at point of referral (with a further proportion who are awaiting diagnosis or displaying neuro-divergent traits).

In this reporting period we have also seen:

- Increased level of distress reflected in the top four reasons for referral: anxiety / stress, suicidal ideation, emotional regulation & trauma. There has been a higher proportion of children and young people referred to the HUB who are on a waiting list for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or whom have been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services by their GP and redirected to Healthier Minds by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- A significant proportion of referrals that are higher than Tier 2 in complexity and need.
- 97% of children and young people supported by the Healthier Minds Team report improved mental and emotional wellbeing.
- All parents who completed the post support evaluation noted they would recommend the service to others.
- That in response to increased need for support for parents, Healthier Minds have created a six-week parent group to provide information, strategies, and support for parents / carers of a child or young person with either an autism diagnosis or on the pathway to diagnosis. Parental feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Given the emotional impact of the Healthier Minds work and the increase in the complexity and severity of reasons for young people being referred, there are regular activities to support staff wellbeing.

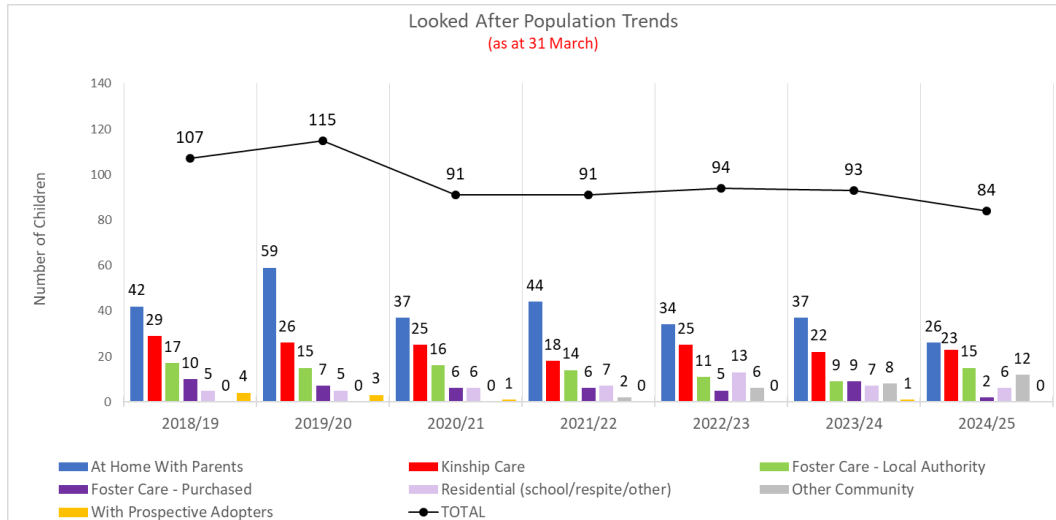
Accessibility of the Healthier Minds resource, particularly the change to self-referral via QR code has reduced barrier to access. This is evident as referrals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities have increased from 8% to 11%.

### **East Renfrewshire's Looked after Children and Young People's Population - A Profile of our Children**

On 31 March 2025, 84 children and young people in East Renfrewshire were looked after in a range of settings. This constitutes approximately 0.3% of the total children's population of the area and remains one of the smallest proportions in Scotland. This aligns with our continued commitment to The Promise and keeping families together wherever we can. The gender balance has been consistent in recent years with 58% boys and 42% girls. The number of children looked after away from home has decreased. This decrease has been maintained despite the challenges posed by our commitment to the National Transfer Scheme and support offered to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. There were two young people in secure care in this period;

one of whom was remanded for a period of eleven days and the other young person placed by a Children's Hearing for a period of 42 days.

In this year, the average amount of time children were looked after at home increased from twenty months in 2023/24 to twenty-four months in 2024/25.



## **Youth Intensive Support Service**

The Youth Intensive Support Service is the lead service for all looked after young people aged 12 – 26 years, recognising that more intensive interventions are required to improve recovery from trauma, neglect, and abuse.

Using a relationship based model the team delivers the statutory duties within the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, namely, to support young people eligible for Continuing Care up to the age of 21 years and for Aftercare up to the age of 26 years. The service aim is to successfully engage young people in East Renfrewshire by providing and co-ordinating multifaceted support plans. The service has the following shared aims across social work and health services:

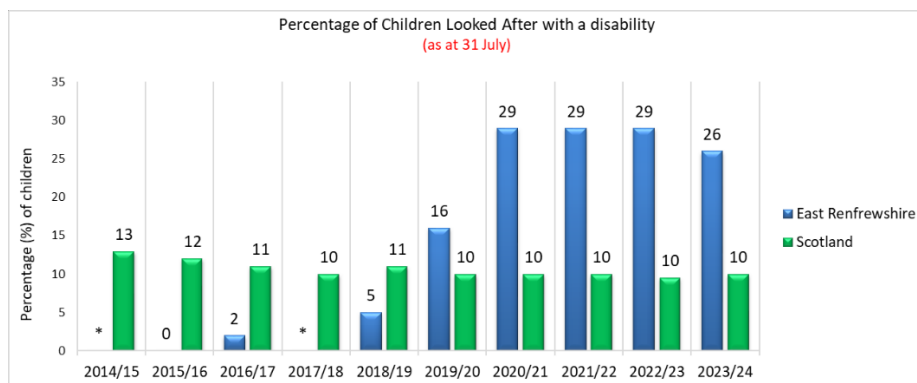
- To reduce the number of young people looked after and accommodated and at risk of hospitalisation and custody.
- To reduce the impact of historical trauma and abuse for young people.
- To ensure that the transition into adulthood achieves better long-term outcomes.

In 2024/25, a total of 143 young people received support from Youth Intensive Support Service and the most common age group was fourteen to twenty. There are an additional 53 young people who receive aftercare support as they need it. 64.3% of young people were male. It is evident that this gender split is affected by the National Transfer Scheme's unaccompanied asylum seeking children's arrivals who have been exclusively male. In the reporting period, 37% of children and young people supported by the Youth Intensive Support Service are currently looked after and 18.2% also

received additional commissioned support reflecting complexity of presentation and need for holistic wrap around support.

### **Children with Disabilities**

Of note is that 26% of looked after children in East Renfrewshire have a known disability. East Renfrewshire has fully adopted the principles of self-directed support in partnership with children, their families and other people who are important to them.



**Note:** \* represents numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality

**Source:** Children's Social Work Statistics, Scottish Government

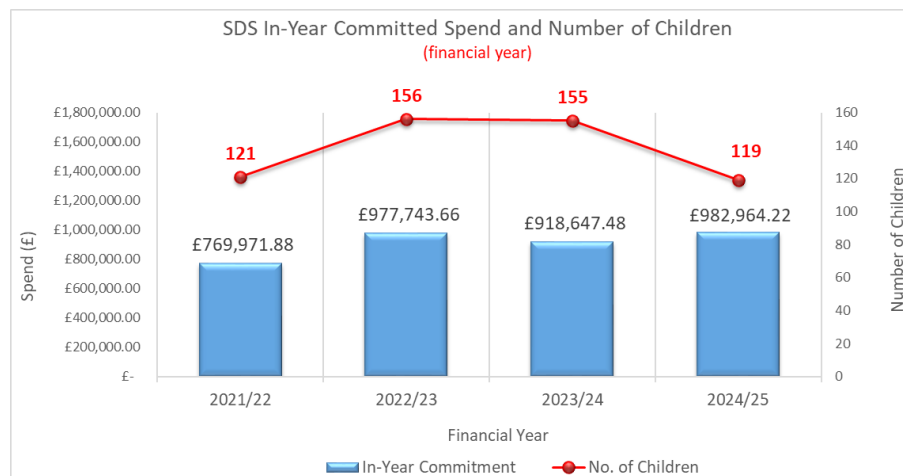
With the introduction of our Supporting People Framework, all our assessments are discussed and agreed by a multi-agency consultation group. This ensures that families and the child's plan are fully considered, and support is targeted to the right families. We continue to manage a high level of children with complex needs that require to be looked after away from home. This population increased during the years of Covid19 and have not returned to pre pandemic numbers. One factor which has contributed to this trend significantly are the reduced options and resources for suitable respite support in the area.

In 2023/24 and in line with the implementation of the Health and Social Care Partnership's Supporting People Framework, community children's services focused on transforming and redesigning how we review, assess and plan for children with a disability. This included joint work between adult and children's services focusing on preparing and assessing for young people's transition. The work focused on ensuring that children's plans and any decision in relation to budgets were outcomes led which offered parity and flexibility for those in receipt of self-directed support budgets. The team worked closely with partners and other agencies across the Health and Social Care Partnership to fully embed our Supporting People Framework within children's services.

