

Clackmannanshire
Child Protection
Committee

**Strategic Plan
2026-2029**



Foreword

Protecting children and young people is one of the most important responsibilities we share as a community. In Clackmannanshire, we remain committed to ensuring that every child grows up safe, respected, and supported to flourish. As Independent Chair of the Child Protection Committee (CPC), I am pleased to introduce our Strategic Plan for 2026–2029—a plan that reflects the shared commitment, expertise, and determination of our multi agency partners.

This strategy has been developed collaboratively with all partners represented on the CPC, ensuring that it is rooted in local experience, professional insight, and a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities within Clackmannanshire. It has also been informed by the voices of children, young people, families, and practitioners who interact with our systems every day. Their perspectives have shaped our priorities and our ambition for improvement.

We recognise the increasing complexity of the circumstances affecting children and families: the ongoing impact of poverty, digital risks, and the pressures on services all require a strong, coordinated response. This plan sets out how we will continue to strengthen governance, build capacity, and support high quality, trauma informed practice across all agencies. At its core lies a simple but essential principle: that child protection is everyone's responsibility, and that effective partnership working is fundamental to keeping children safe.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the partners who contribute to the work of the CPC. Your professionalism, integrity, and willingness to learn together make a real difference. I also want to acknowledge the children and families who share their experiences with us—their courage and honesty inform our direction and deepen our understanding of what matters most.

This plan represents our collective commitment to continuous improvement and to ensuring that children and young people in Clackmannanshire are protected from harm and enabled to achieve their full potential. Together, we will deliver on the priorities set out here with determination, compassion, and a shared sense of purpose.



Cecilia Meechan

Independent Chair

Clackmannanshire Child Protection Committee

Introduction and Context

This Strategic Plan builds on the Clackmannanshire CPC Strategic Improvement Plan 2023–2025, reflecting progress, learning, and the evolving child protection landscape.

It aligns with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated 2023) and the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Refresh (2022), both of which emphasise a whole-system, rights-based, and trauma-informed approach that places children and families at the centre of decision-making. This Plan is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), now incorporated into Scots law. The UNCRC provides the rights-based foundation for GIRFEC, translating children’s legal rights into everyday practice through early intervention, participation, and proportionate, child-centred decision-making.

The GIRFEC Refresh reaffirms the importance of early intervention, shared responsibility, and proportionate responses, ensuring that every child gets the right support at the right time. This Plan embeds those principles across Clackmannanshire’s multi-agency workforce, ensuring that staff at every level understand and apply GIRFEC in daily practice.

The Plan defines the strategic direction for 2026–2029, consolidating local achievements while addressing ongoing challenges, including poverty, mental health, and workforce wellbeing. It commits to a culture of learning, compassion, and continuous improvement across all agencies.

Key Progress and Learning 2023–2025

Between 2023 and 2025, Clackmannanshire CPC strengthened its foundations for collaborative leadership and continuous improvement.

Key developments included:

- **Governance and Assurance:** Enhanced alignment with the Chief Officers Group (COG) and Forth Valley Public Protection subgroup arrangements, creating stronger collective oversight.
- **Learning and Practice Improvement:** Delivery of a multi-agency training and learning programme that integrated findings from learning reviews and national updates, including the GIRFEC Refresh (2022).
- **Participation and Voice:** Increased involvement of children, young people, and parents through advocacy, consultation, and feedback tools such as Oor Clacks Voices and Viewpoint.
- **Early Help and Family Support:** Embedding of the Family Support Collaborative, strengthening early intervention and aligning services around wellbeing needs.
- **Workforce and Culture:** A growing emphasis on reflective supervision, wellbeing, and trauma-informed leadership.

Learning from this period highlighted the need to further embed GIRFEC processes across all agencies, ensuring that staff understand their roles in identifying, planning, and coordinating support at the earliest stage.

The next phase will build on this foundation, strengthening the shared language, practice tools, and multi-agency pathways that underpin consistent GIRFEC implementation.

