
Report to Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 29 October 2026

Subject: Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2025-26

Report by: Chief Social Work Officer

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. To present the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Annual Report reflecting the reporting period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (attached as Appendix 1).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the CSWO Annual Report 2025/26 and the assurance, performance information, risks and priorities set out within it, and to comment and challenge as appropriate.
- 2.2. Note the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2025-26 will subsequently be submitted to the Chief Social Work Advisor and Chief Executive, National Social Work Agency to the Scottish Government.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. This Annual Report has been prepared to fulfil the statutory requirement for the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) to report on the delivery and performance of social work services within the local authority area.
- 3.2. The annual report provides assurance on the statutory CSWO role, professional leadership, governance and oversight of social work and social care services, and highlights key service performance, pressures, risks and priorities across children and families, justice and adult services.
- 3.3. The report follows the structure and guidance issued by the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser in Scottish Government. It focuses on:
- Local governance and accountability arrangements
 - Service delivery and performance
 - Resources
 - Workforce

3.4. Overview of Activity and Performance

The report provides a summary of social work and social care service activity during the reporting period of 2025/26. It includes performance information across key areas of statutory social work and public protection.

The report also highlights significant developments, achievements, and challenges faced by services throughout the year, particularly in the context of increasing demand and ongoing budgetary pressures across both the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

3.5. Key Achievements in Social Work and Social Care:

- Earlier support: Most families referred to Early Help received support without escalation to locality social work.
- Family and community-based care: Kinship care increased, 90.4% of care-experienced children lived in community settings, and 90% of sibling groups remained together.
- Stronger public protection: Child protection practice, MAPPA oversight and multi-agency quality assurance continued to develop.
- Community-based justice: Bail Supervision, Diversion and purposeful Unpaid Work supported prevention, rehabilitation and alternatives to custody.
- Supporting independence: Adult Services maintained timely access to care at home and strengthened preventative support for unpaid carers and adults with complex needs.
- Workforce development: Investment continued in professional learning, newly qualified social workers, student placements and multi-agency training.

3.6 Workforce Recognition

The achievements outlined in this report reflect the commitment and professionalism of the social work and social care workforce. It also acknowledges the vital role of unpaid carers who continue to support children, young people, and adults across Clackmannanshire in often very challenging circumstances.

3.7 Looking Ahead

Clackmannanshire's social work and social care services continue to navigate a complex and evolving landscape shaped by increasing demand, legislative developments, financial and workforce pressures. Despite these challenges, the service remains committed to delivering high-quality, responsive support; guided by the voices of local people and communities. Looking ahead, the focus will be on: sustaining safe statutory services, strengthening prevention and early intervention, building workforce resilience, and maintaining robust governance and public protection through ongoing service reform.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

4.1. None

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. *Financial Details*

5.2. There are no financial implications from this report.

5.3. *Staffing*

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all ☐

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life ☒

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential ☒

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish ☒

(2) Council Policies

Complies with relevant Council Policies ☒

8.0 Impact Assessments

8.1 Have you attached the combined equalities impact assessment to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty and fairer Scotland duty? (All EFSIAs also require to be published on the Council's website)

Yes ☐ No ☒

8.2 If an impact assessment has not been undertaken you should explain why:

This annual report is provided for information purposes only. It does not introduce a new policy, function, or strategy, nor does it propose any significant changes to existing ones. As such, an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☐

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Annual Report 2025-2026

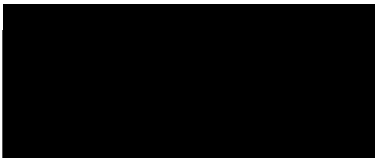
11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)
- Yes ☐ (please list the documents below) No ☒

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Approved by

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Annual Report

2025/2026



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Welcome to my sixth Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for Clackmannanshire, covering the period from **1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026**.

Social work and social care services continued to operate in a demanding environment shaped by increasing complexity, financial constraint, workforce pressures and persistent inequality. Despite these challenges, staff and partners maintained essential statutory and public protection services while progressing prevention, early intervention and community-based support.

Children's Services responded to the highest level of requests for assistance in recent years, with most referrals to Early Help not requiring escalation to locality social work. Family-based care remained a strength, with kinship care increasing and most care-experienced children and young people living in community settings. Developments in child protection, Bairns' Hoose, aftercare and Continuing Care further strengthened rights-based and trauma-informed support.

Justice Services expanded Bail Supervision and Diversion from Prosecution, delivered purposeful Unpaid Work and substantially restored capacity within Glenochil Prison-Based Social Work. Strong MAPPA and partnership arrangements continued to support rehabilitation, effective risk management and public protection.

Adult Services progressed Right Care, Right Time, strengthened community-based support and maintained timely access to commissioned care at home. Increasing Adult Support and Protection and out-of-hours demand, alongside Guardianship, workforce and financial pressures, will require continued oversight.

Key Achievements 2025/2026

- Earlier support: Most families referred to Early Help received support without escalation to locality social work.
- Family and community-based care: Kinship care increased, 90.4% of care-experienced children lived in community settings, and 90% of sibling groups remained together.
- Stronger public protection: Child protection practice, MAPPA oversight and multi-agency quality assurance continued to develop.
- Community-based justice: Bail Supervision, Diversion and purposeful Unpaid Work supported prevention, rehabilitation and alternatives to custody.
- Supporting independence: Adult Services maintained timely access to care at home and strengthened preventative support for unpaid carers and adults with complex needs.
- Workforce development: Investment continued in professional learning, newly qualified social workers, student placements and multi-agency training.

These achievements reflect the professionalism, resilience and compassion of our workforce and the contribution of partners, supported people, families and unpaid carers. I offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has helped protect rights, manage risk and improve outcomes across our communities.

Looking ahead, our focus must remain on prevention and early intervention, expand sustainable local care capacity, workforce resilience, and measurable outcomes. Transformation and financial recovery must continue without compromising statutory duties, public protection, service quality or the rights and wellbeing of the people we support and who rely on our services.

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose and Background

This Annual Report has been prepared to fulfil the statutory requirement for the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) to report on the delivery and performance of social work services within the local authority area. It provides a comprehensive overview of the CSWO's role in providing professional leadership, oversight of practice, and assurance of governance, values, and standards, as outlined in national guidance.

The report also addresses areas of statutory responsibility where legislation confers specific functions directly on the CSWO. These responsibilities primarily relate to public protection and decisions involving the restriction of individual liberty, where the CSWO plays a critical role in ensuring ethical, legal, and person-centred practice.

2.2 National and Local Reporting Requirements

In accordance with national expectations, each local authority is required to submit an annual CSWO report to the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government. This contributes to the development of a national overview of the social work profession, practice, and service delivery across Scotland.

Locally, the report also satisfies the statutory requirement to produce and publish an annual report for both the Council and the Integrated Joint Board (IJB). It supports transparency and accountability by providing elected members, partners, and the public with insight into the performance, challenges, and achievements of social work and social care services.

2.3 Scope of the Report

This report covers the period **1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026** and provides:

- An overview of the delivery of social work and social care services across children's, justice and adult services
- A summary of governance and accountability arrangements
- Performance and quality assurance information
- Reflections on workforce capacity, service pressures, and innovation
- Key developments and priorities for continuous improvement

3. Clackmannanshire Profile

Clackmannanshire is a small, distinctive and predominantly semi-rural area. While many local outcomes compare positively with Scotland as a whole, the area continues to experience significant inequalities associated with deprivation, health, economic participation and demographic change. The profile below brings together the latest available evidence across a range of measures. As datasets are published at different times, figures relate to the latest available reporting period for each indicator and should be interpreted accordingly.

Our Local Area

- Clackmannanshire covers approximately **159 square kilometres (61.4 square miles)** and is the second-smallest Scottish local authority by area and has approximately 293 kilometres of road.
- **54.4% of local residents** reported their neighbourhood as a very good place to live, compared with 53.5% across Scotland. This represents an improvement from the previously reported local figure of 41.5%.

- Measures of unemployment indicate a broadly similar position to Scotland overall, although **youth unemployment remains a particular area for attention**. Local employability activity, including the Clackmannanshire Works programme, continues to support people towards employment; **18.5%** against a Scottish rate of 14.2% (of all unemployed people).
- **Outcomes for school leavers are positive**. The local profile records **96.8% of school leavers entering a positive destination**, compared with 95.7% nationally. The Scottish Government confirmed that 95.7% of 2024/25 school leavers across Scotland were in a positive initial destination approximately three months after leaving school. The separate national nine-month follow-up rate was 93.5%.
- **Participation among 16 to 19-year-olds, at 92.0% remains below the reported Scottish comparison of 93.3%**, indicating that **sustained participation** in education, training and employment remains an important area of focus.
- Active travel to work is broadly comparable with the Scottish position. Particularly positive performance has been reported for **children and young people's active travel to school, with 62.5% travelling actively** compared with 47.2% nationally.
- Clackmannanshire experiences significant concentrations of income and other forms of deprivation (income and crime deprivation in young people (under 25) are higher than average). At the same time, previous SIMD analysis has indicated a comparatively positive position on geographic access to services. These different dimensions of deprivation highlight the importance of considering local inequalities at community and neighbourhood level rather than relying solely on an overall area-wide measure.

Our People

- The latest National Records of Scotland estimate places Clackmannanshire's population at **51,610 at 30 June 2025**, a decrease of 0.7% from 51,970 in 2024. Clackmannanshire remains one of Scotland's smallest mainland local-authority populations.
- Population projections indicate continuing demographic pressures over the longer term. Clackmannanshire is expected to experience population change alongside a **continuing shift towards an older age profile**.
- The population has a **slightly higher proportion of older people than Scotland as a whole**. The Council's 2025/26 demographic profile reports approximately **21% of residents aged 65 and over**, compared with around 20% nationally.
- **Children aged 0 to 15** accounts for approximately **17% of the local population**, slightly above the Scottish proportion of approximately 16%. Conversely, the 16 to 24 population is relatively small. National Records of Scotland reports that 16 to 24-year-olds were the smallest of its six broad age groups in Clackmannanshire in 2025.
- Taken together, the local age structure places pressure on the size of the **working-age population** and reinforces the importance of workforce participation, skills development, recruitment and retention.
- Smoking prevalence remains an important public-health issue. Recent profile data indicates that **smoking among adults** in Clackmannanshire continues to be slightly higher than the Scottish comparison.

- A significant proportion of the local population lives in communities experiencing high levels of deprivation. Previous local analysis identified **18 of Clackmannanshire's 72 data zones** among Scotland's 20% most deprived.
- Rent arrears have historically presented a challenge locally but have reduced in recent reporting, with the profile recording a rate of **7.3%, compared with 8.6% nationally**.
- Performance in administering crisis and community care grants is strong. The available profile data records **99.7% of crisis grant decisions within one day** and **100% of community care grant decisions within 15 days**, compared with reported Scottish rates of 96.0% and 90.7% respectively.

Our Children and Young People

- Child poverty remains a significant concern with **17.0% of children in Clackmannanshire living in poverty (after housing costs)**; the 4th highest rate in Scotland. Available evidence consistently identifies poverty and deprivation as important factors affecting children and families in Clackmannanshire.
- The number of **care-experienced children and young people** reduced by **4%** during 2025/26 to 209 at 31 March 2026; however, at 31 July 2026 this had increased to 219, remaining broadly in line with levels seen in recent years. The **local rate of 22.1 per 1,000 children aged 0–17 remains higher than the Scottish rate of 11.8 per 1,000**.
- The profile records **28.2% of school pupils registered for free school meals** and **37.5% recorded as having additional support needs**. These figures reinforce the importance of inclusive education and targeted support, while recognising that registration, entitlement and uptake can represent different measures.
- Overall school attendance is reported at **91.2%**, with attendance among care-experienced children and young people at **85.6%**. These compare with reported Scottish rates of 91.0% and 83.7% respectively. Attendance among smaller groups can vary between years and is therefore best considered as part of a longer-term trend.
- The **poverty-related attainment gap has reduced on a number of measures**. Primary literacy and numeracy performance is reported as being broadly comparable with Scotland, while secondary attainment remains an area where further improvement is required, particularly in addressing the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Our Older People

- Clackmannanshire's population has been ageing over the longer term, creating increasing demands across health, social care, housing and community services. The local population is ageing at a faster rate than Scotland as a whole, with a **38% increase in people aged 65+ since 2010** (Scotland = 29% increase).
- The profile records an increase in the number of older people supported within their own communities, with **homecare hours increasing substantially over the longer term**. This is consistent with an emphasis on supporting people to remain at home where that is appropriate to their needs and wishes.
- The available profile reports that **72.1% of people aged 65 and over with long-term needs receive homecare**, compared with 62.3% nationally. The indicator suggests a comparatively high level of community-based provision, although levels of provision should be considered alongside need, intensity and outcomes for individuals.

- Delayed discharge remains an important system-wide challenge. The profile records **855 delayed days per 1,000 people aged 75 and over locally**, compared with 899 nationally. While the local rate is below the reported Scottish comparison, the increase over recent years means that avoiding unnecessary time in hospital remains a significant area of partnership focus.
- The profile also records a comparatively **high proportion of adult care services graded Good or better**, at **88.0% compared with 81.9%** nationally. Inspection outcomes should continue to be considered alongside other measures of service quality, experience and outcomes.

Our Health and Wellbeing

- People in Clackmannanshire continue to experience significant **health inequalities**. Reported life expectancy is 80.3 years for women and 75.9 years for men, below the respective Scottish comparisons of 81.1 and 77.2 years.
- **Healthy life expectancy presents an even greater challenge**. Available evidence indicates that both men and women in Clackmannanshire can expect to live **around 55 years in good health**, approximately four years fewer than the Scottish comparison. The current HSCP locality profile provides further evidence on local population health and health inequalities.
- Alcohol, drugs and smoking continue to contribute to preventable ill health and mortality. The available profile suggests alcohol-related mortality is closer to the Scottish rate, while **drug and particularly smoking-related harms remain areas of concern**. Trends should be considered over several years because relatively small numbers locally can produce considerable annual variation.
- Mental health continues to be an important public-health priority. The profile records **23.6% of the population prescribed mental-health-related medication**, compared with 20.8% across Scotland, alongside a higher reported rate of psychiatric hospitalisation.
- Hospital readmission is an area requiring continued attention. The available profile records **140 readmissions within 28 days per 1,000 discharges**, compared with 103 nationally. Understanding the reasons for readmission, including the interaction between hospital, primary care, community health and social care, remains important.
- **Suicide prevention remains a priority**. The profile records an overall rate above the Scottish comparison (19.7 compared to 16.8 across Scotland). Encouragingly, the reported rolling-period rate among young people aged 11 to 25 has reduced substantially. Given Clackmannanshire's relatively small population and the sensitivity of small-number rates, short-term changes should be interpreted cautiously and should not reduce the continuing focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Recorded **domestic abuse remains higher than the Scottish comparison** in the available profile, (**141 per 10,000 population** compared with 116 nationally and the **4th highest** of the 32 local authorities); reinforcing the continuing importance of gender-based violence, safeguarding and multi-agency public-protection arrangements.
- Overall recorded crime is reported as lower than the Scottish rate, at **731 crimes per 10,000 population compared with 857 nationally**. There has also been a substantial longer-term reduction in hospital admissions of young people following assault. As with other relatively low-frequency events, trends are more informative than individual-year changes.

Overall Picture

Clackmannanshire is a small area with strong communities, improving outcomes in a number of areas and evidence of effective local services, including positive school-leaver destinations, active travel to school, community-based support for older people and timely delivery of some forms of financial assistance.