In the reporting period we undertook reviews for all children's plans where families are in receipt of a self-directed support payment. We recognised that there has been an increase in the use of both self-directed support and the request for support from children and families social work services during the recovery from the Covid19 pandemic. In order to support this increasing demand and offer families the best possible service delivery we have realigned some of our social work supports to ensure fair, equitable provision for all our children and their families. This includes a service based within community children services who will help support future reviews of self-

directed support packages and children's individual plans. We do this in partnership with carers, multi-agency partners and, most importantly, the child.

The number of children in receipt of an individual budget has decreased by 23.2% after applying the Supporting People Framework. All children with a support package were reviewed in 2024/25 under this new approach. The service still faces substantial pressure, and it is anticipated that this will continue to be an area of significant demand in the years ahead. We continue to work closely with the transition service and adult's teams to support with transition planning given the more complex needs presenting. This includes early mapping with education colleagues, timely reviews, and transition support from age fourteen. An additional Social Work post was resourced in order to support this area of work.



## **Champions Board, Group Work and Participation**

### **Champions Board**

The Champions Board continue to use their voice to represent the views of young people with care experience and guide the implementation of the Promise both locally and nationally. They have been involved in recent government consultations around 'Moving On', 'Children's Hearings' and 'The Future of Foster Care'.

They have also attended the Promise Oversight Board Parliamentary Reception as ambassadors for Care Experienced Young People, engaging in discussion with members of the Oversight Board and MSPs.

The Champion's Board has been successful in securing a Youth Led Grant via the Promise Partnership which has allowed young people to engage with other care experienced children and young people in their community and determine what the needs are and put ideas into action. They have allocated this funding to a variety of projects designed alongside their peers.

### **Groupwork and Participation**

East Renfrewshire has a wide model of participation to ensure that the voices of wider groups are listened to and feed into the work of the Promise Board. There is

engagement with children, young people, families, and communities, with the following successes in this reporting period.

- An intensive summer programme with a variety of weekly activities across all teams, creating opportunities for fun, play and connection over the summer period.
- A weekly activity based groupwork programme for boys to promote pro social activities and relationships.
- An outdoor group for children to support development, build skills and support wider family relationships.
- Girls transitioning to high school engaged in focused groupwork which supported transitions, promoted positive friendships and learning new skills, leading to improved attendance, relationships, and self-esteem.
- 'Healing Together' a programme for young people impacted by domestic violence was delivered in response to need by the Intensive Family Support Team.
- 'Preparing for Caring' group has been delivered to support understanding of a baby's brain development to help parents feel prepared and attuned to their baby's needs.
- Young People have engaged with Articulate Cultural Trust in a variety of groups focusing on music and graffiti art as a means of expressing themselves.
- A Girl's Group was created in response to the needs of females being supported by Youth Intensive Support Service. This focused on healthy relationships, inclusion, and mental health.
- Young People attended a Mural Workshop at SWG3 to design a mural representing care experience.
- Children, Young People, and those who support them attended Who Cares? Scotland's Love Rally and Time to Shine events to celebrate Care Experience Week.
- Young people co-created a ten-week housing skills programme with contributions from eight community partners. This programme covered cooking, budgeting, employment, fire safety, housing processes, being a good neighbour, cleaning / laundry, healthy habits, and making a house a home.
- Events have taken place to support key stakeholders to engage with children, young people, and families with lived experience. This has included a Family Fun Day which allowed children, families and those who support them to come together with local Elected Members.

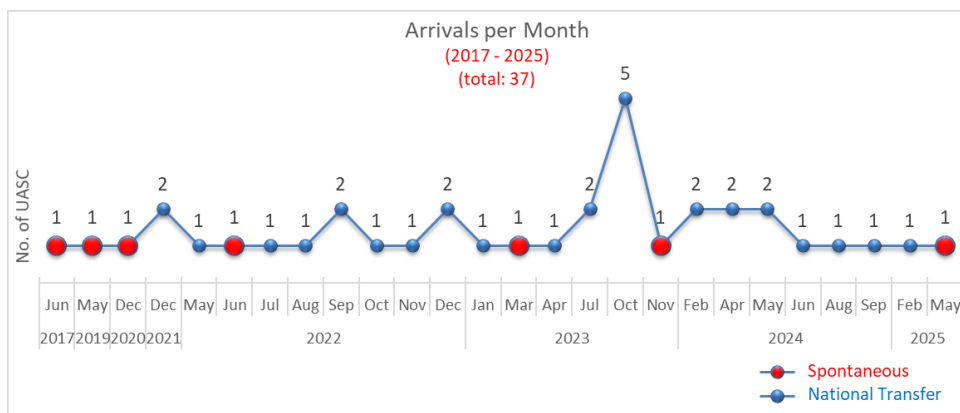
- Youth Intensive Support Service and Community Learning and Development worked together with a group of young people to produce and star in a short film 'No Bad' which looked at the perceptions of young people in the community. This film was supported by both Police and Fire and Rescue. The film premiered at Eastwood Theatre in October and received positive feedback from elected members, senior leaders, parents, and friends.
- The Aftercare Drop in meets on a monthly basis offering support, peer interaction and a sense of belonging.

There was development of a Joint Housing and Social Work policy for Care Leavers and Housing Skills Programme to ensure care experienced young people have as much support as possible to successful transition from care to independence.

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

The Youth Intensive Support Service is the main support service for these unaccompanied children in East Renfrewshire. A total of 38 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have been accommodated in East Renfrewshire. The majority of people have been referred through the National Transfer Scheme.

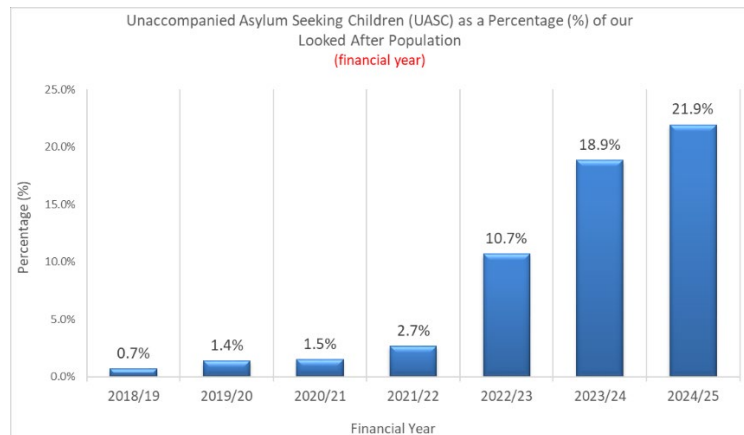
All unaccompanied asylum seeking children have an allocated social worker but also have to opportunity to take part in a weekly group focused on preventing isolation, supporting health and wellbeing and independence.



**Note:** Chart includes data up to 07/05/2025.

Since the implementation of the mandated National Transfer Scheme in November 2021 the proportion of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in our looked after population in East Renfrewshire has risen significantly to 21.9% and is predicted to continue to increase. As young people get older this change is reflected in our aftercare population, currently 15.4% of our aftercare population are unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This group of young people can present with particular and prevalent trauma experiences and are often isolated. Our staff require skilled, compassionate, and empathic approaches in supporting this group. The ethnic background of our separated children comprises 11% Afghans, 5% Albanian, 27% Iranian, 24% Sudanese, 19% Syrian and 14% Vietnamese young people.





Our efforts in tackling discrimination and racism particular to this group includes:

- Information sessions with foster carers to raise awareness of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Training session on our public protection calendar for staff on unaccompanied asylum seeking children and challenges to support.
- Links with the local faith forum to make cultural connections and strengthen Health and Social Care Partnership links with faith communities.
- Integration of unaccompanied asylum seeking children with wider participation, Promise, Youth Voice, Champions Board.
- Work with Police, Fire, and other partners to reduce isolation.

### **Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care**

The Fostering and Adoption teams have been registered since December 2005 and transferred their registration to the Care Inspectorate in 2011. East Renfrewshire Council's Adult Support service has been registered since December 2017. This was undertaken following an area of improvement from a previous inspection where it outlined the necessity to register the service as an adult placement provider with the Care Inspectorate, in line with the Scottish Governments Continuing Care Agenda.

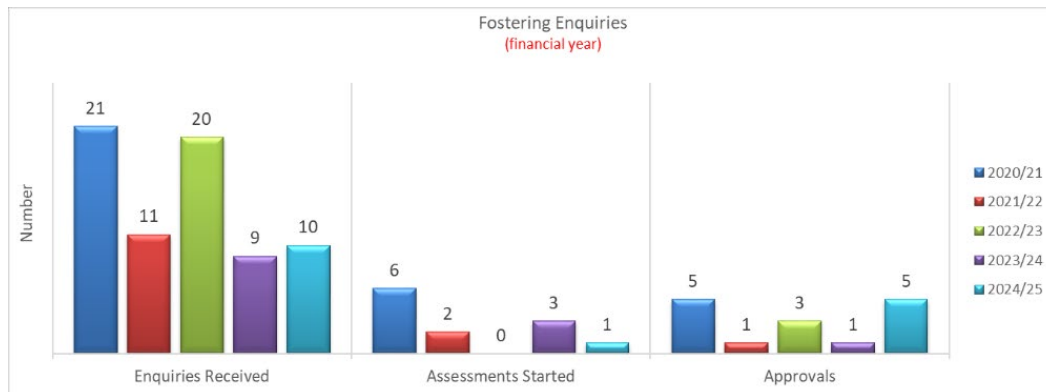
East Renfrewshire have continued to provide support, guidance, and training to all of our carers, and all three of our services were inspected between 13<sup>th</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 by the Care Inspectorate. Their report was published in March 2025; each service received a grade five which reflected Very Good against a six-point scale where one is unsatisfactory and six is excellent.