Demographics and Local Context

Clackmannanshire has a population of just over 52,000, with children and young people accounting for around a quarter of all residents.

While small in scale, the area has a proportionally large child population and strong community connections, supporting close partnership working.

The area experiences significant child poverty, with around 29% of children living in poverty after housing costs — among the highest rates in Scotland. Despite this, 82.5% of children meet key developmental milestones, and school attendance (91%) remains above the national average.

The number of children on the Clackmannanshire Child Protection Register for parental mental ill-health, parental substance use, neglect and domestic abuse are high and our strategic plan acknowledges this.

Additional support needs (ASNs) in general are rising both locally, nationally and globally, with a notable rise in complex neurodevelopmental differences (NDD), particularly Autism Spectrum Disorders. The number of learners identified with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Clackmannanshire has risen in line with national trends. However, Clackmannanshire differs significantly from the national picture in that ASN levels are consistently higher across every quintile. While improved recording contributes to this increase, feedback suggests that family wellbeing and wider social factors—particularly in the post-Covid context are also influencing this pattern.

Clackmannanshire's size and integrated partnerships create opportunities for a whole-system approach where every child is seen, heard, safe, and supported.

Vision and Purpose

Our Vision

Clackmannanshire is a place where every child is safe, valued, and given the foundations to thrive.
(as agreed by Alva Academy Senior Pupil Parliament group)

Our Purpose

The Clackmannanshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) provides strategic leadership for continuous improvement in protecting children and young people from harm.

We promote early intervention, participation, workforce wellbeing, and trauma-informed practice to ensure that protection and support are everyone's responsibility.

Our work is aligned with The Promise, the UNCRC, and GIRFEC, and contributes directly to the Clackmannanshire Children's Services Plan.

Strategic Plan 2026–2029 – Priorities and Outcomes

Leadership & Governance

Strategic Objectives	Key Actions 2026–2029	Indicators of Success
Provide visible, accountable leadership that reflects national guidance and local priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refresh CPC Terms of Reference in line with the 2023 National Guidance.• Deliver annual improvement and communication plans.• Strengthen governance with the Chief Officers Group and public protection partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CPC Plan approved and reviewed annually.• Clear accountability pathways evidenced.• Improved coherence across public protection structures.

Whole Family Support, GIRFEC & Prevention

Strategic Objectives	Key Actions 2026–2029	Indicators of Success
<p>Embed the GIRFEC approach across all agencies to strengthen early help and proportionate responses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the GIRFEC 2022 refresh across all services. • Ensure consistent use of the Named Person, Child’s ‘My Plan’, and Lead Professional functions. • Deliver joint training to strengthen shared language and understanding. • Strengthen the whole-family, multi-agency approach across Adult and Children services consistently consider adult needs when working with children, and children’s wellbeing and safety when working with adults. • Align whole-family, multi-agency work with Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership and Community Wellbeing Plan. • Expand alignment with Equally Safe, the local VAWG Strategic Plan, and MARAC processes to ensure earlier identification and proportionate support. • Improve routine enquiry, risk assessment, and safety planning across all agencies, ensuring every practitioner understands their role in recognising coercive control and its impact on children. • Enhance collaboration with specialist domestic abuse services to deliver timely, trauma-informed support for non-abusive parents and children. • Develop preventative programmes aimed at reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse, including community-based early help, parenting support, and targeted interventions for families at heightened risk. • Strengthen data sharing and analysis to better understand patterns of domestic abuse and track reductions in harm, repeat victimisation, and children’s exposure to domestic abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence among staff in applying GIRFEC principles. • Reduction in crisis interventions and CP registrations. • Improved quality and consistency of Child’s Plans. • Families report that help is accessible and coordinated. • Reduction in the number of children on the Child Protection Register due to domestic abuse and repeat domestic abuse-related referrals. • Families report increased feelings of safety and support. • Improved consistency in the identification, recording and multi-agency response to domestic abuse.