At the same time, the area continues to experience significant and persistent inequalities. Poverty and deprivation, poorer healthy life expectancy, mental-health need, drug and smoking-related harm, domestic abuse and some aspects of educational and economic participation remain important challenges.

Demographic change adds to this complexity. An ageing population, a relatively small working-age population and recent population decline have implications for the sustainability of the workforce, public services and communities.

The overall picture is therefore one of resilience alongside significant inequality. Continuing improvement will require a strong focus on prevention and early intervention, reducing inequalities, supporting children and families, enabling people to remain healthy and independent, strengthening community capacity and ensuring that public services respond effectively to changing patterns of need.

Further information on Council and partnership performance, and other facts and figures, can be found at: <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/council/performance/> and <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/council/factsandfigures/>

4.0 Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

4.1 Statutory Role of the Chief Social Work Officer

Under Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, local authorities are required to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). The CSWO holds a unique statutory role, providing strategic and professional leadership in the delivery of social work services across the local authority area. The CSWO is responsible for ensuring professional oversight of social work practice and service delivery. This includes:

- Upholding professional governance and standards
- Driving continuous service improvement
- Providing leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether directly provided by the local authority or commissioned through third or independent sector partners.

4.2 Framework for Delivery

Social work services operate within a complex statutory and professional framework, requiring services to meet national standards, deliver best value and protect and promote the rights, safety and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) provides professional governance and assurance across all social work services, ensuring that practice is lawful, ethical and consistent with professional standards. This is particularly important in areas of public protection and where statutory interventions may restrict an individual's liberty.

The CSWO is also Head of Service (Wellbeing), with strategic and operational responsibility for Children's and Justice Services. The role operates within the governance arrangements of:

- Clackmannanshire Council;
- Clackmannanshire and Stirling Integration Joint Board; and
- Clackmannanshire Community Planning Partnership, the Alliance.

Social work priorities are aligned with the Council and Community Planning Partnership's strategic framework, including the [Corporate Plan Be the Future](#) and the [Clackmannanshire's Wellbeing Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2034](#).

4.3 Governance and Oversight

Children's and Justice Services are managed by Clackmannanshire Council within the Wellbeing Directorate, with service priorities reflected in the [Community Wellbeing Plan 2025-2026](#).

Adult social work, social care and community health services are delegated to the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Integration Joint Board (IJB) and delivered through the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). The IJB provides strategic direction through its [Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023-2033](#).

The Chief Officer/Director of Adult Services is responsible for the operational management and performance of integrated services, supported by senior leadership arrangements providing oversight and assurance in relation to performance and professional, clinical and care governance.

During 2024-2025 there were changes in the Interim Chief Officer arrangements, with a further Interim Chief Officer currently in post during 2025-2026.

4.4 Leadership and Professional Accountability

As a member of the Council's Extended Senior Leadership Team, the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) provides professional leadership, advice and assurance across social work services, working with Elected Members, senior leaders, managers and practitioners.

The CSWO has professional responsibility for promoting high standards of practice and ensuring that social work services fulfil their statutory duties and operate in accordance with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice. This includes oversight of professional standards, service quality and ethical, rights-based and person-centred practice.

4.5 Public Protection and Strategic Partnerships

The Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) provides professional leadership and assurance across Clackmannanshire's multi-agency public protection arrangements. As a member of the Public Protection Chief Officer Group, the CSWO contributes professional advice and strategic oversight in relation to child protection, adult support and protection, violence against women and girls, and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

The CSWO also contributes to the Child Protection Committee, Adult Support and Protection Committee, Community Justice Partnership, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Tackling Poverty Partnership and MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group.

As Chair of Clackmannanshire's Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Group, the CSWO leads partnership planning to support improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

Collectively, these arrangements provide established routes for multi-agency scrutiny, professional challenge, escalation and assurance, supporting coordinated oversight of public protection risks and statutory responsibilities across the partnership.

4.6 Reporting and Governance

As a statutory officer of the Council, the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) reports directly to the Chief Executive and meets regularly to provide professional advice on social work policy, priorities, service pressures and emerging challenges.

The CSWO provides professional oversight and assurance through the Council's wider governance arrangements, including the Alliance, Council and Audit & Scrutiny Committee, Children & Young People Board, Adult Social Care Board, Extended Senior Leadership Group, and Clackmannanshire and Stirling Integration Joint Board (IJB). Regular engagement also takes place with the relevant Spokesperson and Deputy Spokesperson on matters relating to children's services, adult social care and justice.

As a non-voting member of the IJB, the CSWO contributes to the governance of integrated health and social care and is an active member of the Clinical and Professional Care Governance Group. The CSWO also participates in the Forth Valley Collaborative Care Home Oversight Group, which brings together strategic leaders from the two Health and Social Care Partnerships and NHS Forth Valley to oversee and support the quality of care provided within local care homes.

In summary, these arrangements support direct professional accountability, provide routes for escalation and advice, and enable the CSWO to contribute to scrutiny, assurance and strategic decision-making across Council and partnership governance structures.

5. Service Quality and Performance

5.1 Children and Families

During 2025/26, Children's Social Work Services continued to respond effectively to increasing demand while maintaining a strong focus on prevention, protection, permanence and corporate parenting.

Demand for Children's Services increased during 2025/26, with **1,705 requests for assistance**, the highest level in recent years. Of these, **1,002 (58.8%)** were referred to Early Help and **703 (41.2%)** directly to locality social work teams. **Despite a 7% increase in Early Help referrals, 92% did not require subsequent statutory intervention.** This indicates a positive shift towards earlier, proportionate support, while maintaining timely access to statutory assessment, care and protection where risk or need requires it.

Despite this increase, key indicators of statutory intervention reduced. Child protection concern reports fell by **28%**, child protection investigations reduced by **22%**, and referrals to the Children's Reporter reduced by **24%**. This suggests that early intervention, partnership working and targeted family support are helping to prevent concerns escalating to more intensive statutory intervention.

While overall child protection activity reduced, the number of children on the **Child Protection Register increased from 19 to 30**. This reflects the concentration of significant risk within a relatively small number of families, particularly where multiple siblings are affected. Domestic abuse and neglect remain the most common factors associated with child protection registration and continue to be priority areas for partnership action.

The number of **care-experienced children and young people reduced by 4%** during 2025/26 to 209 at 31 March 2026; however, by 31 July 2026 this had increased to 219, returning to levels broadly consistent with recent years. Family-based care remains a particular strength in Clackmannanshire, with kinship care continuing to be the largest placement type, supporting children to remain connected to their families and communities wherever it is safe to do so. Placement stability also remains positive, with very few children experiencing multiple placement moves. While the local rate of 22.1 per 1,000 children aged 0–17 remains significantly higher than the Scottish rate of 11.8 per 1,000, the overall profile of care continues to reflect a strong focus on family-based and stable care arrangements.

Progress was also evident in the support provided to care experienced young people. Aftercare provision increased, pathway review performance improved significantly and the number of young people benefiting from Continuing Care almost doubled during the year. These developments demonstrate a continued

commitment to fulfilling corporate parenting responsibilities and supporting positive transitions into adulthood.

Notwithstanding this progress, increasing demand, the prevalence of domestic abuse and neglect, and continued reliance on external placements present ongoing challenges. Ensuring sufficient local placement capacity, sustaining early intervention services and supporting children within their families and communities will remain key priorities moving forward.

At a Glance: 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Key Measure	2025/26 Position
Requests for Assistance	1,705 (+5%)
Child Protection Concern Reports	87 (-28%)
Child Protection Investigations	53 (-22%)
Children on Child Protection Register	30 (+58%)
Care Experienced Children and Young People	209 (-4%)
Children in Kinship Care	170 ¹ (+1%)
Young People Receiving Aftercare	49 (+17%)
Young People in Continuing Care	13 (+86%)
Referrals to the Children's Reporter	93 (-24%)

The 2025/26 data demonstrates children's services responding effectively to increasing demand while maintaining a strong focus on prevention, protection and permanence. Although referrals continue to rise, reductions in child protection concerns, investigations and Children's Reporter referrals suggest that early intervention, partnership working and targeted family support are helping to reduce the need for statutory intervention.

At the same time, the increase in Child Protection Register numbers highlights that significant risk remains concentrated within a relatively small number of families, with domestic abuse and neglect continuing to be the predominant concerns.

Positive progress has also been achieved for care experienced children and young people through strong kinship care arrangements, stable placements, improved pathway planning and increased aftercare and Continuing Care provision.

Future priorities will focus on managing rising demand, strengthening early intervention and family support, addressing domestic abuse and neglect, sustaining workforce capacity, and improving local placement sufficiency to reduce reliance on external provision and ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

5.1.1 Early Intervention service performance

The introduction of the **Children's Services Early Help Team** in 2022 represents a significant development in our approach to prevention and early intervention. As the front door to children's social work, the team provides early screening and proportionate responses to initial contacts, helping families' access appropriate support while ensuring that locality social work teams remain focused on children requiring more targeted or formal statutory intervention. This work is supported by a wider whole-family support system, bringing together health, education, housing, community and third-sector services.

¹ Of the 170 children living in Kinship, 76 children were on residence orders and 86 children were looked after and accommodated through compulsory or voluntary measures.

The **Whole Family Support Screening Group** provides a multi-agency mechanism for coordinating support. During the year, **25 screening groups considered 141 referrals**, with 80% allocated to services within 12 weeks and 68% achieving or partially achieving their intended outcomes within the review period.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) continues to promote family-led solutions and support children to remain within their wider family networks wherever this is safe and appropriate. During 2025/26, **108** referrals led to **44 family meetings** and **42 family plans**. These identified **37 potential kinship placements**, supported **15 children to return home**, and enabled **17 families** to provide supervision for family-time arrangements.

Preventative support was also delivered through a range of targeted and universal programmes. **Mellow parenting programmes** reported improvements in parental reflection, communication, confidence, peer support and family relationships. The well established **THRIVE to Keep Well programme** supported parents and carers experiencing mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing challenges, with participants reporting improvements in confidence, self-esteem, motivation, parenting capacity and wellbeing.

Early diversionary support for young people was provided through the **Awareness Programme**, delivered in partnership with Barnardo's. Four intensive programmes involved **14 young people** during 2025/26. Of these, **10** did not reoffend and **all 14** were subsequently closed to Children's and Families Social Work. While based on a relatively small cohort, these outcomes are encouraging and support the continued emphasis on early and proportionate intervention.

Universal early-years support also remained an important part of prevention. The **Puddles and Play Group**, delivered in partnership with Health Visiting services, engaged more than **400 families**, while **17 Baby Massage programmes** supported **95 families**, with a focus on attachment, parental confidence and reducing isolation.

Family Support Collaborative and Wellbeing Hubs

The innovative and successful **Family Support Collaborative**, now in its third year, provides a positive framework for coordinated universal, targeted and intensive whole-family support across Clackmannanshire. Partner organisations supported at least **338 families** and **266 children and young people** at any one time through targeted and intensive services, alongside wider universal provision.

Support is relationship-based, trauma-informed and locally delivered, with services working collectively to address a range of needs and practical barriers. The model aligns with Getting it Right for Every Child, The Promise and Whole Family Wellbeing Fund ambitions, while supporting stronger pathways between universal, targeted and intensive provision.

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding has created additional capacity at important points in the system, enabling a greater range of earlier intervention and wraparound support where children are at risk of becoming care experienced.

The **Family Wellbeing Hubs** provide an accessible community component of this approach. Between April 2025 and April 2026, the hubs supported **89 parents** through specialist activities, engaged **24** parents in wellbeing sessions and provided universal early-intervention opportunities for **125** children. The wider Family Support Collaborative now includes **39 third-sector organisations**, strengthening opportunities for communication and coordinated support.

Demand for targeted and intensive family support remains high, with a number of services operating at or close to capacity. This remains an area requiring continued oversight, particularly given increasing complexity of need and the importance of maintaining timely access to preventative support.

Wider Indicators

There are also encouraging trends within the wider children's services system and are consistent with the direction of Clackmannanshire's preventative and early-intervention approach.

In 2025/26, **93 children** in Clackmannanshire were referred to the Children's Reporter, a **reduction of 24%** from 123 in 2024/25 and the **lowest number recorded over the four-year reporting period**. Social Work was the main source of local referrals at 51%, followed by Police at 35%. **Lack of parental care** remained the most commonly recorded ground for referral at **53%**, while **19%** related to **alleged offending**.

The larger reduction locally is positive but requires careful interpretation and does not, in itself, demonstrate reduced need. The continuing prominence of lack of parental care highlights sustained family vulnerability and the importance of effective early help and whole-family support.

Early Intervention: Strategic Priorities 2026/27:

The service will focus on three strategic commitments:

- **Timely, coordinated whole-family support:** Strengthen the Family Support Collaborative, Family Wellbeing Hubs and multi-agency screening arrangements to improve access, reduce delays and provide clearer pathways between universal, targeted and intensive support.
- **Prevention, participation and family-led practice:** Expand evidence-based parenting and preventative approaches, including family-led planning and co-production, to strengthen family resilience and reduce avoidable escalation to statutory social work.
- **Performance, outcomes and assurance:** Strengthen monitoring of demand, capacity, waiting times, repeat referrals, outcomes and escalation to statutory services, providing clearer evidence of impact, unmet need and service pressures to inform improvement and future planning.

Together, these priorities will strengthen timely access, prevention and measurable outcomes, supporting sustainable early help while ensuring statutory social work remains focused on children and families with the highest levels of need and risk.

5.1.2 Safeguarding Through Rapid Intervention (STRIVE)

Safeguarding Through Rapid Intervention (STRIVE) is Clackmannanshire's multi-agency early intervention approach, bringing together Council services, Police, Health and Social Care and third-sector partners to identify vulnerability early, coordinate support and reduce the risk of escalation. STRIVE complements established child and adult protection arrangements, including the Children's Services Early Help Team and the Adults Services Early Intervention Team and is embedded within local multi-agency practice.

Capacity was strengthened during 2025/26 through the appointment of a STRIVE Lead and Community Connector. The Community Connector has strengthened engagement with people experiencing multiple and complex vulnerabilities, including mental ill-health, social isolation, housing insecurity and financial hardship, providing an important link between individuals, communities and statutory services.

Priorities for 2026/27 are to strengthen capacity in response to demand, improve performance and outcome reporting, and undertake a self-evaluation and cost-benefit analysis to provide clearer evidence of STRIVE's impact and inform its future development.

5.1.3 Children with Disabilities service performance

Supporting children and young people with disabilities to remain within their families and communities continues to be a priority. During 2025/26, the Children with Disabilities Team received **92** referrals, completed **39** Section 23 assessments and reviewed **37** care packages, demonstrating sustained demand for specialist assessment and support.

Progress was made in strengthening personalised and equitable support. Revised Section 23 assessment tool and budget allocation systems were introduced to improve consistency and transparency in decision-making. Nine young people received Direct Payments through Self-Directed Support, enabling more individually tailored arrangements. However, the limited range of local provision continues to restrict the choice available to some families, particularly those supporting children with complex needs.

Partnership working with Scottish Autism extended community-based support to **11** young people, with nine participating in structured group activities and two receiving individual support. The development of the **Mellow Ability programme** will further strengthen preventative support for parents and carers of younger children with additional and complex needs. Evidence of sustained outcomes from these initiatives will be monitored during 2026/27.