### **Fostering**

The Fostering service provides a fostering and family placement resource for children and young people aged from birth to 18 years. The Fostering Service recruits and supports foster carer families to provide a range of fostering placements including permanent, long-term, interim, emergency, and short breaks.

By the end of this reporting period, there were sixteen registered households and fourteen of our children and young people were residing with East Renfrewshire foster carers.

There were no complaints to this service during the reporting period.



### **Supported Care**

Our supported care service is an adult placement service that can provide short breaks or interim placements for young people up to their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. Continuing care supports young people from the age of 16 – 21 years of age. East Renfrewshire Council pride themselves that the nurture and commitment provided by our carers for this age range of young people / adults has been long established and prior to any changes in legislation or recommendations via the Promise.

By the end of this reporting period, there were six young people registered as receiving continuing care with East Renfrewshire foster carers and two adults within an East Renfrewshire supported carer household.

There were no complaints to this service during the reporting period.

From inspection, it noted for both Fostering and our Adult Placement service that:

- Children and young people experienced a high standard of care. They had developed meaningful and trusting relationships and lived in stable and predictable home environments.
- Children and young people and caregivers benefitted from the agency having a strong and well-embedded commitment to participation and inclusion.
- Children and young people were supported to maintain meaningful relationships with extended family members, significant birth family members and were involved in the wider community.
- Caregivers provided nurturing, trauma informed care, supported by staff who were skilled, knowledgeable, and responsive.

- There was evidence of positive outcomes for children and young people. This was supported by good quality assessments of caregivers and in the support provided following the placement of children.

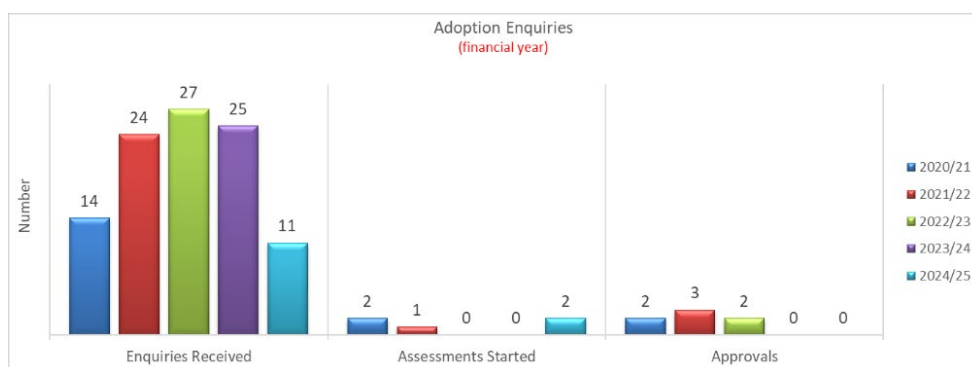
## **Adoption**

East Renfrewshire Council's Adoption Service provides a service for children and young people, aged from birth to eighteen years, and their families. The service recruits and supports adoptive parents to provide families for children, who have been assessed as unable to live with their birth parents or extended family members.

The Inspection noted that:

- Children living within adoptive families experienced a high standard of care. They benefitted from loving, trusting and secure relationships and stable home environments.
- Adoptive families valued enduring and supportive relationships with their supervising social workers.
- Adoptive families benefitted from an experienced and skilled staff team.
- Adoptive parents received valuable support from the service to enable them to support children with indirect birth family contact and lifelong links.
- The service worked collaboratively and proactively with children's social workers to ensure the timely progress of planning for children who required permanent care.
- Good quality adoption support planning supported timely and appropriate interventions for adoptive families.

There were no complaints to this service during the reporting period.



### **Keeping Connected**

The team provide a post adoption keeping connected service to individual families, recognising the importance of developing and supporting relationships between adoptees, adoptive families, and birth families.

In respect of indirect contact support, the team provided intermediary services for East Renfrewshire's children and collaborated with other local authorities to facilitate indirect post-adoption contact. Support included vetting letters, providing feedback, and assisting with letter exchanges.

The team developed a more robust framework for assessing post-adoption support needs. This framework enhances the quality and consistency of support provided to adoptive families. In the reporting period, we have provided post adoption support following assessment to seven adopted children and their families.

The team are skilled in providing support, time, and guidance to all family members in creating connections.

The team have undertaken the following to challenge and address any potential racism and discrimination in these registered services.

- Within supervision, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion questions are asked each time for staff to highlight or raise any issues in relation to this area.
- We have made sure language is reflected appropriately in paperwork / assessments.
- We have a care experienced panel member on our fostering and kinship panels.
- We have approached our Promise Lead to look at how we integrate the voice of children and young people within panels / reviews.

### **Inclusive Support Service**

The Inclusive Support Service is comprised of holiday provision during spring, summer, and October school holidays and out of school activity clubs. The service provides a range of targeted support for children and young people aged 5 – 18 years. All of the children and young people who access the service have either complex health or behavioural support needs with a significant number having limited verbal communication.

During this reporting period, the service supported 196 children and young people at our holiday programmes who had been assessed by social work as critical or substantial level of need via the Supporting People Framework. Inclusive Support is a registered service with the Care Inspectorate and can therefore provide personal care and administer medication where staff deliver on all aspects of individualised care plans and provide targeted support for our most vulnerable children and young people.

We currently have 148 children registered with the service and 47 on our waiting list. We have supported children and young people to engage in a variety of out of school activities such as football, drama, forest school, dance, and cooking. Clubs support young people to learn and practice life skills and socialise with peers fostering friendships as well as having fun. During the reporting period, we provided support for eight clubs per week, which involved staffing commitments for evenings and weekends. This work is carried out in conjunction with both SupERkids, a parent led charity, and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

The Inclusive Support team have continued to address racism and discrimination by:

- Supervision Conversations: Racism and discrimination are explicitly discussed during individual supervision to prompt conversations and reflection.
- Inclusive Facilitation: All facilitators are encouraged to adapt sessions to meet young people where they are, encouraging inclusion and engagement.
- Promoting Inclusion: Children with additional support needs are supported to access mainstream holiday provision through multi-agency collaboration, resource sharing, skills, and knowledge.
- Collaborative Support: Working with East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Trust to support a young person to attend mainstream holiday provision through joint planning and strategy sharing.
- Inclusive Recruitment: Involving a parent on the recruitment panel for casual support staff to ensure lived experience perspectives included in decision-making.

### **The Promise and Corporate Parenting**

The 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 marked five years since the conclusions of the Independent Care Review were published and The Promise was made and launched. Locally we marked this anniversary as an important time to reflect on what we have achieved so far and the journey ahead. A comprehensive 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary report structured around the foundations of *Voice, Care, Family, People, Scaffolding*, was prepared and submitted for East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board and Council and subsequently approved. The report also incorporated the work undertaken by local Corporate Parents.

**Supporting Sibling Relationships:** Over the last twelve months we have implemented the Promise by continuing to reduce the looked after children's population and ensuring that those children and young people who are subject to a compulsory measure continue to have relationships with their siblings and extended childhood friends and family, where this is safe to do so. To progress in this area, we have signed up to participate in the two national New Horizons Community of Practice Tests of Change Programmes in relation to siblings – data, and decision making. 2024 was the first year that local authorities were required to report on their efforts to ensure children and young people in care retained important relationships with their siblings. This new reporting requirement follows considerable work that has been undertaken within the Children and Families teams to improve assessment in this area and to acknowledge the

importance of the child's views on sibling like relationships, being reflected in the child's plan and Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) reports. These work streams will be continuing over the next year.

**The Promise Workforce Learning Programme:** A three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme was devised to support the workforce and all Corporate Parents understand the aim of The Promise and the part they can play in implementation. The new programme was approved by Council in October 2024 and local partners agreed to promote the attendance and engagement of their workforce at levels appropriate to roles and responsibilities.

### **Whole Family Wellbeing Fund**

The overall aim of the Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) is that every family that needs support gets the right support at the right time, for as long as it is needed, to fulfil children's rights to be raised safely in their own families.