Voice, Participation & Communication

Strategic Objectives	Key Actions 2026–2029	Indicators of Success
<p>Ensure children, young people, and families influence decision-making at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a CPC Participation Framework aligned with the UNCRC. • Use advocacy feedback and lived experience to shape policy. • Strengthen communication about support pathways and rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation in planning and reviews. • Positive feedback from families on involvement. • Improved public understanding of child protection.

Learning, Improvement & Excellence

Strategic Objectives	Key Actions 2026–2029	Indicators of Success
<p>Build a culture of reflection, continuous improvement, and shared learning across all agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a streamlined Learning & Improvement Framework incorporating GIRFEC and UNCRC principles, National Child Protection Guidance (2023), and the National Learning & Development Framework (2024). • Strengthen continuous improvement through feedback loops so that learning actions are tracked, reviewed, and embedded in practice. • Ensure Learning Reviews are trauma-informed and restorative, with proportionate processes and clear pathways for shared learning. • Provide structured supervision, reflective practice spaces, and multi-agency debriefs following critical incidents or reviews. • Embed learning on the national practice model and core assessment tools into all training programmes. • Support social care service transformation through a new Target Operating Model, supported by investment in a modern Social Work IT system. <p>Streamline working conditions of social work staff and multiagency staff with Artificial Intelligence (AI) products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continuous improvement in audits, inspections, and multi-agency performance data. • GIRFEC / UNCRC aligned practice consistently demonstrated across agencies. • Staff feedback demonstrates that training has improved confidence, knowledge and ability to apply whole-family, multi-agency practice in their role. • Learning Reviews completed within expected timescales, with learning actions demonstrably influencing practice. • Staff report feeling supported and confident in applying lessons learned.

Care, Protection, Transitions & The Promise

Strategic Objectives	Key Actions 2026–2029	Indicators of Success
<p>Ensure trauma-responsive, rights-based protection and smooth transitions into adulthood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the Bairns' Hoose and trauma-informed models. • Strengthen joint work on neglect, domestic abuse, and parental substance use. • Develop 16–26 transition pathways for care-experienced and vulnerable young people. • Align with employability, housing, and health supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in pre-birth and repeat registrations. • More young people achieving positive destinations. • Improved housing and wellbeing outcomes post-care. • Young people report feeling prepared for adulthood.

People, Partnerships & Workforce Wellbeing

Strategic Objectives	Key Actions 2026–2029	Indicators of Success
<p>Build a resilient, supported workforce that is confident, trauma-informed, and skilled in applying GIRFEC and child protection practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forth Valley multi-agency collaboration on practice and training. • Embed supervision, reflective practice, and wellbeing supports across all agencies. • Provide targeted support for staff involved in Learning Reviews, critical incidents, or complex cases. • Develop opportunities for multi-agency training on GIRFEC, vicarious trauma, and resilience. • Recognise and celebrate workforce contributions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved staff wellbeing and retention. • Staff demonstrate confidence in GIRFEC processes. • Reflective practice embedded in all services. • Shared workforce sustainability plans in place

Approach and Principles

- Collaborative Leadership – shared accountability across all agencies.
- Child- and Family-Centred Practice – guided by The Promise, GIRFEC, and UNCRC.
- Prevention and Early Help – timely, proportionate support through GIRFEC pathways.
- Learning and Reflection – supportive environments for professional growth and review.
- Trauma-Informed Workforce – recognising and responding to vicarious trauma and emotional impact.
- Sustainability and Partnership – investing in people, collaboration, and community capacity.

By 2029 We Aim to See

- Children and families feel safe, supported, and heard.
- GIRFEC principles fully embedded across all agencies.
- Earlier intervention reduces the need for statutory measures.
- Learning Reviews are restorative and lead to measurable improvement.
- Staff involved in reviews receive structured support and recovery time.
- A confident, resilient, trauma-informed workforce delivering consistent practice.
- New Social Work IT system.
- Embed Artificial Intelligence (AI) in operating systems.