Transition planning supported **16** young people through the multi-agency Transition Panel. While this has strengthened coordination, delays in securing appropriate adult provision by school-leaving dates remain a significant risk to continuity of care and require continued oversight.

Children with Disabilities: Strategic Priorities 2026/27:

- **Choice, flexibility and family support:** Develop local outreach, home and community-based support and break-in-care provision, alongside Self-Directed Support, to increase choice and better meet children's and families' individual needs.
- **Effective transitions to adulthood:** Strengthen joint planning between Children's and Adult Services to improve the timeliness, coordination and continuity of support for young people moving into adulthood.
- **Outcomes and assurance:** Strengthen performance and outcome reporting, including children's and families' experiences, to demonstrate the impact of support on wellbeing, independence, choice and family resilience.

Together, these priorities will support more personalised, timely and sustainable provision, while strengthening assurance that children with disabilities and their families receive effective support, particularly where needs are complex.

5.1.4 Care and Protection service performance

In 2025/26, **87 children** were the subject of child protection concerns, a **reduction of 28%** from 120 in 2024/25. The rate reduced from 13.7 to 10.0 per 1,000 children aged 0–15, continuing the longer-term downward trend from 16.1 per 1,000 in 2022/23.

Multi-agency safeguarding activity remained robust. There were **136 Initial Referral Discussions**, an **increase of 11%** from 2024/25, supporting timely information-sharing, joint risk assessment and coordinated protective decision-making. There were **53 child protection investigations**, a **reduction of 22%** from the previous year. Police Scotland was the principal source of concerns at 38%, followed by Social Work and the Emergency Duty Team at 25%, and Education at 18%. The significant change in referral patterns will continue to be examined through multi-agency quality assurance.

Forty Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings were held in relation to **62 children**. Of the **87 children subject to investigation**, **71% progressed to an Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting** and, of these, **79% were placed on the Child Protection Register**. These proportions increased from 67% and 60% respectively in 2024/25, indicating that children progressing through formal child protection processes were more likely to require coordinated multi-agency protection.

At 31 March 2026, **30 children were on the Child Protection Register**, equivalent to 3.4 per 1,000 children aged 0–15. This represented an **increase of 58%** from 19 children at 31 March 2025 and was above the latest available Scottish comparator of 2.34 per 1,000, which relates to an earlier reporting period.

The year-end register total was significantly influenced by family composition. **Eighty per cent of registered children were part of a sibling group**, compared with 63% in 2024/25 and 64% in 2023/24. The registration of sibling groups can produce substantial year-on-year variation in a relatively small cohort and should therefore be considered when interpreting changes in the headline register figure.

Domestic abuse was the most common primary concern for children on the register at 31 March 2026, followed by neglect. This represents a return to the pattern evident in 2023/24 and earlier years, following a different profile in 2024/25, when parental or carer mental ill health and physical injury were the leading concerns. This reinforces the importance of effective multi-agency responses to domestic abuse and neglect, including support that addresses risk across the whole family.

There were **49 new registrations during 2025/26. Children aged 5–11 represented the largest group at 43%**, followed by **children aged 0–4 at 39%. Unborn babies accounted for 11% and children aged 12–15 for 7%.** Overall, **93% of new registrations related to unborn babies or children aged under 12**, highlighting the importance of early identification, effective pre-birth assessment and timely family support.

Three children were re-registered within six months during 2025/26, compared with four in 2024/25. While the number reduced, repeat registration remains an important indicator of whether improvements achieved through protection planning are sustained. Continued review of re-registration cases will support learning about the effectiveness of interventions, risk assessment and planning at the point of deregistration.

Overall, the data demonstrates reduced activity at the initial concern and investigation stages, alongside sustained multi-agency scrutiny and a higher proportion of children progressing to registration where significant risk was identified. The profile of registration reflects the impact of sibling groups and the continuing significance of domestic abuse and neglect. This provides assurance that formal protective measures are being applied where required, while reinforcing the need for continued oversight of referral patterns, thresholds, repeat registrations, family-level risks and the consistency and effectiveness of multi-agency decision-making.

Care and protection services continued to strengthen trauma-informed, child-centred and rights-based practice during 2025/26. The **Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)** is now embedded across Forth Valley, with **over 90%** of Joint Investigative Interviews undertaken using the model. Regular quality assurance activity indicates high standards of practice and compliance with national requirements, with quarterly performance monitoring supporting continued improvement and workforce development.

The **Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD) Quality Assurance Framework** has further strengthened multi-agency oversight. Monthly audits using a standardised approach provide a consistent mechanism for identifying learning, strengthening decision-making and supporting improvement across child protection practice.

Significant progress has also been made through the **Forth Valley Bairns' Hoose Partnership**, strengthening the system response to children affected by abuse and significant harm. Tests of Change during 2025/26 demonstrated positive outcomes, including improvements in practitioner wellbeing and reduced secondary traumatic stress through Clinical Psychology-led reflective practice. Speech and Language Therapy input strengthened practitioner understanding of children's communication needs and developed accessible approaches to support children's participation in protection and justice processes.

Children and young people have continued to influence service development through the **Changemakers Participation Group**, contributing to justice journey resources, accessible information and environmental design principles. This provides important evidence that children's lived experience and rights are being incorporated into the developing Bairns' Hoose model.

Audit, Quality Assurance and Learning

A comprehensive programme of multi-agency audit, scrutiny and learning provides assurance on the quality and effectiveness of child protection practice in Clackmannanshire. The Child Protection Committee's (CPC) Quality Assurance Subgroup oversees this activity, ensuring that findings from audit, performance information and learning reviews are translated into focused improvement activity.

The Forth Valley Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD) Quality Assurance Framework is embedded, with monthly multi-agency audits examining the quality of decision-making, information sharing, safety planning and outcomes. Findings are shared with practitioners and used to inform workforce development, policy and practice improvement. The CPC Learning Review Group complements this activity by systematically considering learning from local and national reviews and assessing its relevance to local safeguarding arrangements.

During 2025/26, the CPC undertook a thematic multi-agency audit of 18 pre-birth child protection cases. The findings provided positive assurance regarding partnership working, timely decision-making, information sharing, assessment and child-centred practice. The audit also identified specific areas requiring improvement, including contingency planning, engagement with fathers and wider family networks, mental health input, cross-authority transfers and more consistent application of the Safe & Together approach in domestic abuse cases. These actions have been incorporated into the CPC Quality Assurance Improvement Plan and will be monitored through established governance arrangements.

Quality assurance has also supported wider improvements during the year, including continued implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model, learning from the Bairns' Hoose Tests of Change and strengthened participation of children and young people through the Changemakers Participation Group. The Child Protection Committee Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and associated Implementation Plan provide the framework for taking this learning forward.

Whole System Approach: Youth Justice

Clackmannanshire continues to embed the Whole System Approach to Youth Justice, with prevention, early intervention and diversion central to supporting children in conflict with the law. Practice is trauma-informed, relationship-based and focused on avoiding unnecessary escalation into formal justice processes, while maintaining appropriate oversight of risk, public protection and community safety.

There is encouraging evidence of the impact of early diversionary approaches. During 2025/26, the **Awareness Programme**, delivered in partnership with Barnardo's, supported **14** young people across four programmes. Ten participants did not reoffend and all participants were subsequently closed to Children's and Families Social Work. While this is a relatively small cohort, the outcomes provide positive evidence of the potential contribution of timely and proportionate diversionary intervention.

This sits alongside a wider positive trend in referrals to the Children's Reporter. During 2025/26, **93 children** were referred, **24% fewer** than in the previous year. The **proportion of referrals relating to offence grounds has also reduced** from 26% in 2023/24 to 23% in 2024/25 and 19% in 2025/26. These trends are encouraging and consistent with the direction of the Whole System Approach, reflecting activity across the wider children's services partnership.

Care and Protection: Strategic Priorities 2026/27:

- **Strengthen integrated, rights-based protection and support:** Embed GIRFEC, Bairns' Hoose Standards and trauma-informed practice, strengthening multi-agency pathways, Child's Planning and the participation of children and families.
- **Strengthen responses to risk and emerging harm:** Further develop multi-agency responses to domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and exploitation, and children in conflict with the law, including implementation of Safe & Together and the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- **Embed learning and workforce improvement:** Ensure learning from audit, learning reviews, Bairns' Hoose Tests of Change and children's lived experience translates into sustained improvements in frontline practice, supported by reflective supervision, workforce development and practitioner wellbeing.

- **Strengthen performance, outcomes and assurance:** Develop the multi-agency performance and quality assurance framework, maintaining scrutiny of IRD and SCIM practice while strengthening evidence of children's experiences, outcomes, service quality, risk and the sustained impact of intervention.

Together, these priorities will strengthen assurance that children at risk of harm receive timely, coordinated and rights-based responses, with learning, performance evidence and children's experiences driving continuous improvement across the partnership.

5.1.5 Delivering on The Promise

During 2025/26, Children's Services continued to progress the ambitions of The Promise through prevention and early intervention, family-based care, timely permanence, relationship-based practice and improved support for care-experienced young people into adulthood.

Care Experienced Children and Young People: Placement profile

As at **31 March 2026**, there were **209** care experienced children and young people in Clackmannanshire, compared with 217 in March 2025. This represents a reduction of eight children, or **3.7%**, indicating that the overall population remained relatively stable.

The placement profile continued to be strongly weighted towards family and community-based care. Of the 209 children and young people, **26 (12.4%) were living at home** and **84 (40.2%) were in kinship care**, making kinship care the largest single placement category. The number in kinship care increased from 77 in 2025 to 84 in 2026, an increase of seven children, or **9.1%**. As a proportion of the total care experienced population, kinship care increased from **35.5% to 40.2%**, a rise of 4.7 percentage points.

A further **77 children (36.8%) were in foster care**, comprising **26 (12.4%)** in local authority foster care and **51 (24.4%)** with external foster care providers. Local authority foster placements increased from 23 in 2025 to 26 in 2026, an increase of **13%**. However, **external provision continued to account for around two-thirds of all foster placements**, demonstrating sustained reliance on purchased foster care.

Residential care accounted for **20 children and young people (9.6%)**, including four in the local authority children's house, nine in other residential placements and seven in residential schools. A further two children were recorded in other community placements.

Overall, **189 children and young people, or 90.4%**, were living in community-based settings, including at home, in kinship care, in foster care or in other community placements. The remaining 20 children, or 9.6%, were in residential settings.

As at 31 March 2026, **75 looked after children were placed outside Clackmannanshire**, an increase of two children, or 2.7%, from 73 in 2025. However, this remained below the 79 recorded in 2024 and 88 in 2023, representing an **overall reduction of 14.8% since 2023**.

Provisional local data ² recorded **219** care-experienced children and young people **at 31 July 2026**, broadly unchanged from 217 in 2025. This was 4.3% higher than in 2024 but remained 2.7% below the 2023 level. The provisional **local rate of 22.1 per 1,000 children aged 0–17** remained substantially above the latest published Scottish rate of 11.8 per 1,000 in 2025, although direct comparison is limited by the different reporting years and the provisional status of the local data. During 2025/26, **67 children entered care**, down from 89 in the previous year, a **reduction of 24.7%**. This indicates fewer new entries to care while the overall care-experienced population remained broadly stable.

² Data note: The July 2026 local figures are drawn from the CLAS database and remain provisional, subject to validation and submission to the Scottish Government. The latest published national comparator relates to 31 July 2025.

The high proportion of children supported in family and community settings, with **90%** of sibling groups placed together, and the longer-term reduction in outwith-authority placements are positive; however, the recent increase in outwith-area placements and continued reliance on external provision require ongoing scrutiny and oversight, alongside action to strengthen kinship support and sustainable local fostering and residential capacity.

Regulated Services and Residential Care

The January 2026 inspection of Woodside Children's House evaluated children and young people's safety, relationships and outcomes as Good, while leadership capacity and resources were evaluated as Adequate. All previous areas for improvement had been met. The inspection identified strengths in trauma-informed practice, support for young people and families, and the contribution of Dyadic Developmental Practice to relationships and care. Further improvement is required in quality assurance, supervision and workforce development.

Participation in the **Promise in Partnership Programme** is supporting the development of a more relational and reflective approach to improvement. This complements the Council's exploration of future residential-care models, including work with the Vardy Foundation, although this remains at the discovery stage and will require evaluation as it develops.

The appointment of a **Promise Support Worker** has increased opportunities for young people at Woodside to access more individualised education, training and wellbeing activities. During 2026/27, the **All About Me digital platform** will be introduced and evaluated to strengthen young people's participation in care planning and their ownership of decisions affecting their lives.

The service will also progress the redesign of residential provision, with a focus on the sustainability and quality of care, community inclusion and ensuring that young people have access to opportunities comparable with those of their peers.

Family-Based Care and Permanence

The Family Connections Team, comprising fostering, adoption and continuing-care services, was evaluated as Good or Very Good across key areas following inspection in September 2025. Continued investment in attachment-led and trauma-informed approaches has strengthened support to foster, kinship and adoptive families, with an emphasis on maintaining relationships, keeping siblings together and enabling children to remain within their families and communities wherever this is safe and appropriate.

Clackmannanshire's **All About Me Days** have been recognised in national guidance as effective permanence practice. These meetings bring carers and professionals together to develop a shared understanding of a child's history, experiences, trauma and future needs, strengthening the quality of permanence decision-making.

However, **family-based care capacity has reduced**. At 31 March 2026, Clackmannanshire had **16** registered foster-care households (28 individual foster carers), representing a **15% reduction** in both households and carers. **No new foster carers were approved during the reporting year**. Recruitment, retention and succession planning therefore remain significant service priorities.

These local pressures reflect the wider national position. In June 2026, all 32 Scottish Chief Social Work Officers issued a joint statement through Social Work Scotland, warning of an acute shortage of suitable homes and carers for children unable to remain with their families. The statement described the capacity of the care system as saturated, highlighted the increased risks created by insufficient placement choice and called for urgent action by national and local government.

Local correspondence following the statement confirmed that placement shortages continued to be discussed collectively by Chief Social Work Officers and that the exceptional pressures were affecting professional decision-making across the system. It also recorded planned engagement involving Social Work

Scotland, COSLA, the emerging national social work arrangements and the Scottish Government's Children and Families Directorate. Subsequent correspondence identified that Clackmannanshire's experience was likely to be reflected across other authorities and that a ministerial roundtable was being convened to agree actions in response to the placement crisis.

The local data is consistent with these national concerns. During 2025/26, **81** children experienced **external foster-care placements** and **17** experienced **external residential placements**. Overall external placements reduced by 6.7%, from 105 to 98, but this did not produce a corresponding reduction in expenditure because of increasing reliance on higher-cost residential provision.

Unplanned admissions to foster care reduced from 3.2% to 1.2%, while unplanned residential admissions increased from 7.1% to 17.6%. This indicates a growing risk that reduced foster-care availability and increasing complexity of need are narrowing placement choice and contributing to crisis-led residential admissions.

Permanence Planning

The Infant Assessment Team continued to lead early permanence planning, particularly where adoption was identified as the legal route. Practice has been informed by research, national learning and child-centred approaches, including the recognised use of All About Me Days.

However, delays in permanence planning were experienced due to workforce recruitment, retention and experience pressures, together with limited capacity for paediatric permanence assessments across Forth Valley. These delays create risks of drift, uncertainty and disrupted attachments for children.

During 2026/27, improvement activity will focus on strengthening practitioner knowledge, tracking permanence timescales and establishing clearer escalation arrangements where delay arises. Work will also progress to develop a compassionate pathway for parents who have experienced repeated permanence or adoption proceedings, recognising the impact of intergenerational and repeated trauma.