In East Renfrewshire, the partnership has targeted this important resource to create seven new service project responses. These are based on the priority areas of need analysed from our Children's Services Plan 2023 – 26 Strategic Needs Assessment. These include:

- complex disability,
- neuro diversity and co morbidity mental health,
- vulnerable families – includes young families and kinship carers,
- women and their children experiencing domestic violence,
- children and families living in poverty,
- non-school attendance – includes care experienced pupils and pupils with significant mental health concerns.

Furthermore, we have employed fifteen members of staff through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund investment. Twelve of these posts work directly with children, young people and families whilst three have been created to ensure programme synergy with existing service delivery (no gaps and no duplication) but also drive the strategic direction of the fund and support its alignment with our Council's Children's Services Plan and related Corporate Strategies. Annual reporting of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund is undertaken by partners with a detailed report submitted to the Scottish Government annually in the summer. Over 2024/2025, 328 families and 436 children / young people received support from services funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, with one fifth of the families receiving their support directly from Family First the main holistic family service, whilst the remainder have required tailored intensive help that due to the nature of the issues concerned is likely to be required over an extended period, mid to long term. Since 2024 all funded services have been supported to embed improvement methodology within their systems which in turn has enabled them to report on impact more accurately. Positively the Scottish Government recently confirmed the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund will be extended to 2027. This in turn will enable partners to make longer term commitments in improving wellbeing in the agreed areas.

## **Promise Board**

East Renfrewshire Council approved the development of The Promise Board in September 2024. This is an innovative new approach to engaging children and young people alongside their families, ensuring that they are listened to and at the centre of everything we do in East Renfrewshire.

The Promise Board membership comprises of children, young people, families, and carers along with Chief Officers, senior officials, elected members, Police Scotland, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust and other relevant partners. A young person and the Chief Executive jointly holding the formal role of Chair to the Promise Board.

The purpose of The Promise Board is to ensure that care experienced children and young people and their families can communicate directly with Council, Health and Social Care Partnership, and other Corporate Parents in relation to what is working well and what could be improved. Allowing children, young people and families to participate in setting the agenda will ensure that what is most important to those with the lived experience of the care system will begin to be addressed in a supportive environment. Work over this period has focused on identifying representatives with lived experience from various groups and creating a network and vision of what is to be achieved.

The Champions Board have been key leaders in the formation of the Promise Board and presented to Elected Members at a learning session to highlight the importance of ensuring the voice of lived experience is at the heart of Keeping the Promise in East Renfrewshire. To support the wider implementation of the Promise, a three tier Learning Programme has been developed. An e-learning module has been developed alongside Who Cares? Scotland and is available to all Council and NHS employees. A multi-agency training event has been held which included all Promise Board Members alongside representatives from across departments.

## **Children and Young People's Rights**

During the last year we have responded to the passing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Scotland Act 2024 by ensuring compliance with the new key statutory duties. The priority in this area has been the introduction of child friendly complaints and training to accompany this. We are working towards the new child friendly procedures being compliant with the new legislation and that these are now promoted by Council services and staff locally. Workforce training is now available for all staff who work with the public. In addition, we are utilising the audit tool that has been developed to evaluate implementation within Children and Families settings to ensure individual children and young people's assessment, and planning is rights centred. The Health and Social Care Partnership fully participate in the wider partnership United Nations Convention on the Rights Implementation Group which is led by the Head of Education.

## **2.2 Adult Social Work and Social Care**

### **Assessment and Review Activity**

#### **Supporting People Framework and Review Activity**

The Supporting People Framework has been fully embedded across the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and is now applied to all new and existing cases. This framework ensures that support is prioritised for individuals with the most significant needs. It reflects a strong commitment to equity, transparency, and sustainability in service delivery.

#### **Care Home Assurance**

Care Home Assurance continues to be a priority for East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, with oversight meetings attended by a range of professionals to ensure governance for all of the care homes in the area.

Additionally, there is an annual schedule of assurance visits which are carried out by senior staff from Nursing, Social Work and Commissioning teams to all of the East Renfrewshire Care Homes. Overall, there is a high level of support and oversight from a range of professionals for the East Renfrewshire residents living in a care home, which provides assurance that residents are experiencing high levels of care and support.

#### **Initial Contact Team**

The Initial Contact Team was established in May 2019. The team are a single point of access for all new referrals related to Adult Health and Social Care. The team respond to the growing demand and complexity of health and social care support needs across East Renfrewshire, and follows a “right person, right support, right time” delivery model. The Initial Contact Team work closely with our third sector partners in delivering this support. The Initial Contact Team experience an average of 176 calls per month.

There have been significant changes both nationally and locally within East Renfrewshire since the last review of the Initial Contact Team was undertaken in 2021. This has prompted further consideration of the current service, acknowledging changing demands and implementing potential areas of improvement which will be captured within a follow up review of the service this year.

#### **Learning Disability Community Team**

#### **Transitions Team**

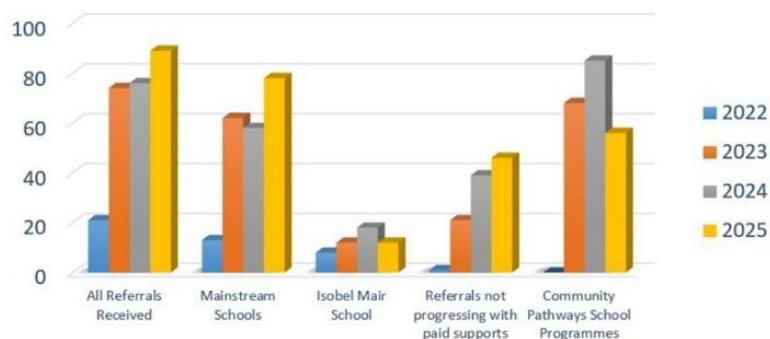
2024/25 saw the highest number of referrals to the Transition Team to date. This was in part due to the high number of school leavers from Isobel Mair School, and an increase in the numbers of young people with a neurodiversity diagnosis and legacy Covid issues. Additional funding was allocated to the team as a test for change whereby a social work post was created to work with children with very complex needs and support the transfer to adult services. Early indications suggest this improves outcomes for young people and prevents them facing an abrupt change which people often



describe at the most difficult part of transitions from children services to adult services. Other notable developments were:

- Increased use of shared support and budgets to meet outcomes – more person focussed and cost effective.
- Collaboration with the Learning Disability Team to improve operational working practices.
- Continued multi-agency working with the consultation group model, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Adult Mental Health Services and utilisation of the Dynamic Support Register.

**Transitions Service Referrals**



**Planned developments for 25/26 include:**

- Planned implementation of pilot Learning Disability Health Checks by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Learning Disability Health Check Team ahead of the young person's final year of education at Isobel Mair School.
- Implementation of Transitions Project to embed transitions into all areas of the Health and Social Care Partnership, wider Council family and relevant stakeholders.
- Co-location of Transitions Team within Children Services to work closely between services, share knowledge and develop best practice.
- Plans to offer joint working experience for newly qualified Children Services Social Workers to develop knowledge of transitions processes as part of learning during Newly Qualified Social Worker year.

The team have taken the following actions to address racism and discrimination:

- Working with teams to increase awareness, knowledge, and confidence in the use of Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment as an essential part of service planning. Importantly, this considers the impact of change on all of the

protected characteristics, for both the delivery of a service to our communities, and for the staff delivering the service.

- Working with relevant community partners to engage diverse communities through the implementation of the Supporting People Framework, and the proposed non-residential Charging Policy.

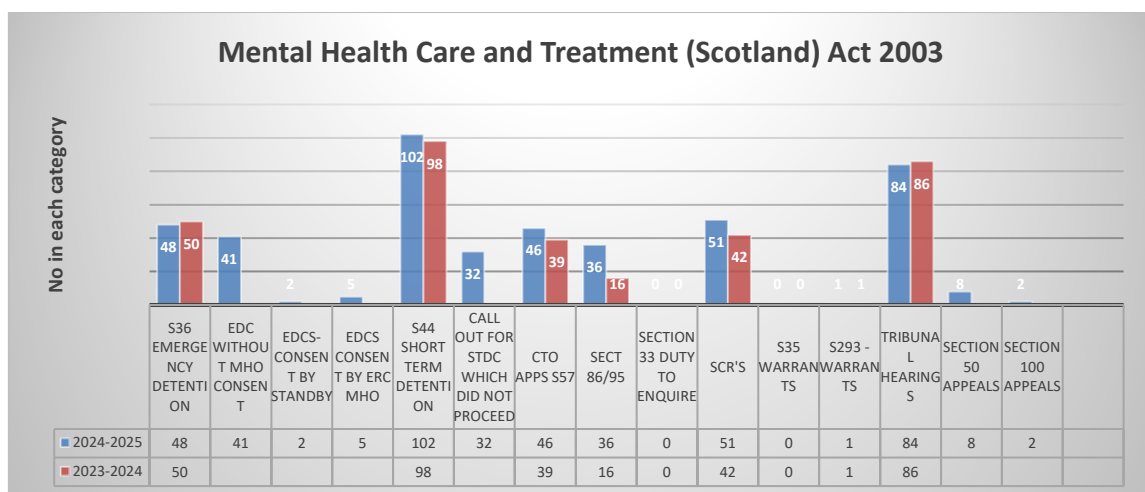
## 2.3 Mental Health

Mental Health Officers (MHOs) are responsible for carrying out specific duties on behalf of the local authority detailed within the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015, Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.

The East Renfrewshire Mental Health Officer service sits under the umbrella of Mental Health Recovery and Learning Disability services within East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. At present the operational management for the service is overseen by the team manager, senior manager, and Head of Services with the ultimate responsibility for the statutory duties sitting with the Chief Social Work Officer. Mental Health Officers work closely with all partners across East Renfrewshire and the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS board area.

Activity generated by the Mental Health Act remains fairly consistent with the exception of activity under section 86 and 95 (extension and / or variation of a Compulsory Treatment Order) which has more than doubled. A focus of improvement and monitoring following the Mental Welfare Commission annual monitoring report has been the completion of Social Circumstances Reports (SCRs) and the granting of Emergency Detention Certificates (EDCs) without Mental Health Officer consent. While Social Circumstances Report completion rates continue to improve year on year this continues to present as an ongoing challenge for the service. Emergency Detention Certificates without consent also remains high although our data would indicate that this is occurring out of hours or in cases when no contact with the Mental Health Team is being made. A local trend which we have also observed is the increase in requests to assess for a Short Term Detention Certificate which do not lead to a detention. This is the first year we have collated this data and it will continue to be monitored.

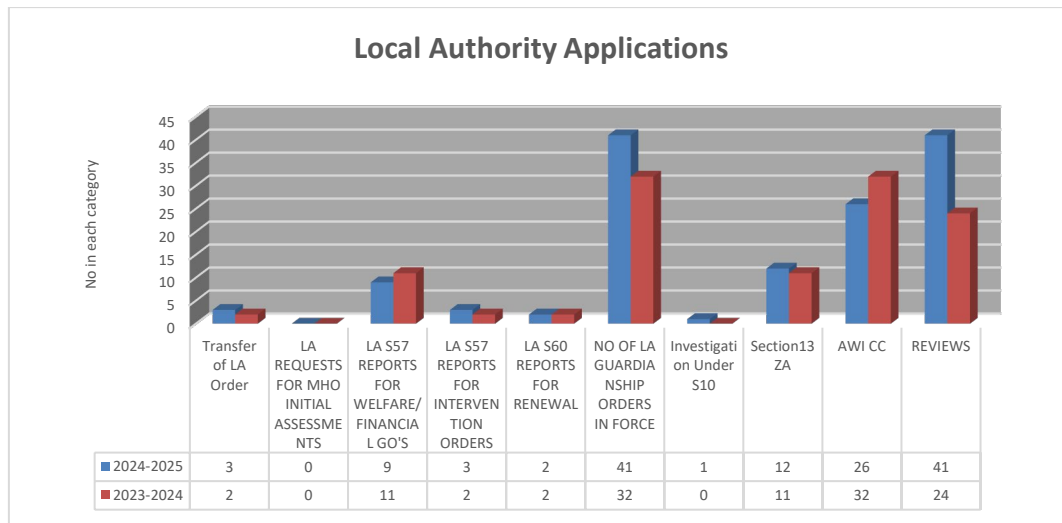
**Graph 1**



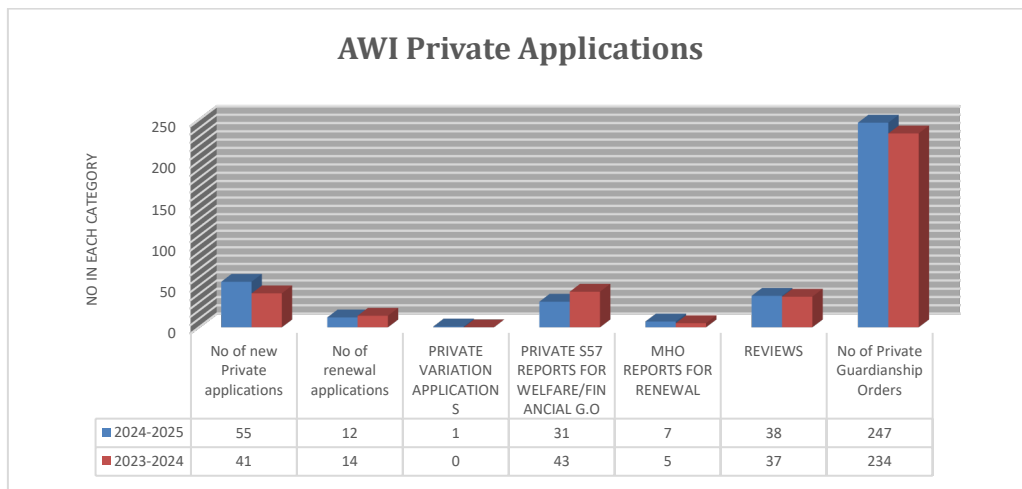
Statutory duties under the Adults with Incapacity legislation with regard to application on behalf of the Chief Social Work Officer reduced slightly although adults subject to an order within East Renfrewshire have increased by 28%. The main challenge continues

to be the level of complexity of our inpatient population and the requirement for more restrictive powers to facilitate hospital discharge.

**Graph 2**

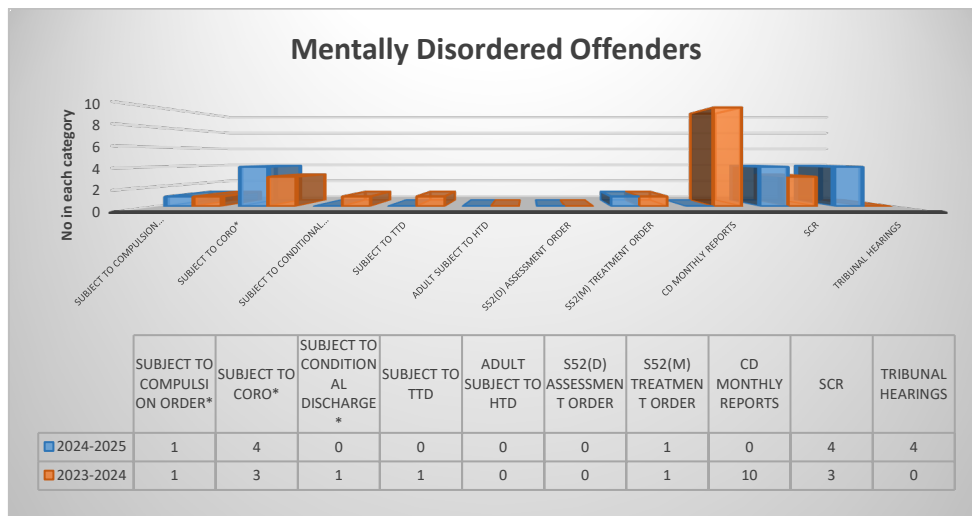


**Graph 3**



Figures from Graph 3 indicate that the demand for Mental Health Officers reports to accompany private applications for Welfare and Financial Guardianship has increased by over 33%. This has coincided with the loss of a whole-time equivalent post within the service due to the ending of the Scottish Government's Mental Health Officers Capacity grant funding. This has resulted in a reduction in the completion of s57 reports by nearly 40% causing a significant increase in waiting times for an allocation of a Mental Health Officer. The supervision of private guardianship orders also remains a challenge due to the significant number of guardians to be supervised which currently sits at 247 (an increase of 13 from last year).

Graph 4



Number of adults within our forensic case load remain low with less than 6 individuals subject to orders under the Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.

A positive development has been the creation of a new post within the team which will have a remit over the interphase between mental health and alcohol and drug services. This was in recognition that the pathway for those individuals who struggle to engage with support is frequently via statutory measures. This is an exciting opportunity, and we look forward to improving service delivery for this population within East Renfrewshire.

## **2.4 Criminal Justice**

### **Community Payback Orders (CPO)**

During 2024/25, the Justice Social Work team have developed in a number of key areas. All Justice Social Work Staff have completed their Level 3 Trauma training. This has been complemented by all staff undertaking a range of training including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy work, ensuring that work within Supervision is responsive to the needs of service users. This is supported by 82% of people reported that their order had helped address their offending.

We have sought to develop the progress made within the previous year with regards to our Unpaid Work Service. We continue to draw upon our bespoke workshops to deliver a tailored Unpaid Work service to our local community. We have ensured our premises enable service users to develop new skills, and have invested considerably in new tools and staffing, resulting in increased capacity. Throughout this, service users have been supported to complete 11,284 hours of Unpaid Work during 2024/25 to the direct benefit of the community, a 32% increase over the previous year.