Aftercare and Continuing Care

Support for care-experienced young people strengthened during 2025/26. At 31 March 2026, **49 young people** were receiving aftercare, a **17% increase** from 42 in 2025, while **Pathway Review completion improved from 58% to 77%.** **Continuing care also increased, with 13 young people remaining in placements** at July 2026 compared with seven in 2025. This demonstrates increased use of arrangements that enable eligible young people to remain in their care placements beyond school-leaving age.

These trends provide positive assurance regarding access to support through the transition to adulthood. Continued CSWO oversight will focus on improving Pathway Review completion and assuring the quality and impact of pathway planning, including outcomes for young people.

Throughcare and aftercare arrangements were strengthened through additional leadership capacity and the co-production of a **new 15+ assessment and planning framework.** The framework brings GIRFEC assessment, planning and earlier throughcare involvement into a single relational approach, intended to reduce duplication and improve continuity as young people move towards adulthood.

Strengthened partnership working with Housing has also developed to identify housing instability earlier and provide more flexible support where care-experienced young people experience difficulty maintaining tenancies. Preparation continued for the Care Leavers Payment and for changes to care and care-experience legislation, alongside improved communication with young people about their rights, entitlements and access to support.

Implementation and evaluation of the 15+ framework during 2026/27 will provide clearer evidence of its impact on continuity of relationships, housing stability, wellbeing and young people's transitions into adulthood.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

Independent Reviewing Officers continued to provide scrutiny of care planning and review arrangements, with particular attention given to children looked after at home and young people preparing to leave care. Reduced staffing capacity during the year limited the wider programme of planned audit activity.

Once staffing is restored, priorities will include implementing the 15+ framework, reinstating targeted audit and strengthening assurance regarding the quality of planning and review for children looked after at home and in residential care. Workforce development will also focus on assessment, report writing and outcome-focused planning.

Delivering on The Promise: Strategic Priorities 2026/27

- **Prevention and Keeping Families Together:** Strengthen early help and whole-family support to prevent avoidable escalation and enable children to remain safely at home or within their wider family networks wherever possible.
- **Placement Sufficiency and Family-Based Care:** Increase local care capacity through foster-carer recruitment and retention, kinship support and development of family and community-based alternatives, reducing reliance on external and crisis-led residential placements.
- **Permanence, Stability and Transitions:** Reduce drift, delay and instability through stronger permanence planning, placement matching and escalation arrangements, alongside earlier and more coordinated support for care-experienced young people transitioning into adulthood.
- **Relationships, Rights and Participation:** Strengthen relational and rights-based practice, ensuring children and young people meaningfully influence their care and plans, maintain important sibling, family and community relationships, and experience continuity wherever possible.
- **Performance, Quality and Assurance:** Strengthen quality assurance and outcome reporting across care and permanence services, with systematic oversight of entry to care, placement sufficiency and stability, unplanned admissions, external provision, permanence timescales, costs and longer-term outcomes for care-experienced children and young people.

Together, these priorities will support delivery of The Promise by strengthening prevention and family-based support, increasing local placement capacity and improving stability, permanence and outcomes for care-experienced children and young people.

Summary of Key Children's Services Achievements 2025/26

During 2025/26, Children's Services continued to progress towards a more preventative, family-led, rights-based and trauma-informed system. Key achievements included:

- **Earlier support:** Of the 1,002 referrals received by the Early Help Team, 92% did not progress to locality social work teams, enabling many families to receive support without escalation to statutory intervention.
- **Family-led solutions:** Family Group Decision Making produced 42 family plans, supporting kinship options, family reunification and safe family-time arrangements.
- **Reduced entry to care:** 67 children entered care, 24.7% fewer than in the previous year, supporting the strategic focus on keeping children safely within their families wherever possible.
- **Family and community connections:** 76% of care-experienced children and young people lived in community settings, with 90% of sibling groups remaining together.
- **Stronger protection practice:** More than 90% of Joint Investigative Interviews were delivered through the Scottish Child Interview Model, supported by routine multi-agency quality assurance.

- **Bairns' Hoose progressed:** Tests of Change strengthened trauma-informed practice, communication support and workforce learning, with children and young people directly influencing service development.
- **Positive diversionary outcomes:** Early intervention supported young people away from further offending, alongside a reduction in the proportion of Children's Reporter referrals relating to offence grounds.
- **Improved permanence and participation:** Child-centred permanence practice received national recognition, while children and young people increasingly influenced their plans and service development.
- **Support for children with disabilities improved:** More consistent assessment and resource allocation were introduced, alongside increased personalised and community-based support and strengthened transition planning.

Overall, these achievements demonstrate continued progress towards a more preventative, family-led, rights-based and trauma-informed children's services system, with stronger multi-agency assurance and a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and families.

CSWO assurance – Children's Services

The CSWO is assured that Children's Services has established arrangements to support the effective discharge of statutory responsibilities and to promote the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people. Evidence from 2025/26 demonstrates strengths in early intervention and whole-family support, family-based and stable care, child protection practice, support for children with disabilities, youth justice prevention and diversion, and increasingly systematic multi-agency quality assurance and improvement. This assurance is qualified by continuing pressures arising from increasing complexity of need, service and provider capacity, placement sufficiency, permanence and transitions, together with the need to strengthen evidence of sustained outcomes.

Particular professional oversight will therefore continue in relation to timely access to support, placement sufficiency and family-based care, permanence planning, disability provision and transitions, implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, and assurance that learning and improvement activity are resulting in demonstrable and sustained improvements in outcomes for children, young people and families.

5.2 Justice Services

During 2025/26, Justice Services maintained effective statutory and public protection delivery while strengthening early intervention, rehabilitation, community-based alternatives to custody and throughcare. Increased use of Bail Supervision and Diversion, purposeful Unpaid Work, significant recovery in Prison-Based Social Work and robust MAPPA arrangements demonstrate a resilient, partnership-based approach focused on positive change and safer communities.

5.2.1 Community Justice Team

During 2025/26, Clackmannanshire Justice Services continued to deliver a strong community-based approach focused on rehabilitation, prevention, reducing the risk of reoffending and supporting individuals to achieve greater stability within their communities.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the service completed **241 Justice Social Work Reports**, resulting in **146 Community Payback Orders** (CPOs). Although report and order volumes declined for a second consecutive year, Justice Social Work maintained its focus on providing high-quality, person-centred assessment and intervention, ensuring that recommendations to the Courts reflected assessed risk, need and opportunities for rehabilitation.

A key area of development was the continued use of community-based interventions as alternatives to remand and short-term custody. During the year, **224 Bail Supervision Assessments** were completed, with **40 individuals commencing Bail Supervision Orders**. The substantial level of assessment activity reflected implementation of the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act and local arrangements between Justice Social Work and the Courts to extend consideration of bail supervision to most individuals held within court custody suites, subject to consent. This strengthened opportunities for earlier assessment and intervention, helping eligible individuals to remain safely in the community while receiving support to comply with bail conditions and address identified needs.

Diversion from Prosecution remained an important early-intervention pathway, with 67 assessments completed and 32 individuals accessing support during 2025/26. By intervening at an earlier stage, Diversion provides an opportunity to address the circumstances contributing to offending behaviour without unnecessary escalation through the justice system. Alongside Bail Supervision, this reflects an increasing emphasis on proportionate, preventative and individually tailored responses.

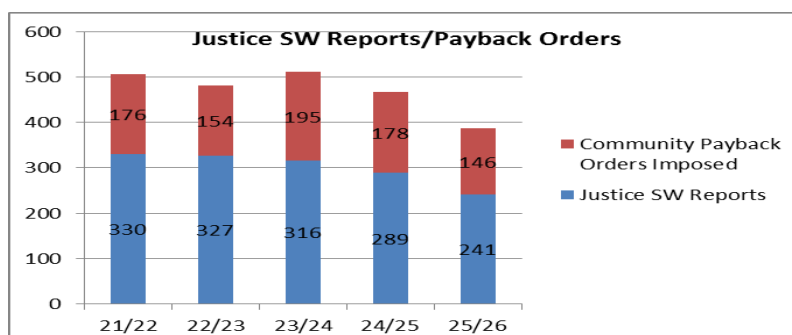
Partnership working remained central to achieving these outcomes. Through the Community Justice Partnership, Court User Groups and the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership, Justice Services continued to strengthen links between statutory and community partners. The ongoing partnership with SACRO and its Women's Worker Service provided additional capacity for court-mandated interventions associated with the Caledonian Programme alongside early-intervention and support provision. This broadened the range of community-based responses available to the Courts and strengthened the service's ability to respond to individual circumstances and needs.

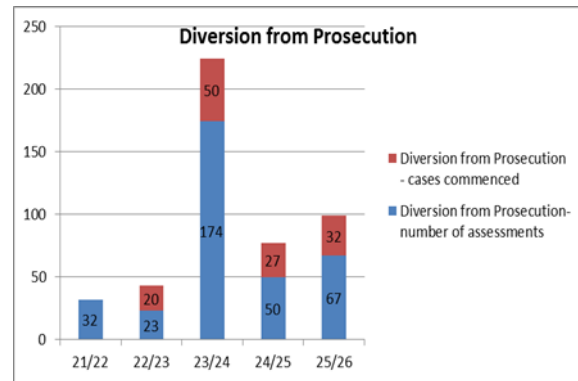
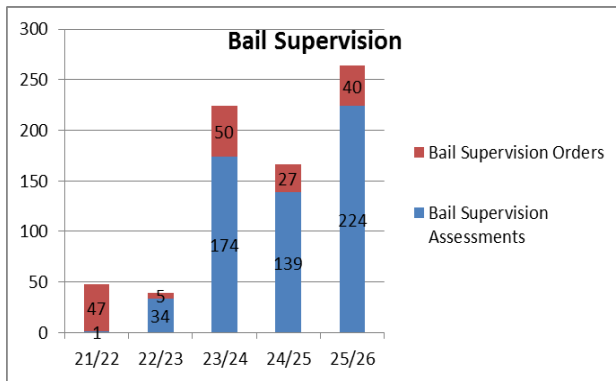
Collaboration with Health, Education, Employability Services, Police Scotland, Children's Services and Adult Social Services further supported a whole-system approach. This is particularly important where offending behaviour is associated with wider social and personal needs, enabling Justice Social Work intervention to connect individuals with wider support rather than responding to offending behaviour in isolation.

Impact and outcomes

The 2025/26 activity demonstrates a continued shift towards earlier, proportionate and community-based intervention:

- 224 Bail Supervision Assessments, widening opportunities for alternatives to remand and earlier support;
- 40 people commenced Bail Supervision, enabling individuals assessed as suitable to remain in the community subject to appropriate oversight and support;
- 67 Diversion from Prosecution Assessments, with 32 people accessing intervention, creating opportunities to address needs without further progression through the justice system;
- 146 Community Payback Orders, providing structured community-based sentencing and opportunities for rehabilitation; and
- Strengthened multi-agency and commissioned-service pathways, enhancing the range of support available to address individual needs and promote positive change.





Justice Services continue to discharge their statutory responsibilities with a clear focus on public protection, effective risk management, rehabilitation and prevention. The continued development of Bail Supervision, Diversion and partnership-based interventions demonstrates progress towards earlier and more proportionate community-based responses. The reduction in Justice Social Work Reports and Community Payback Orders for a second consecutive year will require continued oversight, alongside strengthened outcome measurement to demonstrate the longer-term impact of interventions on successful completion, reduced justice-system involvement and reoffending.

5.2.2 Unpaid Work Team

During 2025/26, the Unpaid Work Team continued to deliver visible community benefit while supporting reparation, rehabilitation and the effective delivery of Community Payback Orders. Building on more than **20,000 hours of unpaid work delivered in the previous reporting period**, the service maintained a strong focus on ensuring that unpaid work is purposeful, responsive to local priorities and provides meaningful opportunities for individuals to contribute positively to their communities.

Partnership working with community organisations, local groups and Council services strengthened the range and impact of unpaid work opportunities. Projects delivered tangible improvements across Clackmannanshire, including environmental and grounds improvements, maintenance of paths and watercourses, construction and refurbishment of community resources, and support to community organisations and family services. The team also responded to severe weather events by helping to clear fallen trees and restore safe access routes, demonstrating the flexibility of the service in responding directly to community need.

These projects provide more than completion of court-ordered hours. They enable individuals to make meaningful reparation, establish positive routines, contribute to their communities and engage in purposeful activity, while delivering improvements that are directly visible to local people. Increased promotion of the work through Council communication channels and social media has further improved the visibility of Community Payback, with positive public feedback helping to demonstrate the contribution community-based justice can make locally. The service has also attracted wider interest, including recognition by Community Justice Scotland and engagement from the Scottish Government.

A full review of Unpaid Work provision commenced during the year, incorporating feedback from people undertaking unpaid work, Justice Staff, partners and community beneficiaries. This will inform future service development, with priorities including stronger links with employability and education, increased opportunities for skills development and accreditation, expanded community partnerships and sufficient operational capacity to respond to demand.

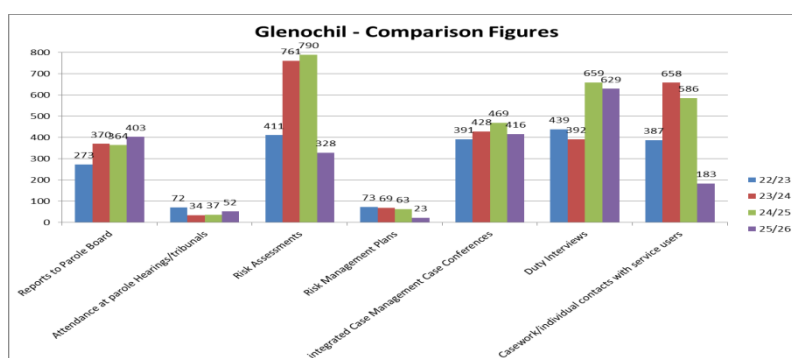
Unpaid Work continues to support the effective delivery of Community Payback Orders, balancing reparation, rehabilitation and public protection while delivering tangible benefits for local communities. Further strengthening of outcome measurement will provide clearer evidence of the longer-term impact for individuals and communities, including skills development, progression and successful completion of orders.

5.2.3 Glenochil Prison-Based Social Work Team (PBSW)

During 2025/26, the Glenochil **Prison-Based Social Work Team** made **significant progress in restoring service capacity**, with the previous backlog almost fully addressed by April 2026, while maintaining its contribution to public protection, statutory risk management and effective release planning.

Despite increasing prison population pressures and complexity of need, the team completed **413** Parole Board reports, **309** accredited risk assessments and **27** risk management plans, attended **53** Parole Board Oral Hearings and **11** MAPPA meetings, and responded to **587** duty referrals and **345** professional consultations. This activity supported timely assessment, multi-agency risk management and informed decision-making for individuals progressing through and from custody.

Additional Scottish Government funding will increase social work, management and business support capacity, enabling the service to move from recovery towards strengthened specialist practice, earlier intervention and improved throughcare. Priorities include enhanced work with people presenting higher levels of risk and complexity, closer collaboration with NHS colleagues, improved prisoner induction and greater access to voluntary throughcare.



The team has made significant progress in restoring service capacity while maintaining its core public protection responsibilities. Rising demand and increasing complexity remain key pressures, requiring continued oversight to ensure additional investment translates into timely intervention, robust risk management, effective throughcare and improved outcomes for individuals and communities.

5.2.4 Community Justice Partnership

During 2025/26, the Community Justice Partnership (CJP) continued to strengthen the local whole-system approach to prevention, community-based justice and rehabilitation, providing an important strategic framework through which Justice Services and partners can improve outcomes for individuals and communities.

The Partnership's work was closely aligned with operational Justice Services priorities. This included supporting the sustained use of Bail Supervision as an alternative to remand, co-funding an Addiction Recovery Worker within Justice Services, strengthening pre-release planning with the national Upside Throughcare Service, and supporting employability pathways for people undertaking unpaid work or preparing for release. Together, these approaches strengthen opportunities for earlier intervention, continuity of support and addressing needs associated with offending.

The CJP also supported continuous improvement through the review of Unpaid Work provision, ensuring that future development is informed by feedback from individuals undertaking unpaid work, staff, partners and community beneficiaries. Continued delivery of Naloxone training further supports a harm-reduction approach for people affected by substance use.

A significant development has been the embedding of the Lived Experience Panel, supported by the Resilience Learning Partnership. The Panel contributes directly to CJP decision-making, service development and strategic priorities, strengthening the influence of people with lived experience on the

design and improvement of local justice services. Its approach has been recognised as an example of good practice by Community Justice Scotland.

The Partnership's shared leadership model, involving Justice Services, Police Scotland, Clackmannanshire & Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership and the Resilience Learning Partnership, continues to support collective ownership of community justice priorities and stronger alignment across local services.

The Community Justice Partnership provides an effective strategic framework supporting earlier intervention, alternatives to custody, rehabilitation, harm reduction and improved throughcare. Its close alignment with Justice Services strengthens the whole-system response to offending, with continued development of outcome measures required to demonstrate the collective and longer-term impact for individuals and communities.

5.2.5 Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

During 2025/26, Clackmannanshire Council continued to play a central role in the Forth Valley Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), working with Falkirk and Stirling Councils, Police Scotland, NHS Forth Valley, the Scottish Prison Service and the State Hospital to support effective assessment, management and reduction of risk to the public.

Robust multi-agency governance and quality assurance remained central to the arrangements. Performance monitoring, case file audits and reviews of further offending identified consistent evidence of effective routine risk management and strong partnership working, with learning incorporated into improvement activity and the MAPPA Risk Register. Examples of impact included intensive multi-agency planning across geographical boundaries, implementation of a 24/7 support package prior to release to reduce community risk, and proactive intelligence-sharing between the Scottish Prison Service and Police Scotland that enabled the detection and prevention of criminal activity.

MAPPA activity remained closely aligned with wider Justice Services through risk assessment, release planning, prison-based social work and community supervision, supporting continuity of risk management as individuals move through and from custody. Although Clackmannanshire case numbers remained relatively stable, increasing MAPPA demand across Forth Valley placed additional pressure on capacity. Partners responded through additional investment in administrative capacity, supporting the continued safe and effective delivery of the arrangements.

Preparation is also underway for the national Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS), alongside partnership work to strengthen arrangements for Foreign National Offenders. Ensuring sufficient capacity to respond to increasing demand and complexity remains a priority for 2026/27.

Clackmannanshire MAPPA position at 31 March 2026

MAPPA category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Category 1: Registered Sex Offenders*	59	0	0	59
Category 2: Restricted Patients**	1	2	0	3
Category 3: Other Risk of Serious Harm*	0	0	0	0
Total	60	2	0	62

* CAT 1 and CAT 3 figures are cases being managed by FV MAPPA – both in community and custody

** RP figures are cases living in the community and hospital (both local and national)

The year-end position shows that the majority of individuals were managed at Level 1, consistent with the MAPPA principle that individuals should be managed at the lowest level proportionate to delivering an effective risk management plan. Scottish Government guidance defines Level 1 as Routine Risk Management, Level 2 as Multi-Agency Risk Management and Level 3 as Multi-Agency Public Protection Panels. No Category 3 cases were recorded at 31 March 2026.

Forth Valley MAPPA continues to provide a robust multi-agency framework for public protection, proportionate risk management and effective information-sharing. Quality assurance provides evidence of effective practice despite increasing demand. Continued oversight of capacity, emerging complexity and implementation of MAPPS will be required to maintain effective public protection arrangements and ensure identified learning translates into sustained service improvement.

5.2.6 Justice Services funding and sustainability

Justice Services continued to strengthen early intervention, rehabilitation and community-based alternatives to custody, aligned with the Scottish Government's national direction for community justice. The 2026/27 Scottish Budget provides £102.3 million for community justice services and £86.5 million for justice social work.

However, Clackmannanshire's 2026/27 Section 27 allocation reduced by £24,156, alongside the four-year funding reduction affecting local Caledonian provision. This creates a significant sustainability risk for established preventative provision, requiring continued oversight to protect effective early intervention, rehabilitation and community-based responses while ensuring resources remain targeted to local need.

Key Justice Service's achievements 2025/26

- Expanded early intervention and community-based responses, with 224 Bail Supervision Assessments and 67 Diversion from Prosecution Assessments supporting earlier, proportionate intervention and alternatives to custody.
- Maintained effective community justice and rehabilitation, including 146 Community Payback Orders and purposeful Unpaid Work delivering visible community benefit, reparation and opportunities for positive change.
- Restored Prison-Based Social Work capacity while maintaining public protection, substantially addressing the Glenochil service backlog alongside significant statutory risk assessment, Parole Board and release-planning activity.
- Strengthened whole-system working and throughcare, aligning Justice Services and the Community Justice Partnership through addiction recovery, employability, pre-release support and lived experience informing service improvement.
- Maintained robust multi-agency public protection, with MAPPA quality assurance demonstrating effective risk management, coordinated partnership working and information-sharing in support of safer communities.

Strategic priorities for 2026/27

Building on progress during 2025/26, Justice Services will focus on:

- Strengthening prevention and community-based responses, further developing Bail Supervision, Diversion from Prosecution and Community Payback to support earlier, proportionate intervention and appropriate alternatives to custody.
- Improving rehabilitation and sustainable outcomes, strengthening links between Unpaid Work, employability, education, skills development and accreditation to support positive progression while delivering meaningful reparation and community benefit.
- Strengthening throughcare and responses to complex need, using increased Prison-Based Social Work capacity to enhance specialist intervention, release planning, health collaboration, prisoner induction and access to voluntary throughcare.
- Maintaining robust public protection and risk management, ensuring MAPPA and wider multi-agency arrangements remain effective and resilient in responding to increasing demand and complexity, alongside preparation for MAPPS.
- Strengthening evidence of impact and lived experience, developing outcome measurement across Justice Services and embedding lived experience and stakeholder feedback within service improvement.

Collectively, these priorities will support continued delivery of effective, proportionate and outcome-focused Justice Services, maintaining public protection while strengthening prevention, rehabilitation, throughcare and opportunities for sustained positive change.

CSWO assurance – Justice Services

The CSWO is assured that Justice Services continue to discharge their statutory and public protection responsibilities effectively. Strong multi-agency risk management, expanded early intervention and community-based responses, recovery in Prison-Based Social Work and effective MAPPA arrangements provide positive evidence of a resilient service focused on rehabilitation, positive change and safer communities.

The reduction in local Justice and Caledonian funding, alongside increasing demand and complexity, presents a significant but actively managed sustainability risk. Continued oversight will focus on protecting effective preventative provision, maintaining safe and effective statutory services and strengthening evidence of longer-term outcomes for individuals and communities.

5.3 Adult Services: Clackmannanshire & Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) serves a combined population of approximately 145,650, comprising 51,610 people in Clackmannanshire and 94,040 in Stirling, based on the latest National Records of Scotland mid-2025 population estimates.

5.3.1 Governance, Strategic Leadership and Transformation

Adult Social Work and Social Care services in Clackmannanshire are delivered through the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). Clackmannanshire Council plays a key leadership role through its representation on the Integration Joint Board (IJB), which brings together Elected Members, NHS Board representatives, Third Sector partners, service users, unpaid carers, professional advisers and statutory officers, including the Chief Social Work Officer.

The IJB is responsible for the strategic planning and commissioning of delegated health and social care services, supported by governance arrangements that provide oversight of performance, finance, risk, quality and strategic planning. These arrangements ensure that the voices of people who use services and unpaid carers are reflected in decision-making and service development.

The HSCP continues to progress an ambitious programme of transformation through its Transforming Care Programme, aligned to the **Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023–2033**. This programme is focused on modernising services, redesigning models of care and support, strengthening community-based provision, and ensuring compliance with key legislative duties, including Self-directed Support and carers' rights.

As Scotland's only HSCP operating across two local authorities, the Partnership promotes a "Once for Clackmannanshire and Stirling" approach, supporting greater consistency, equity and sustainability in service delivery. This is further strengthened through hosted responsibility for Specialist Mental Health and Learning Disability Services across Forth Valley, enabling a coordinated and integrated approach to meeting the needs of local communities.

5.3.2 Adult Services Performance

Adult Services continues to operate within a challenging environment of rising demand, increasing complexity, workforce pressures and financial constraint. Services have prioritised safe and timely support for people at greatest risk, although these pressures have constrained capacity for prevention, early intervention and timely review.

The **Right Care, Right Time** programme is the principal framework for service improvement, providing a more consistent and sustainable approach to managing demand, aligning resources with assessed need and ensuring support remains safe, proportionate and outcome focused. Supported by strengthened social work

leadership and partnership working, the programme aims to improve people's experience of care, strengthen workforce wellbeing and create greater capacity for earlier intervention and self-management.

5.3.3 Multidisciplinary Team Meetings

Multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings are a key element of the Adult Social Care Front Door redesign, bringing professional expertise together earlier to support timely, coordinated and proportionate responses. The approach aims to reduce duplication, strengthen community-based solutions and ensure people are directed to the right support at the right time, helping to prevent unnecessary escalation into statutory services. Following challenges with the previous model, arrangements have been strengthened and continue to be developed with partners to ensure the MDT is sustainable, effectively manages demand and risk, and delivers improved outcomes for people.

5.3.4 Development of the Adult Social Care Front Door (Early Intervention Team)

The Adult Social Care Front Door received **9,668 calls and contacts** during 2025/26, demonstrating sustained demand and the need for a more timely, consistent and proportionate initial response. The new Early Intervention Team, aligned with the Right Care, Right Time programme, will provide triage, information and signposting, proportionate assessment and short-term intervention of up to six weeks.

The intended impact is to resolve needs earlier, prevent unnecessary progression to long-term social work involvement and reduce waiting lists, while creating capacity within locality and review teams for complex, statutory and relationship-based work. Greater use of community, third-sector and informal support will promote independence, self-management, choice and control, consistent with Self-directed Support principles. Revised standard operating procedures will support clearer responsibilities, more consistent practice and effective use of available resources.

	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26
Total number of calls/ contacts	736	757	765	805	914	852	845	733	832	865	704	860

5.3.5 Self-directed support implementation

Self-directed Support (SDS) remains central to delivering personalised social care, enabling people to exercise greater choice, control and independence over how their support needs and outcomes are met. While most people continue to receive support through Option 3, work is underway to strengthen evidence that individuals are making informed choices and can access their preferred SDS option. Improved documentation will capture people's experience of SDS, providing clearer evidence of choice, outcomes and any barriers to accessing alternative options, and informing service improvement.

The SDS Lived Experience Group continues to ensure the voices of supported people, unpaid carers and personal assistants influence service development. Priorities include improving accessible information, strengthening the Social Work front door and supporting transitions for young people. Work is also progressing to broaden participation and demonstrate more clearly how lived experience influences decisions and service change.

5.3.6 Contracted Care Packages

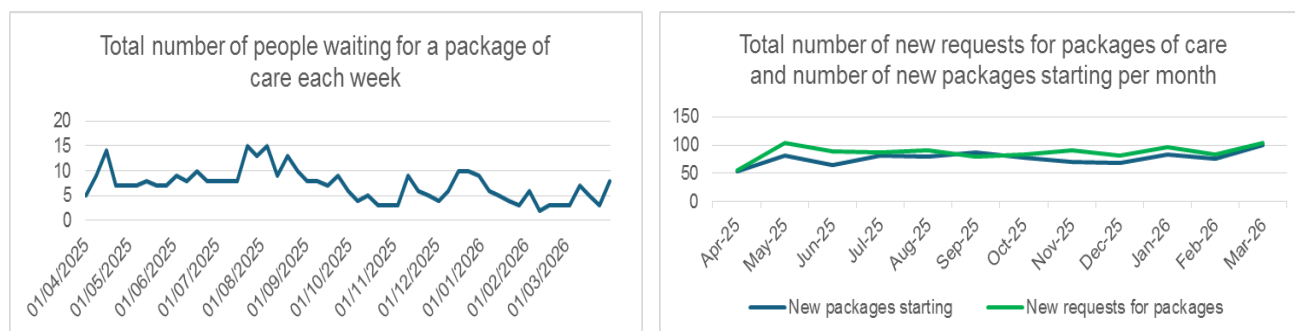
A continued focus on quality, Best Value and effective commissioning has strengthened access to care at home across Stirling and Clackmannanshire. By January 2026, over 96% of care packages were allocated to providers in Groups A and B, enabling available resources to support more people while maintaining quality standards.

Performance data demonstrates a responsive and sustainable care-at-home system. Throughout the year, the number of people waiting for a new care package remained low and reduced further from September,

when waiting numbers were in single figures in almost every month. This indicates that assessed need is being translated into support quickly, minimising delays for people who require care to remain safely at home.

The close alignment between the number of new care packages requested and those commencing each month provides further evidence that services are keeping pace with demand. Importantly, there has been no corresponding growth in waiting lists despite ongoing demand, demonstrating effective assessment, care planning, commissioning and decision-making arrangements.

These trends are delivering tangible benefits for individuals and communities. Timely access to care and support helps people maintain independence, reduces the risk of needs escalating, supports unpaid carers and enables more people to remain safely in their own homes for longer. The data provides positive evidence that the commissioned care market is both responsive to demand and delivering Best Value, while improving outcomes for people who require support.



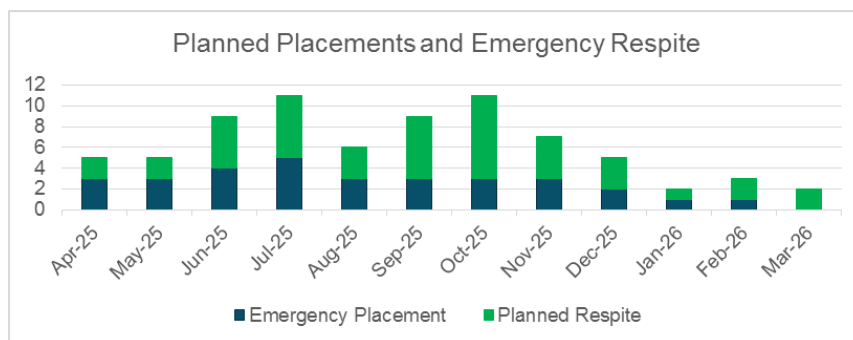
5.3.7 Planned Approaches to Supporting Carers

Performance data demonstrates the positive impact of a preventative approach to supporting unpaid carers. Planned respite continues to account for the vast majority of respite provision, with emergency respite remaining consistently low throughout the year and almost absent during Quarter 4. This indicates that carers' needs are increasingly being identified and addressed through early assessment, anticipatory support planning and timely intervention, reducing the likelihood of caring arrangements reaching crisis point.