Additional work continues to address the stigma of involvement with Justice Social Work. We have sought to draw upon direct delivery of support to a range of community based resources through our Unpaid Work service. Beyond the supports offered daily by Unpaid Work to the local community, these include continuing operational support for a local food share project, and holiday markets where the proceeds are donated to local charities. Such efforts provide direct opportunities for our community to benefit whilst raising awareness of the positive work undertaken by those within the Justice system. Indeed, this is perhaps best echoed in feedback from a service user who completed Unpaid Work, reflecting that participation in Unpaid Work 'made me feel like a productive member of society'.

The Justice Service continued to deliver Moving Forward Making Changes programme. This enabled us to provide individuals who meet the criteria for this programme access to specialised interventions. During 2024/25, work progressed at the national level on the revision of Moving Forward Making Changes to Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C). Final preparations have been prepared for the rollout of Moving Forward 2 Change in June 2025.

### **Court Services**

We continue to work closely with our partners in Renfrewshire to ensure delivery of Electronic Monitoring Bail and Bail Supervision Service. This has enabled us to deliver robust alternatives to custodial remand.

### **Employability**

We continue to work jointly with our partners in Work East Ren in facilitating a shared Community Justice Employability Worker post. This post has allowed considerable progress to be made in the lives of service users accessing the service in increasing their employability profiles. During the reporting period, there has been 25 service users supported to achieve a positive employability or training outcome.

### **Service / Staff Development**

Staff continue to access appropriate risk assessment training including Structured Assessment of Protective Factors (SAPROF), Stable and Acute 2007 (SA07) refresher training and the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment version 3 (SARA V3), and Safe and Together training. The Justice Service have further participated in enhancing knowledge of working with those experiencing dementia and acquired specialised training in supporting those who have experienced Non-Fatal Strangulation.

The Justice Service continue to engage with our colleagues within the Community Justice Partnership and ensured all Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings are held in line with statutory responsibilities. Further, we continue to contribute to East Renfrewshire's British Sign Language Plan 2018 – 2024. We have recently provided a renewed vision to inform East Renfrewshire's British Sign Language Plan 2024 – 2030.

We continue our joint ventures with the Intensive Family Support Team. Through support by the Justice Service for funding of Spousal Assault Risk Assessment training and Trauma Focussed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training, we continue to collaboratively deliver a number of joint services which support men and women involved in the Justice system, alongside children and young people, all through a trauma informed lens. This work provides support to victims and perpetrators of offences to improve outcomes, challenge discrimination and in turn enhance community wellbeing.

The Justice Service remains committed to supporting the community in addressing domestically aggravated offending and the associated consequences of said behaviours. We have continued to ensure 100% attendance at scheduled Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). Following on from the success of having secured a number of 'go-bags' for victims of domestic abuse in the previous year, we continue this scheme and remain in active consultation with a number of partners to ensure a wide reach of these bags.

Undertaking the above work entails skilled interventions by workers and necessitates sophisticated supports to ensure vicarious trauma is mitigated. During the reporting period, Justice Social Work commissioned a third sector agency to deliver 96 reflective.

### **Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme**

In the absence of the Caledonian Programme, to keep women and children safe the Justice Team commenced preparations throughout 2024/25 to utilise a domestic-abuse perpetrator programme delivered by Respect. The programme will ensure victim safety is at the forefront of all interventions. This venture will be co-delivered alongside Children and Families Social Work colleagues. Significant investment has been committed to ensure the appropriate training of workers and provide further support to the Violence Against Women and Girls partnership and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences in addressing domestic abuse within our authority, with an anticipated commencement of the group in Autumn 2025.

## 2.5 Public Protection

### **Child Protection, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement**

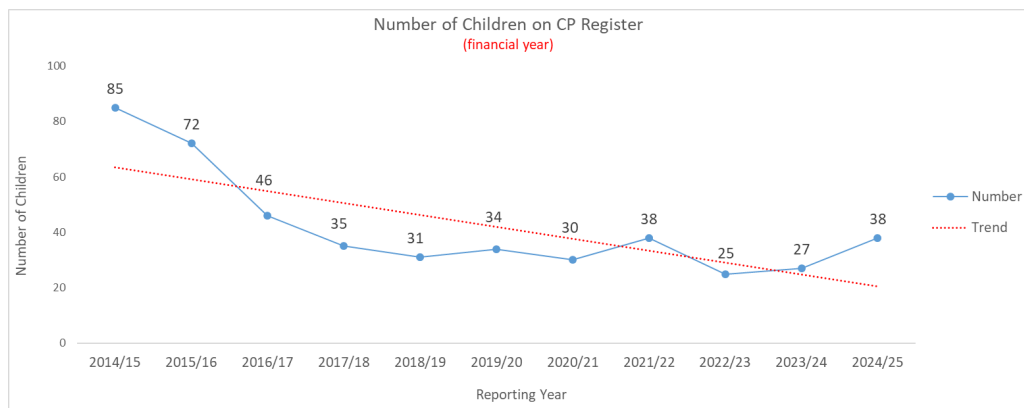
In 2024/25, 38 children were recorded on East Renfrewshire's Child Protection Register — a 40.7% increase compared to the previous year. This significant rise reflects the growing complexity of family circumstances, increased demand for pre-birth child protection interventions, and a number of larger sibling groups requiring protective measures.

The Child Protection Committee continues to develop a robust self-evaluation framework to critically examine data, audit outcomes, and implementation findings, ensuring these insights effectively inform future planning and improvement activity. This approach provides a strong understanding of the critical issues and needs facing our children and young people at risk of harm, as well as the challenges and support requirements of our workforce.

In addition to robust management and audit activity, we continue to benchmark against comparator authorities to ensure that the rate of registration activity is proportionate and necessary.

### **Child Protection Registrations**

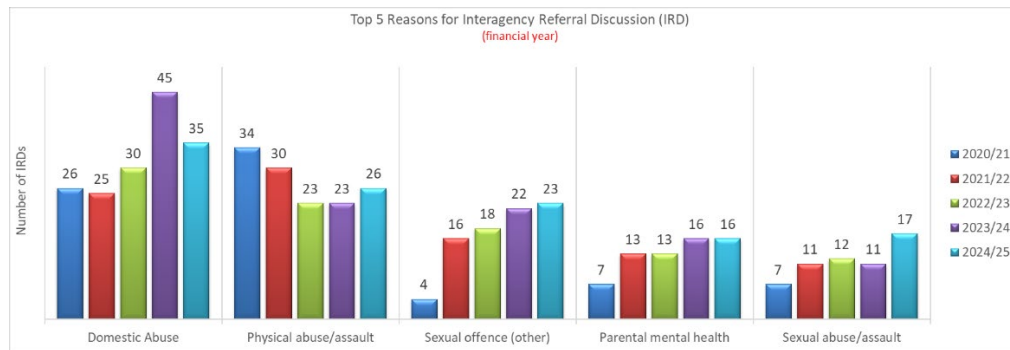
The graph below highlights the number of children subject to child protection registrations from 2014/15 until 2024/25.



### **Interagency Referral Discussions**

During the period April 2024 - March 2025, we have undertaken 186 Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs) (between social work, police, health, and where appropriate education services) in respect of 288 children (some children may have had more than one interagency referral discussions in the reporting period). This is an increase of 21.6% of Interagency Referral Discussions and an increase of 18.0% of children on the previous year.





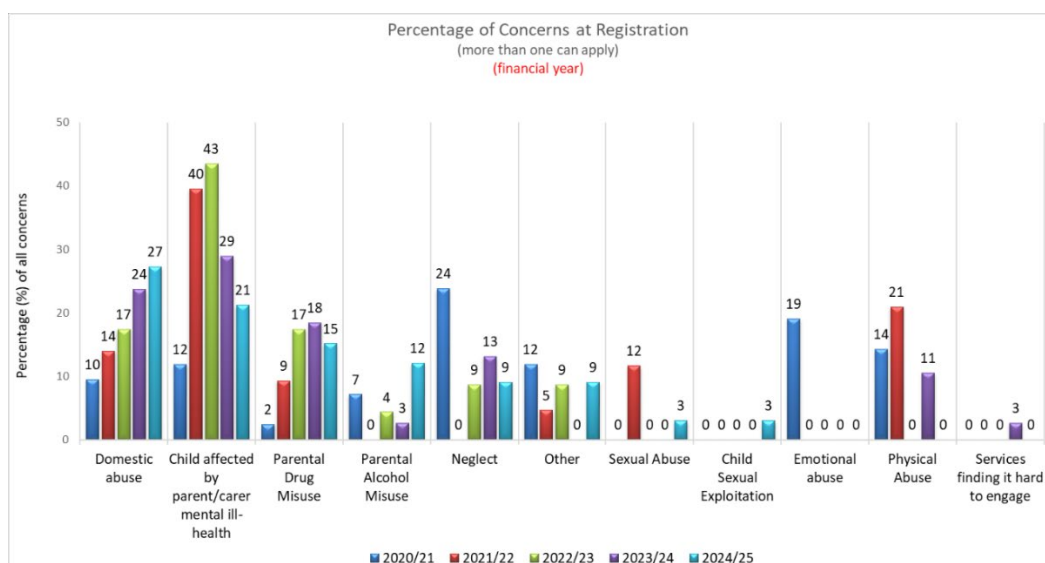
The most common reasons for initiating an Interagency Referral Discussion during 2024/25 are shown in the chart above. The highest reason for an Interagency Referral Discussion in the reporting period was domestic abuse. There has been a small increase in Interagency Referral Discussions for physical abuse/assault and no change in parental mental health.