The predominance of planned respite is a key indicator of carer wellbeing and resilience. By enabling carers to access support and breaks in a planned and predictable way, services help carers maintain their physical and emotional wellbeing, sustain their caring role and balance caring responsibilities with other aspects of their lives. This reduces stress, prevents burnout and strengthens the resilience of both carers and the people they support.

The outcomes for individuals and families are significant. Effective preventative support allows caring relationships to be sustained for longer, helping people remain safely at home and within their communities while avoiding unnecessary escalation to emergency interventions, hospital admission or unplanned care arrangements. The low reliance on emergency respite suggests that support is being provided at the right time, reducing risk and promoting stability for carers and those they care for.

These trends align with what carers consistently tell us matters most: receiving timely support, having opportunities to maintain their own wellbeing and being able to continue caring with confidence. The data provides positive evidence that investment in early intervention and preventative support is improving outcomes, sustaining caring relationships and reducing the need for crisis responses.

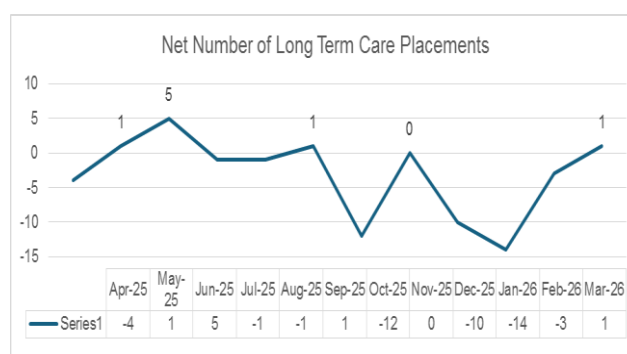
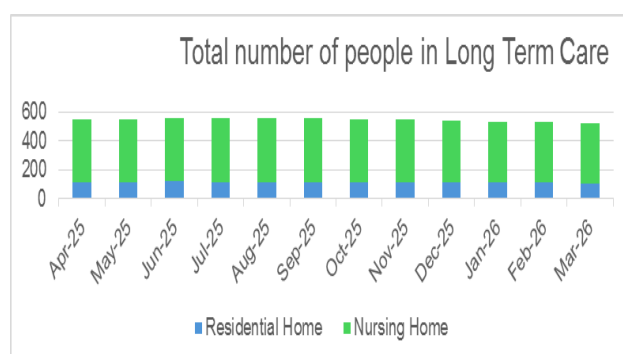


5.3.8 Long Term Care

Strengthened governance and decision-making arrangements have supported a continued focus on ensuring that long-term residential care is only used where it is the most appropriate way of meeting an individual's assessed needs and outcomes. Assessments and support plans are required to demonstrate that community-based alternatives, strengths and existing supports have been fully explored before long-term care is considered.

Performance data shows a gradual reduction in care home occupancy since August 2025, alongside a decline in net new long-term placements. These trends suggest that more people are being supported to remain in their own homes and communities through personalised, community-based support, while long-term care is increasingly targeted towards those with the most complex levels of need.

The impact for individuals is significant. Supporting people to remain at home where safe and appropriate helps maintain independence, preserve family and community connections, and achieve outcomes that align with people's preferences. The data also provides positive evidence of a preventative, strengths-based approach that promotes the least restrictive option and reduces reliance on long-term institutional care.



5.3.9 Guardianship

A review of Guardianship arrangements identified inconsistencies in the application of statutory safeguards and highlighted the need for a more robust and standardised approach across the Stirling and Clackmannanshire HSCP. This work has strengthened oversight of current arrangements and informed a recovery plan focused on improving compliance, consistency and assurance.

Performance data demonstrates increasing demand for Guardianship interventions. **Local Authority applications have risen steadily from 13 in 2023–24 to 21 in 2025–26**, while **private applications remain significantly higher** overall. This reflects the growing complexity of need and the increasing importance of ensuring that vulnerable adults have appropriate legal protections and oversight in place.

To address capacity pressures and improve performance, a revised operating model has been agreed, enabling trained Social Care Officers to undertake most Guardianship supervision and review activity under the oversight of Mental Health Officer Team Managers. This will increase review capacity, reduce backlog and support a more consistent approach across the Partnership.

The intended impact is improved protection of vulnerable adults through more timely reviews, stronger oversight of individual circumstances and greater assurance that Guardianship Orders continue to be necessary, proportionate and focused on achieving positive outcomes for the individual.

Key Statistics: Guardianship Applications:

Period	Private	Local Authority
2023–2024	28	13
2024–2025	59	17
2025–2026	32	21

5.3.10 Workforce Development and Service Improvement

Developing a confident, skilled and legally literate workforce remains fundamental to delivering safe, effective and rights-based social work practice. During the year, practitioners across the HSCP, Falkirk and acute services participated in training on the Adults with Incapacity Act, Mental Health Act, Adult Support and Protection legislation and Self-directed Support (SDS).

This investment has strengthened practitioner confidence in applying complex legislation, exercising professional judgement and supporting informed decision-making. Feedback has been consistently positive, with staff reporting increased confidence, accountability and understanding of their statutory responsibilities. Delivering training on a Forth Valley basis has also supported greater consistency of practice across services and geographical areas.

Improving the quality and consistency of Self-directed Support (SDS) implementation remains a key priority. A review of the SDS training programme is underway to strengthen staff understanding of all SDS options and support more confident, strengths-based practice.

A particular focus has been the **SDS: Putting It Into Practice** programme, which has strengthened practitioners' understanding of SDS principles, legal duties and their application in practice. Early feedback indicates increased confidence in supporting informed choice and delivering more personalised, outcome-focused support. Further sessions are planned as part of a wider programme to embed a sustainable and consistent approach to workforce development. The impact of this investment is reflected in improved decision-making, stronger professional accountability and greater assurance that assessments, support planning and statutory interventions are lawful, proportionate and focused on achieving the best outcomes for the people we support.

The SDS Lived Experience Group will continue to shape local development, ensuring that the views of supported people, unpaid carers and personal assistants directly inform service improvement. New assessment and support planning documentation will provide stronger evidence of whether people are able to access their preferred SDS option and achieve the outcomes that matter to them, strengthening assurance around informed choice and personalised support.

The Care at Home Review Team in Stirling has demonstrated the value of a dedicated, strengths-based review function, helping ensure support remains proportionate, outcome-focused and aligned to individual needs. The approach has improved consistency, strengthened governance and enabled more effective use of resources, while supporting people to maximise independence and make greater use of community and informal supports. Building on these positive outcomes, **a dedicated Care at Home Review Team will be established in Clackmannanshire**. This will strengthen a preventative approach across both localities, helping more people remain independent at home for longer while ensuring statutory services are targeted where they add greatest value.

5.3.11 Development of a New Budget Calculation Tool

A key priority for the coming year is the implementation of a new budget calculation tool to strengthen the consistency, transparency and fairness of resource allocation across the HSCP. The current Resource Allocation System has not consistently supported an outcomes-focused, strengths-based approach and has led to variation in budget setting.

The new tool adopts a more person-centred approach, linking indicative budgets directly to assessed needs, agreed outcomes and the cost of support required. Early testing has been positive, with staff reporting improved usability, greater confidence and more consistent decision-making.

Implementation of the new approach will improve alignment with the principles of Self-directed Support, strengthen consistency and oversight in resource allocation, and provide greater assurance that resources are allocated fairly, proportionately and in a way that supports individuals to achieve their desired outcomes.

5.3.12 Alcohol and Drugs Services

Alcohol and drug use continues to be a significant factor in social work involvement, often alongside mental health concerns, homelessness, safeguarding issues and wider health inequalities. The Social Work Substance Use Team, supported by the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP), plays an important role in ensuring that individuals with complex needs receive coordinated, person-centred support that promotes recovery, reduces harm and improves long-term outcomes.

Working within the HSCP locality structure, the team helps people engage with treatment and recovery services, strengthens safeguarding arrangements and supports greater stability for individuals and families. Feedback from people accessing support and partner agencies has been positive, demonstrating the value of integrated social work involvement in addressing the wider impacts of problematic substance use.

The principal risks mirror those identified across Adult Services more broadly, namely increasing complexity of need, workforce capacity and ensuring effective partnership arrangements can respond to rising demand. Recruitment to vacant posts remains a challenge and presents a risk to maintaining service capacity and sustaining preventative, recovery-focused interventions.

In response, priorities for the coming year will focus on strengthening workforce capacity, embedding revised ADP governance arrangements and improving partnership oversight through the development of specialist reference groups. These actions will support a more coordinated response to complex needs, strengthen prevention and recovery pathways, and improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities affected by substance use.

5.3.13 Joint Inspection of Adult Services

The April 2024 Joint Inspection of Adult Services identified improvement priorities across the Clackmannanshire and Stirling HSCP, including more consistent application of Self-Directed Support, strengthened Social Work governance and professional assurance, improved outcomes and performance data, and enhanced workforce development in key areas of legislation.

A comprehensive Improvement Plan has been in place since December 2024, with progress overseen through a dedicated Inspection Steering Group involving the Chief Social Work Officers for both councils. This provides a clear framework for monitoring progress, maintaining professional oversight and strengthening assurance.

A follow-up inspection was undertaken in summer 2026. As the findings had not been published at the time of writing, they cannot be reflected in this report. In the interim, the Partnership continues to progress the 2024 improvement actions through established governance arrangements, with regular oversight and reporting to senior leadership and partnership governance forums.

Continued CSWO involvement in the improvement programme provides professional oversight of progress, with particular focus on Social Work governance, SDS practice, outcomes and workforce capability.

5.3.14 Adult Support and Protection

Demand for Adult Support and Protection (ASP) continued to increase during 2025–26, with **936 referrals**, a **rise of 10.2%** from 849 in 2024–25. Referrals are now 21.9% higher than in 2022–23, indicating sustained growth in safeguarding demand and increasing pressure on Council Officer capacity and the wider multi-agency system.

Reporting year	Clackmannanshire ASP referrals	Annual change
2022–23	768	—
2023–24	687	-10.5%
2024–25	849	+23.6%
2025–26	936	+10.2%

Care homes remained the largest referral source, accounting for **339 referrals (36.2%)**. Work continued to support proportionate and consistent decision making through the review of the ASP Threshold Matrix for Care Homes and the pilot of a Care Occurrence Form, with oversight provided through the Care Home Assurance Review Team.

Physical harm remained the most frequently recorded type of harm, accounting for **51.7% of inquiries**. Harm occurred most commonly within adults’ own homes and care homes, with people affected by physical disability, dementia, mental ill health, age-related frailty and learning disability featuring prominently. This reflects the complexity of safeguarding need across both community and regulated care settings.

There **were 88 ASP Case Conferences**, including 55 Review Case Conferences. The level of review activity indicates a continuing cohort of adults experiencing enduring or fluctuating risk who require sustained multi-agency protection planning and oversight.

Prevention, learning and improvement

The **Self-Neglect and Hoarding Service supported 37 adults through almost 2,000 interventions, achieving a 76% engagement rate**. Its trauma-informed and relationship-based approach contributed to improved safety, wellbeing and housing conditions, while reducing risks associated with fire, homelessness, hospital discharge and crisis intervention.

Quality assurance continued through performance scrutiny, multi-agency audit, learning reviews and workforce development. A new learning resource, developed with the family of an adult at risk following an ASP Learning Review, has strengthened the contribution of lived experience to multi-agency training and reflective practice.

CSWO assurance: Adult Services and Adult Support and Protection

Adult Services continue to support positive outcomes through prevention, early intervention, independence and rights-based practice, with more people supported safely within their homes and communities. Strong multi-agency arrangements remain in place to protect adults at risk.

Key risks relate to increasing demand and complexity, workforce capacity, Guardianship oversight, consistent delivery of Self-directed Support, and limitations in current information systems, particularly in evidencing Adult Support and Protection activity and outcomes.

CSWO assurance is therefore focused on ensuring that statutory duties are delivered safely, consistently and in accordance with individuals’ rights, while strengthening evidence of the quality and impact of intervention. **Priorities for 2026–27 are to:**

- Strengthen Self-directed Support implementation and assurance, with clearer evidence that people are supported to exercise genuine, informed choice and achieve outcomes that matter to them;
- Improve Guardianship oversight, including the timeliness and consistency of statutory supervision and review;
- Embed a consistent Care at Home Review approach across both localities, supporting early intervention, independence and appropriate alternatives to long-term care;
- Maintain effective oversight of Adult Support and Protection, including increasing demand, workforce capacity, statutory decision making and the appropriate use of investigatory powers;
- Implement the replacement social work information system and strengthen the quality, accessibility and reliability of performance and assurance information;
- Strengthen multi-agency quality assurance and audit, demonstrating how learning translates into improved practice, effective protection and better outcomes for adults at risk;
- Further develop preventative and integrated responses to complex need, including self-neglect, hoarding and problematic substance use; and
- Continue to develop a skilled, confident and resilient workforce, equipped to manage increasing complexity, statutory responsibilities and emerging legislative requirements.

5.4 Forth Valley Emergency Social Work Service

The Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provides a critical statutory safety net across Clackmannanshire, Stirling and Falkirk, ensuring timely intervention and protection for children and adults experiencing crisis or significant risk outside normal working hours. The service remained resilient throughout 2025/26, supported by an expanded pool of social workers and Mental Health Officers across the three councils.

Demand from Clackmannanshire increased by 16.2%, from 1,409 referrals in 2024/25 to 1,637 in 2025/26. This was **driven by a 47.1% increase in adult referrals**, while **children's referrals reduced by 13.1%**, demonstrating a significant shift in the profile of out-of-hours demand.

Clackmannanshire referrals	2024/25	2025/26	Change
Children	717 (51%)	623 (38%)	-13.1%
Adults	682 (48%)	1,003 (61%)	+47.1%
Justice	10 (1%)	11 (1%)	+10.0%
Total	1,409	1,637	+16.2%

The EDT continues to provide a responsive and effective statutory safety net, supporting timely protection and risk management. The substantial growth in adult referrals will remain an area of CSWO oversight to ensure workforce resilience and service capacity continues to meet changing levels and patterns of demand.

5.5 Social Services Complaints and Subject Access Requests

During 2025/26, Social Work Services received **42 complaints**, an **increase of 23.5%** from 34 in 2024/25. Of these, 27 (64%) were resolved at Stage 1 and 15 progressed to Stage 2. One complaint was escalated to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Complaints increased in Children's Services from 12 to 16 and in Justice Services from 3 to 7, while Adult Services remained stable at 19.

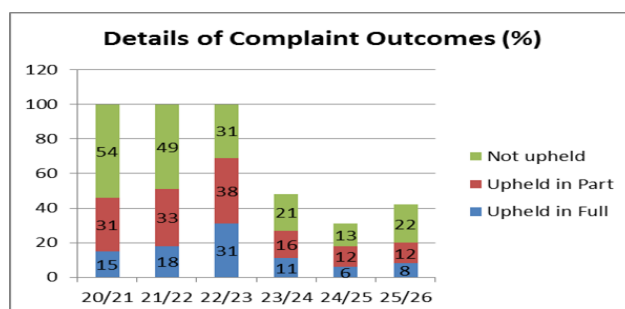
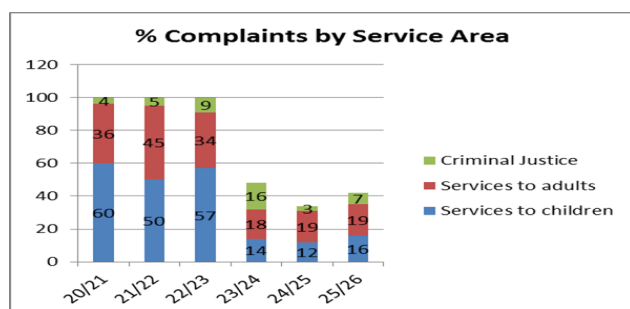
Of all complaints, **25 (60%) were responded to within target timescales**, while **17 (40%) exceeded timescales, predominantly due to case complexity**. Twenty-two complaints (52%) were not upheld, 12 (29%) were partially upheld and eight (19%) were fully upheld. Overall, 20 complaints (48%) were either partially or fully upheld, reinforcing the importance of systematic learning and improvement from complaints.