Of the 288 children and young people subject to Interagency Referral Discussions, 28.1% were subject to a child protection investigation. Of these children and young people 33.3% went on to have an initial or pre-birth child protection planning meeting, with 59.3% of them having their names placed on the child protection register. This is a decrease on the previous year figure of 67.6%.

The number of children who were subject of Interagency Referral Discussions which led to child protection registration was approximately 5.6%. A decrease on the previous year's figure of 10.2%.

### **Concerns Identified at Registration**

A child can be placed on the child protection register with more than one concern noted. Domestic Abuse is currently the highest concern at the point of registration followed by Child Affected by Parent / Carer Mental Ill-Health and Parental Drug Misuse.



### **Interagency Referral Discussion Audits**

A quarterly programme of Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) audit continues to be an ongoing exercise of our continuous improvement programme for child protection, allowing us to maintain an overview of the initial decision making in child protection processes.

The audit findings confirm that we have a joined-up approach to the Interagency Referral Discussion process. In addition to this the increased contribution of our colleagues in education being consistently part of the discussion increased the depth of quality.

### **The North Strathclyde Child Interview Team**

East Renfrewshire are part of the North Strathclyde Child Interview Team. This is a partnership with East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Police Scotland, Scottish Children Reporter's Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, and Children First. Children and young people in East Renfrewshire are now interviewed and supported by Police and Social Work who are highly skilled, utilising proven techniques to achieve best evidence.

Over this reporting period, East Renfrewshire made 54 referrals to the child interview team, where 65% progressed to a joint investigative interview. An overall disclosure rate of 81% was recorded against these interviews, which is a decrease in comparison to last reporting period. Physical assault was the primary reason for referral for children and young people who reside in East Renfrewshire (44%), followed by offences under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act (37%) and thereafter Domestic Abuse (15%). Caution is required here as given the relatively small numbers more detailed breakdown of information here could result in victims becoming identifiable.

100% of our joint investigative interviews are carried out using the Scottish child interview model. By March 2025, 80% of our interviews took place in the Bairns' Hoose.

All children who completed the work with their recovery worker reported that they felt safer, had improved relationship and felt that they were better heard and understood.

In October 2024, the first child gave evidence via video link from the Bairns' Hoose. This was the first time in Scotland that this opportunity has been provided to a child utilising an environment that was custom built with the child or young person at the heart to ensure any trauma experienced from their involvement is minimised. It removed any requirement for them to experience an adult court environment. Seven children have now used the court suite within the Bairns' Hoose to give evidence in criminal trials.

### **Our Response to Domestic Abuse**

Domestic Abuse continues to be the predominant cause for concern in referrals to our children services and features as one of the most significant factors within child protection interagency discussions. Of the 275 referrals made to the Request for Assistance team, 31.6% domestic abuse concerns were reported and 18.8% child protection interagency referral discussions (IRD's) noted domestic abuse as a significant factor.

Through our multi-agency approach we work collaboratively to deliver a significant range of actions to ensure an effective and sustainable approach to preventing, reducing, and responding effectively to domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women and girls. This includes the implementation of Routine Sensitive Enquiry, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Safe and Together practice ensuring a perpetrator pattern based, child centred, survivor strengths approach to working with domestic abuse. We continue to strengthen the capacity of our services and action across the whole system to address the long term effects of trauma and abuse experienced by women, children, and young people.

We work collaboratively with our partners in Rape Crisis Glasgow and Clyde, to deliver a sexual violence outreach support service in East Renfrewshire for women and girls (age 13+). The outreach service operates monthly in Barrhead Health and Care Centre and Eastwood Health and Care Centre.

As part of our work to protect people from harm and abuse, we have established and continue to support a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in East Renfrewshire for high-risk domestic abuse victims. In 2024/25 we continued to see an increase in support required as a result of domestic abuse with 182 victims and 263 children discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. This is an increase of 17.4% and 1% respectively in cases discussed compared to the previous year. The number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic victims increased by 14% and victims with a disability by 13%. This demonstrates continued improved referral by services and recording.

We continue to roll out comprehensive training for staff to identify risk and refer to the appropriate support. We have one of the highest referral rates to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference from our universal services which demonstrates the positive impact of training and continued awareness of domestic abuse across all our staff groups.

We work together with East Renfrewshire Women's Aid Service to provide direct support for women and children who have experienced domestic abuse. During the period, East Renfrewshire Women's Aid Service supported 1116 women and children across the three core services and helpline in 2024 – 25, an increase of 5% compared to the previous year.

The service reported significant change and improvement in women's safety and wellbeing outcomes with 92% of women assessed noting overall improvement in their outcomes.

Women's Aid continue to deliver a Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDER) programme. This ten-week group work programme is an educational, recovery focused, multi-agency initiative for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse. To date two programmes were delivered which included thirteen families and seventeen children. This was positively received and evaluated by all participants.

### Training and Capacity Building

We have ensured employees are aware of the referral pathways and supports available through the delivery of a comprehensive training programme on Domestic Abuse, Risk Assessment, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Safe and Together practice. We provide regular communications to all employees and monthly domestic abuse advice sessions for any member of staff to discuss and seek advice.

Over the course of the last year 100 staff were trained across a range of organisations and disciplines in Domestic Abuse, Risk Assessment, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Safe and Together practice. We have implemented a series of in person and online training on the Domestic Abuse Homicide Timeline delivered by international expert Professor Jane Monkton Smith.

Additionally domestic abuse training sessions were delivered to staff and senior managers to support the implementation of the new domestic abuse policy. Since the launch of the policy 1040 staff have completed the Domestic Abuse Induction Training and 28 senior managers have undertaken the policy training.

We have delivered comprehensive awareness and media campaigns to ensure victims are aware of the range of services and supports available and to raise awareness of gender-based violence. Each year we participate and co-ordinate 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence this includes delivering a range of media communications and wide variety of targeted events and workshops with staff and wider partners through-out 16 days.

Activities have included:

- Providing domestic abuse induction training to all new staff
- Making domestic abuse resource tools available to all staff.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the referral pathways and supports available.
- Developing and implementing a Domestic Abuse policy across full council and Health and Social Care Partnership.

East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Council have taken several steps to tackle racism and discrimination, aligning with national frameworks and local equality duties. These will be highlighted in the forthcoming [Health and Social Care Partnership Equalities Report](#).

## **Adult Support and Protection**

There has been a sustained high level of Adult Support and Protection activity, with a 4% increase in inquiries over the past year. However, the number of investigations and case conferences has decreased, with the conversion rate from inquiry to investigation falling from 21% to 13%. This suggests effective early intervention and collaborative risk mitigation with adults at risk and partner agencies.

The most common locations of harm were in people's own homes (695 cases), Care homes (286 cases) and public places (104 cases). The most frequently recorded types of harm were physical harm, neglect, self-harm. These figures highlight the complex nature of adult harm and the need for trauma-informed, person-centred approaches.

Investigatory powers were used in 269 cases, with most inquiries conducted under the Social Work (Scotland) Act, and fewer under Mental Health and Adults with Incapacity legislation.

Monthly quality assurance reviews confirm that activity is consistently delivered to a good or very good standard. The 2023 – 2025 improvement plan has been completed, and a new plan for 2025 – 2027 has been developed, focusing on chronologies, self-evaluation, and multi-agency collaboration. Updated procedures and forms have been adopted to align with the national dataset.

A comprehensive training programme has been delivered, including:

- Council Officer and second worker training.
- Risk assessment and investigative interviewing.
- Forums for officers and managers to discuss legislation and practice.

Data use has been enhanced through a national dataset and dashboard, enabling trend analysis and strategic planning. Data is routinely shared across agencies and reported to the Scottish Government, with ongoing discussions about reporting frequency.

The Adult Support and Protection Committee's work aligns with national public protection priorities, including learning from reviews, workforce support, information sharing, and continuous improvement through the Quality Improvement Framework and national self-evaluation initiatives.

There were fifty adults referred to East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection where Domestic Abuse was highlighted as a concern. This represents a 22% increase from previous year. A total of 21 adults (42%) were referred to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference; twelve within inquiry stage and nine within investigation stage. In fifteen cases multiple forms of coercive control were reported with 49 reports of coercive control identified.