The service also **processed 148 Subject Access Requests**, 142 relating to Child Care. **145 (98%) were completed within statutory timescales**, with three exceeding the deadline due to case complexity. This activity continues to be delivered within existing service capacity.

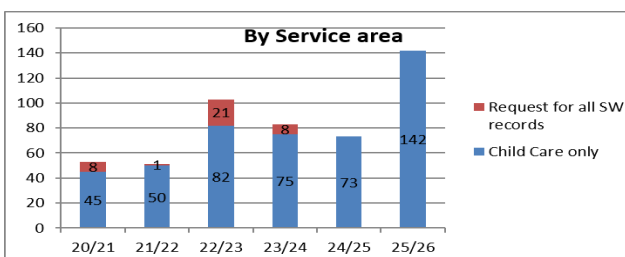
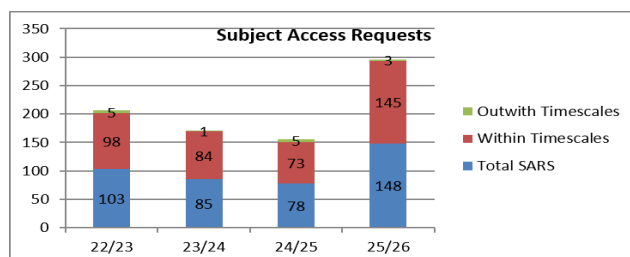
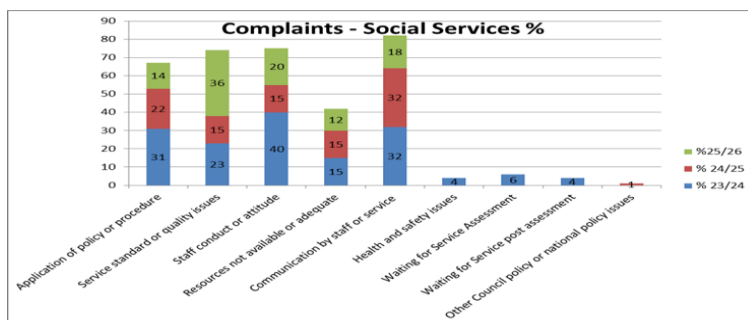
Complaints provide an important source of evidence about people's experience of services and opportunities to strengthen practice. The key risks requiring continued oversight are the increase in complaints, performance against response timescales, the proportion of complaints partially or fully upheld, and the capacity required to manage complex complaints and Subject Access Requests alongside wider statutory responsibilities.

Priorities for 2026/27 are to:

- Strengthen analysis of complaint themes, trends and underlying causes;
- Ensure learning from upheld and partially upheld complaints results in demonstrable improvements to practice and service delivery;
- Improve compliance with Stage 1 and Stage 2 response timescales;
- Strengthen oversight and assurance across service areas where complaint levels have increased; and
- Monitor capacity and performance in responding to Subject Access Requests.



The reasons for complaints received across all social service areas are outlined in the graph below.



5.6 Duty of Candour

Social work and social care services are required to comply with the statutory Duty of Candour when an unintended or unexpected incident results in death or significant harm. This requires openness with those affected, including an apology, and action to learn and improve.

During 2025/26, no incidents within Clackmannanshire Social Work Services triggered the Duty of Candour, providing assurance in relation to safe, accountable and person-centred practice.

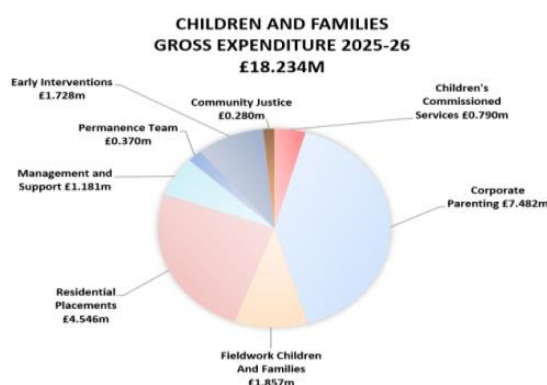
6.0 Resources

6.1 Resources and Financial Sustainability

Social work services continued to operate within a challenging financial environment during 2025/26, reflecting inflation, pay and workforce pressures and increasing complexity of need. Financial sustainability remains a key area of oversight. Priority will be given to strengthening preventative and community-based provision, managing high-cost care and commissioning pressures, and ensuring that financial recovery and resource decisions do not compromise statutory duties, safeguarding, service quality or outcomes for supported people, families and unpaid carers.

Gross expenditure on Children and Families services was **£18.234 million in 2025/26. Corporate Parenting was the largest area of expenditure at £7.482 million, or 41% of the total budget**, followed by **Residential Placements at £4.546 million, or 24.9%**. Together, **these areas accounted for approximately two-thirds of gross expenditure**, reflecting the significant cost of meeting statutory responsibilities and providing care for children who cannot safely remain at home. Whilst the placement profile remained strongly weighted towards family and community-based care, the budget profile demonstrates that placement type and expenditure are not proportionate. Although **only 9.6% of children were in residential care, Residential Placements accounted for 24.9% of total Children and Families expenditure**. This reflects the comparatively high unit cost of residential and specialist provision, likewise, the continued reliance on purchased foster care is a material component of Corporate Parenting expenditure.

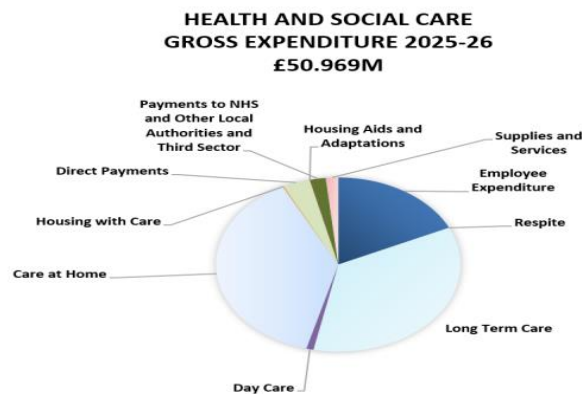
Investment in Early Interventions was £1.788 million, or 9.8% of expenditure, compared with £12.028 million, or 66%, allocated to Corporate Parenting and Residential Placements combined. This balance reflects the immediate statutory and care costs within the service. It also reinforces the importance of evaluating whether early intervention and family support investment is sufficient to safely prevent escalation, support children to remain at home or within family networks, and reduce future dependence on high-cost external provision.



Justice Services recorded expenditure of £1.954 million. Core Scottish Government funding of £1.946 million remained £0.047 million below core expenditure of £1.993 million, highlighting continuing financial pressure alongside increasing demand and statutory responsibilities. The absence of a funding uplift for a third consecutive year, alongside inflation, pay pressures and increasing demand for community-based disposals, presents an ongoing risk to service capacity.



Adult Health and Social Care recorded gross expenditure of £50.969 million, with significant pressures associated with the volume and cost of commissioned care across older people, physical and learning disabilities, mental health residential care and prescribing. A phased savings programme is planned from 2026/27 to address these pressures, improve financial sustainability while protecting frontline services.

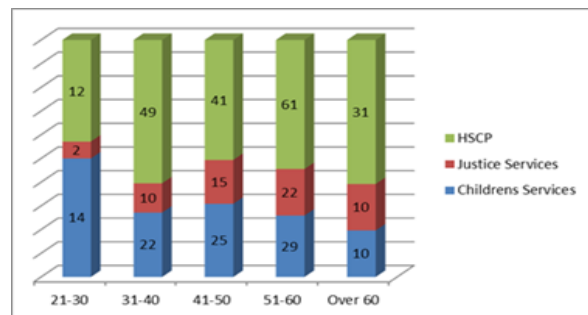
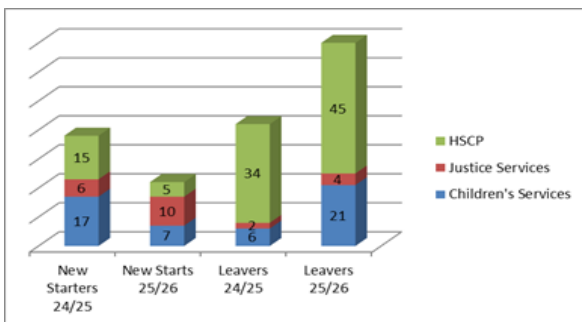


7.0 Workforce

7.1 Workforce Planning

Workforce capacity remains a significant area of risk amid national shortages, financial pressures and persistent recruitment and retention challenges. Pressures are greatest in adult and children's social work, with agency staff continuing to support vacancies, although this is not a sustainable long-term solution. The workforce profile presents additional challenges: 60% of qualified social workers in Children's Services are newly qualified, while Adult Services has a notable proportion of staff aged 51 and over. Senior-level vacancies and interim leadership arrangements across the HSCP also affect continuity, resilience and longer-term improvement.

Workforce Data 2025/26



The Council continues to strengthen workforce planning through the Target Operating Model, leadership development, workforce policies, staff wellbeing support and values-based leadership. Recruitment pathways are being broadened through Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships and partnerships with Forth Valley College, the University of Stirling and the Open University. During 2025/26, Social Services supported six student placements, alongside accredited learning and postgraduate development across children's, adult and justice services.

Structured support for newly qualified social workers is a particular strength. Three Children's Services staff completed the SSSC-supported first-year programme, with one portfolio recognised as exemplary. Clearer career pathways have also supported progression into Senior Practitioner and Team Leader roles.

Investment in learning, leadership and early-career development is positive; however, workforce sustainability remains a material risk. Priority continues to be given to reducing reliance on agency and interim arrangements, retaining experienced practitioners, strengthening succession planning and maintaining a balanced workforce with sufficient experience to support newly qualified staff and deliver safe, high-quality services.

7.2 Corporate workforce support

The Council is strengthening the foundations for a resilient, skilled and supported workforce through:

- Strengthening leadership capacity through new certified leadership development programmes, developed during 2025/26 and launching in 2026/27.
- Building stronger leadership networks through year-round Team Leader and Senior Leadership Forums, supporting collaboration, shared learning and delivery of Council priorities.
- Keeping workforce policies current and responsive through a structured review programme with recognised trade unions, reflecting legislative change and emerging best practice.
- Supporting workforce wellbeing and resilience through accessible, multi-channel wellbeing provision.
- Strengthening the Council's employment offer through a comprehensive employee benefits package to support recruitment and retention locally and across Forth Valley.
- Embedding values-based leadership through the Family Wellbeing Partnership approach, supporting cultural and practice change and more outcome-focused public services.

Together, these measures strengthen leadership, workforce resilience and organisational capacity, providing an important foundation for implementation of the Target Operating Model and the shift towards sustainable, outcome-focused services.

7.2 Training and Development

7.2.1 Public Protection Training and Development

Training and development remain central to workforce resilience, particularly given recruitment pressures, the high proportion of newly qualified staff and the pace of legislative and policy change. During 2025/26, 92 multi-agency public protection sessions were delivered to 353 Clackmannanshire attendees across adult support and protection, child protection, and violence against women and girls. The programme included new learning on GIRFEC, child sexual abuse and human trafficking, with feedback indicating improved understanding of legislation, professional roles, multi-agency working and safeguarding responses.

Operational pressures continue to affect attendance and release for learning. Alongside investment in leadership, career pathways and early-career development, senior leaders and service managers must protect access to essential training, address gaps in completion and use supervision, case audit and quality assurance to evidence its impact on practice.

The range and quality of workforce development provide a strong foundation for safe and effective practice. However, sustained assurance requires evidence that staff can access essential learning and consistently apply it. This is particularly important where workforce capacity is constrained and less experienced practitioners require effective supervision, leadership and professional support.

7.3 Staff Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing is integral to the Council's wider approach to workforce resilience, retention and sustainable service delivery. A comprehensive programme of support is available, including occupational health and employee assistance, mental health and stress-management resources, wellbeing champions, health assessments, mediation and financial and healthy-lifestyle support. This is particularly important in social work and social care, where recruitment, capacity and operational pressures continue to place significant demands on the workforce.

The range of wellbeing support provides a strong foundation; continued focus is required to ensure staff can access support when needed and that workforce wellbeing remains central to retention, resilience and the safe and sustainable delivery of services.

8.0 Conclusion and Looking Ahead 2026-2027

Social work and social care services continued to operate under significant pressure during 2025/26. Demand and complexity increased across several parts of the system, particularly Adult Support and Protection, out-of-hours adult services and support for people with complex needs. Financial pressures were intensified by the cost of commissioned care, external placements, specialist provision and workforce capacity challenges.

Against this background, services continued to deliver their statutory and public protection responsibilities. The year demonstrated the value of prevention, early intervention and strong partnership working. Earlier support helped many children and families avoid escalation to statutory intervention; family and community-based care remained central to the local placement profile; community justice approaches provided alternatives to custody and prosecution; and adult services continued to support more people safely within their homes and communities.

The report also identifies areas requiring sustained professional and corporate oversight. These include the increase in children on the Child Protection Register; domestic abuse and neglect; placement sufficiency and reliance on external provision; permanence delays; transitions for children with disabilities and care-experienced young people; increasing Adult Support and Protection demand; Guardianship compliance; consistent Self-directed Support; and the sustainability of preventative justice provision.

Workforce capacity is a cross-cutting risk. Children's Services has a high proportion of newly qualified social workers, Adult Services has an ageing workforce profile, and agency and interim leadership arrangements remain in use. Investment in leadership, training, supervision, wellbeing and career pathways is positive, but improvement must be demonstrated through stronger recruitment and retention, greater workforce stability and consistently high-quality practice.

Financial sustainability will remain a defining challenge. Future transformation and savings must be supported by clear evidence of need, quality, outcomes and risk. Resource decisions must continue to protect statutory duties, public protection and the rights of supported people, while shifting the balance towards prevention, local capacity and sustainable community-based support.

Strategic priorities for 2026/27

Children and Families:

- Strengthen prevention and whole-family support, improving access, pathways and outcome evidence across Early Help, the Family Support Collaborative, Family Wellbeing Hubs and family-led planning.
- Improve placement sufficiency and permanence, strengthening kinship support, foster-carer recruitment and retention, local residential capacity, placement stability and escalation where permanence is delayed.
- Strengthen protection and rights-based practice, with continued focus on domestic abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse and exploitation, Bairns' Hoose Standards, the Scottish Child Interview Model and implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- Improve transitions and participation, particularly for children with disabilities and care-experienced young people moving into adulthood, while ensuring children and families meaningfully influence their plans and services.