Extreme dominance including verbal abuse was most common, followed by constant criticism of victims role as partner or spouse or parent; isolating the victim from family and friends including monitoring and intercepting messages or phone calls; controlling or observing victims daily activities including restricting access to money; making them account for time; restricting their movements; extreme jealousy; threats of suicide /

homicide; using children to control their partner; manipulation of information given to professionals; preventing victim from taking medication; threats to expose sensitive information; damage to property and cause of injury to pets.

## **Section 3. Resources**

### **Financial Performance 2024/25**

This was another challenging year for the Health and Social Care Partnership as we worked to meet the demand for services whilst delivering a significant savings challenge. The savings target of £11.8 million, which was £2 million higher than needed, recognised forward planning as we work towards sustainability, following our financial recovery in 2023/24.

Significant progress was made during 2024/25 on embedding the Supporting People Framework, which is our criteria-based approach to achieve the required savings, as a key element of the savings programme.

### **Future Challenges**

The East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board continues to face a number of challenges, risks, and uncertainties in the coming years and this is set out in our current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2029/30 and our Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2028. These key strategies also inform our strategic risk register and collectively support medium-term planning and decision making.

The most significant challenges for 2025/26 and beyond include:

- Continued delivery of savings to support financial sustainability, recognising this is at odds with a focus on prevention and the difficulty increases as the cumulative savings increase.
- “Doing more of the same” in identifying savings will not work, we need to review every service in detail as part of a Change and Improvement programme of work to be developed.
- Working with the Scottish Government recognising the national scale of the challenge across health and social care, in the context of a collective £0.5 billion shortfall.
- Managing the real tension between reduced service capacity as a result of the cumulative impact savings in prior years whilst maintaining system wide services including discharge without delay from hospital.
- Understanding the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on mental and physical health in the longer term, we are seeing increased levels of complexity and acuity of need.
- Continued recruitment and retention of our workforce within the Health and Social Care Partnership and our wider partner workforce, recognising the risk of market sustainability challenges.
- Managing prescribing demand and costs in partnership with our GPs and wider population.

- Supporting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our workforce and our residents.
- Meeting increased demand for universal services without funding for growth, including increased population demand and new care homes opening within the area.

East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board agreed its budget for the financial year 2025/26 on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 recognising the significant improvement from savings delivered, however recognising new demand and cost pressures for 2025/26 and beyond.

The budget agreed by East Renfrewshire's Integration Joint Board on 26<sup>h</sup> March 2025 sets out the detail behind each of the cost pressures and it is important to note that these include contractual and policy requirements that must be met.

Whilst the scale of this challenge is significant to East Renfrewshire, particularly as one of the smaller Health and Social Care Partnerships this is not unique; the national position across all public sector services shows a challenging financial outlook, with funding pressures including pay, inflation, demand & complexity, demographics, transitions from child to adult services, prescribing costs & volume and recruitment & retention challenges.

We continue to work alongside our partners to deliver our respective services with a fully integrated approach recognising our collective outcomes to deliver the best services we can for our residents.

We remain in a difficult economic climate and the financial impacts of delivering service to people are dynamic. Our forward planning assumptions will be updated as issues emerge and become clearer. The resulting funding gap in each year will ultimately be determined by the difference between pressures and the funding settlement agreed with our partners, including any policy funding or directives as part of the Scottish Government budget settlement for that year.

There are a number of areas where caseload numbers or staffing ratio to patients will determine necessary changes to the workforce.

Demographic and demand recognise both changes in population and in acuity of need. This also includes the cost of young people moving to adult care. The long-term post Covid-19 impact on complexity and demand is still unclear, however the population in East Renfrewshire continues to grow particularly at the older and younger ends of the age spectrum. We are seeing increasing complexity of need across a range of care groups.



## **Section 4. Workforce and Looking Forward**

### **Training, Learning and Development**

Workforce development remains a priority within the Health and Social Care Partnership, and the service has continued to deliver a wide range of training despite continued financial pressures. Additional funding was provided to deliver the Transforming Trauma Programme (NTTP) and the Newly Qualified Social Worker pilot, although the latter has now ceased.

There has been continued rollout of the Level 2 and 3 training across the wider workforce, including relevant partners across the Council and Health and Social Care Partnership. In addition, a new Level 1 e-learning module has been launched to increase awareness of trauma amongst the general workforce and hence contribute to the realisation of wider strategic aims i.e. Corporate Parenting, The Promise, Dementia Strategy.

A Trauma Collaborative Network has been developed to provide a reflective space for practitioners to share examples of trauma informed practice and helped support the embedding of learning across services. A manager's briefing has also been designed and rolled out to promote the use of the National Trauma Road Map as a self-evaluation tool. Additionally, several pilot projects have also been supported with key partners across education, mental health, Alcohol Drug Recovery Service, and community justice services to help embed trauma informed approaches.

There has been a refresh of our Signs of Safety Programme, identifying areas where staff require additional support to consolidate their knowledge and skills. A new Child Protection training programme has also been developed and rolled out for social workers involved in undertaking child protection assessments that is currently undergoing evaluation.

A review of current practice on Missing Persons has been undertaken in conjunction with Missing People Scotland, from which a new protocol has been devised. Training has been delivered on our new Supporting People Framework and on Outcome Based Planning.

Work has continued supporting our Newly Qualified Social Worker workforce as part of the pilot site. Our first cohort have been supported with the delivery of a rolling programme of learning activities hosted in our Learning Hub, that we aim to develop to support continuous professional learning activity across the social care and social work workforce. A management development programme has also rolled out, focusing on upskilling managers in the use of reflective supervision tools to support the roll out of the Mandatory Supported Year for Newly Qualified Social Worker.

In recognition of the need for an increased focus on workforce development, a new Learning & Development Oversight group has been developed to improve planning, increase efficiency, consider impact, and provide enhanced scrutiny. In addition, a combined Learning & Development / Public Protection subgroup has been formed to oversee public protection multiagency learning and ensure our annual Public Protection Programme remains fit for purpose.

We support the wellbeing and resilience of the workforce by:

- Enhanced focus on building staff support / focus on collective space for teams to come together and support each other to develop peer support.
- Team meetings provide opportunities for time together with specific team check in relating to individual and collective wellbeing.
- Supervision – strengths based approach to support individuals.
- Promoting wellbeing and safety. This proactive approach aims to reduce incidents and promote a culture of learning, empathy, and curiosity.
- Staff Wellbeing Board is displayed in the staffroom, featuring positive feedback and highlighting resources for emotional support. Staff are encouraged to access supports offered by East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.
- Trauma-Informed Practice: Providing training and implementing trauma-informed approaches across the workforce, including leadership.
- Weekly Bulletin: Celebrating team successes and sharing important updates to maintain morale and connection.
- Teams are provided with bi-annual feedback / development sessions.
- Regular attendance at training is encouraged and protected.
- Chief Social Worker and Heads of Service attending Team Meetings to engage with staff and discuss challenges / opportunities within their roles. Staff reported feeling valued, listened to, and respected.

### **Looking Forward**

Despite significant financial pressures, there has been considerable developments in Learning & Development activity to meet the needs of the current workforce. There has been a recognition however that there is a need for additional resource to meet the needs of the workforce and plans are in place to expand this. The introduction of new governance structures should also help to provide greater assurance that the activity being delivered is of high quality and meets local and national requirements.

During this reporting year, a total of thirteen newly qualified social workers have been employed across our workforce. In line with statutory requirements linked to their professional registration, each newly qualified social worker is expected to demonstrate their learning and reflective practice in relation to tackling racism and discrimination within our communities. This obligation is both individual and collective, and we have actively supported newly qualified social workers to evidence their progress through structured learning and group engagement. At this stage, all newly qualified social workers are on track to successfully complete the required statutory learning.

## **Conclusion**

This report highlights and summarises the statutory duties and activities across the social work workforce in East Renfrewshire in the year 2024/25. It reflects, what I believe as Chief Social Work Officer, the high-quality standard of our profession in the fields of children and families, justice, adult social work, and mental health. Our residents and communities rightly expect quality services when they require them, and I am heartened that our workforce show ongoing commitment in delivering this.

The financial challenges for the Health and Social Care Partnership, in delivering services is evident and requires monitoring and review. Social work provides support to those who require it when they are at their most vulnerable or in the most need. We need to ensure we provide this statutory and preventative support at the point of need enabling and fostering resilient and robust communities.

I would like to personally thank all our staff for their kindness, commitment, drive, and professionalism in their delivery of support. I can attest that many go far and beyond normal duties of what would be expected to support our residents and keep them safe. This is particularly appreciated for managing this in uncertain, challenging, and complex situations. Their values, actions and support continue to make me proud to represent them as East Renfrewshire's Chief Social Work Officer.

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