Justice Services:

- Expand effective prevention and community-based alternatives, including Bail Supervision, Diversion from Prosecution and proportionate Community Payback.
- Strengthen rehabilitation and throughcare, connecting Unpaid Work and prison-based intervention with employability, education, recovery, health and voluntary throughcare.
- Maintain robust public protection, ensuring MAPPA remains resilient in the face of increasing demand and complexity and is prepared for implementation of the national Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS).
- Protect service sustainability and demonstrate impact, responding to funding pressures while strengthening evidence on completion, rehabilitation, reduced justice-system involvement and longer-term outcomes.

Adult Social Work:

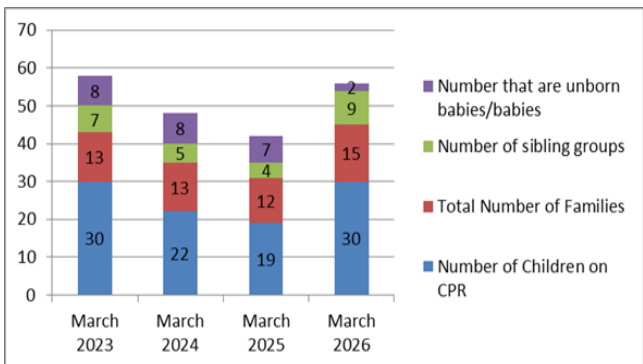
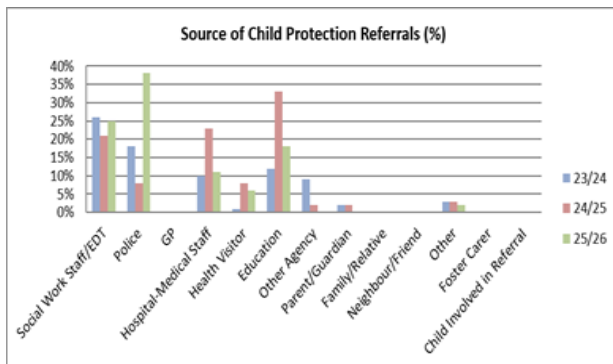
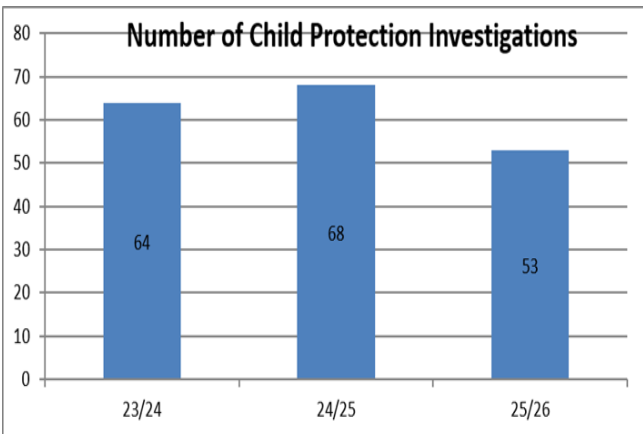
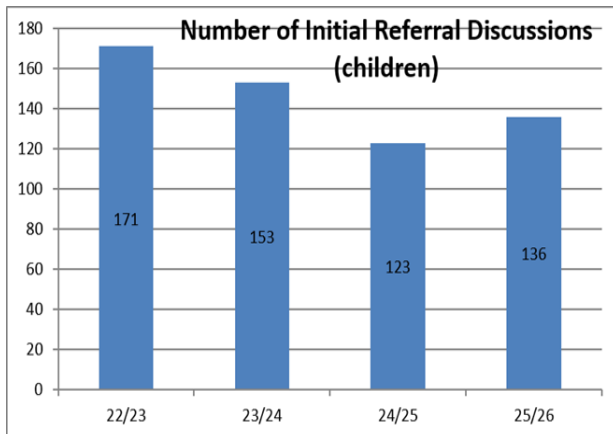
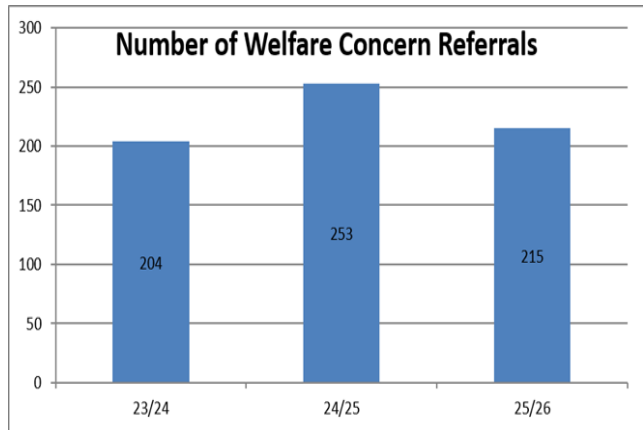
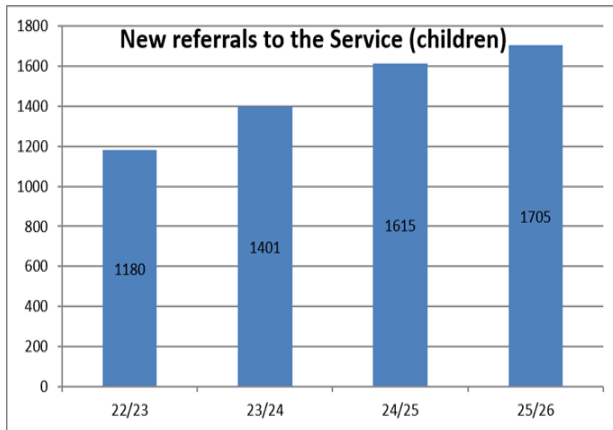
- Embed Right Care, Right Time, strengthening the Adult Social Care Front Door, multidisciplinary working, early intervention and proportionate responses to need.
- Strengthen rights, choice and legal safeguards, improving Self-directed Support, Guardianship supervision and review, and evidence that statutory intervention is lawful, proportionate and outcome focused.
- Support independence and community living, expanding consistent care-at-home review, preventative carer support and alternatives to avoidable long-term or institutional care.
- Maintain effective adult protection, responding to increasing referrals and complexity through sufficient capacity, consistent statutory decision-making, multi-agency quality assurance and stronger information systems.
- Progress the Adult Services improvement programme, maintaining CSWO oversight of social work governance, workforce capability, performance evidence and the actions arising from external scrutiny.

Across all services, the shared priorities will be to develop a skilled and resilient workforce, strengthen prevention and sustainable local provision, improve the use of performance and financial information, and ensure learning results in demonstrable improvement. A central priority will be to realise the benefits of the Social Care Transformation Programme and the new Social Work Case Management System, using service redesign and improved information to support staff, strengthen professional practice and deliver better outcomes for citizens.

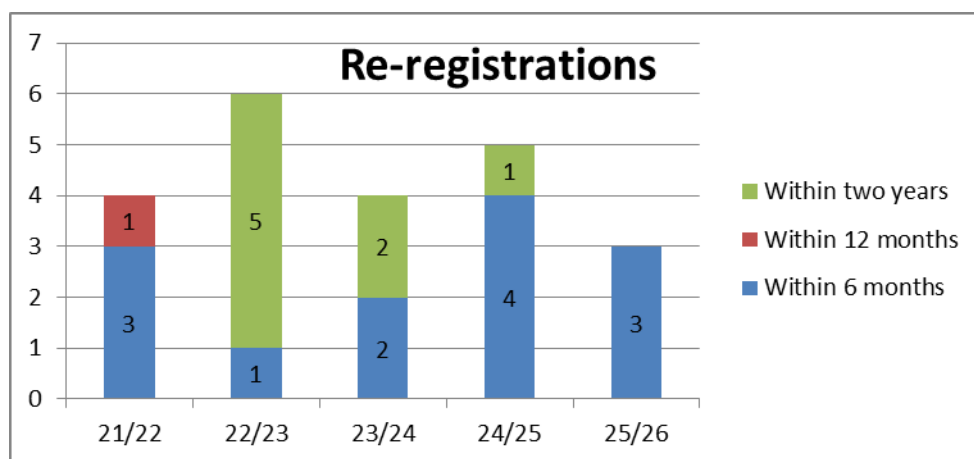
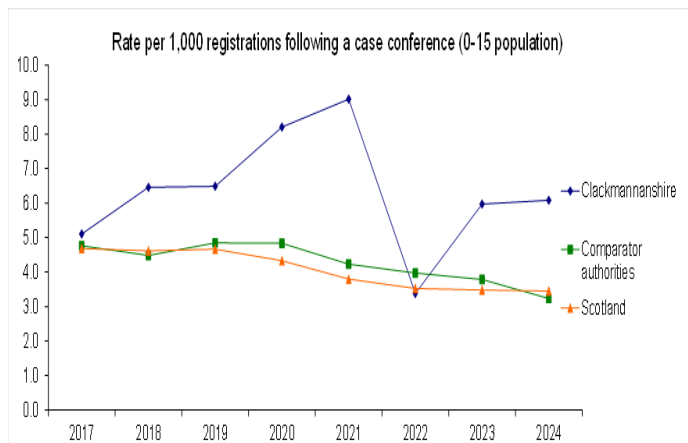
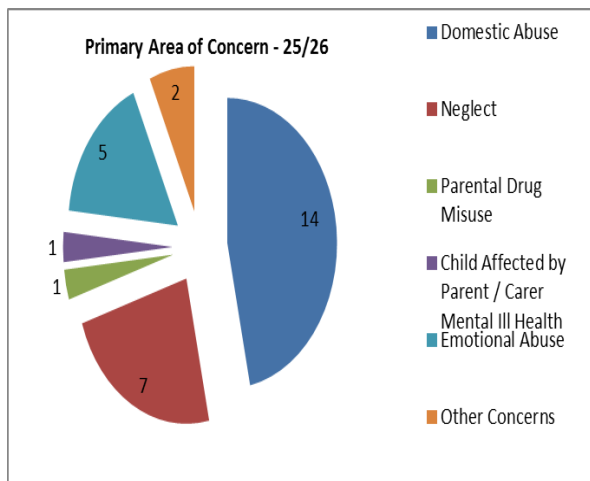
We will continue to work collectively to protect people from harm, reduce inequality and deliver sustainable, rights-based and person-centred services. Our purpose remains clear: to ensure children, adults and families receive the right support at the right time and that social work continues to make a meaningful difference across Clackmannanshire.

Sharon Robertson
Chief Social Work Officer

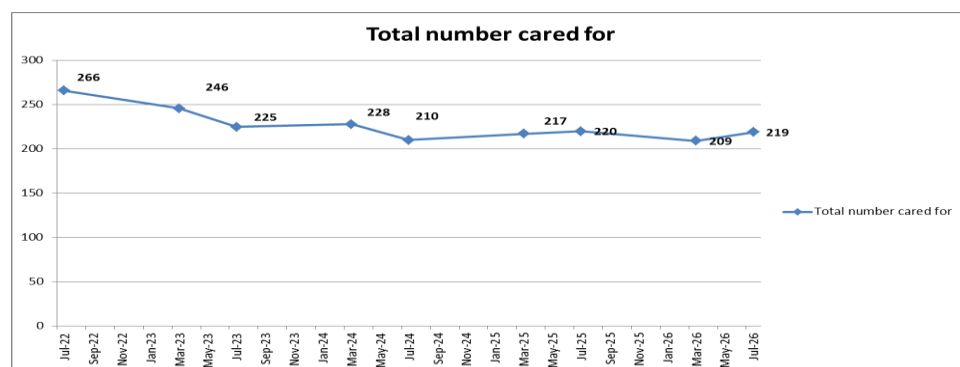
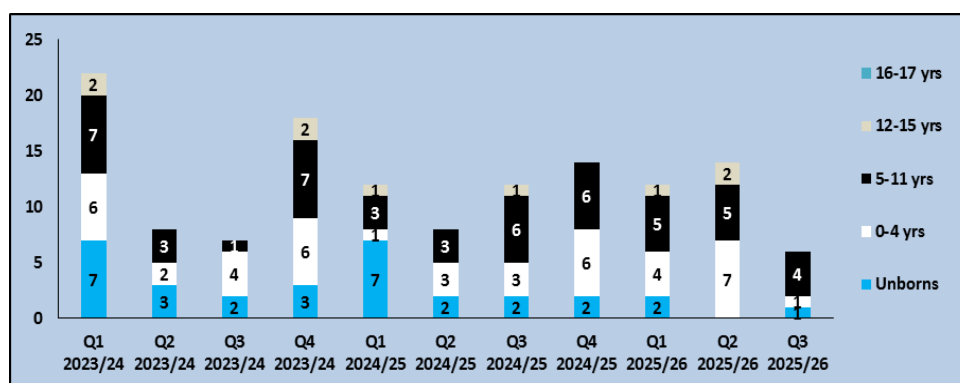
Appendix 1: Children's Services performance data 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2026

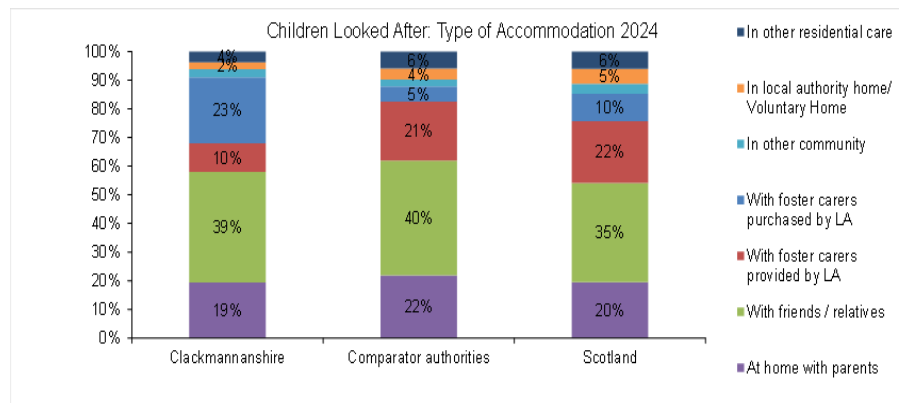
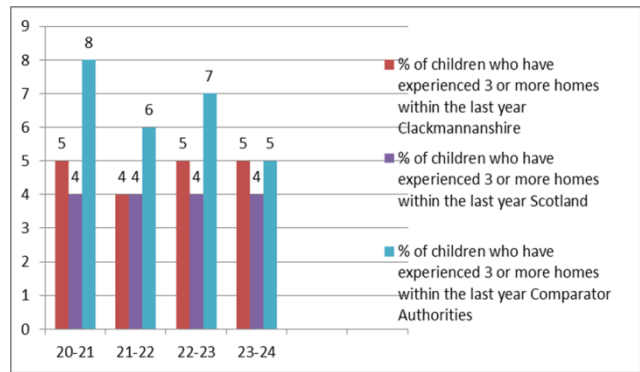
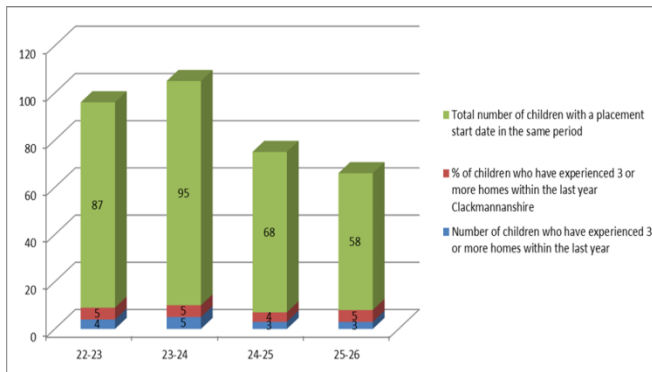


As at	NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON REGISTER	TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES	NUMBER OF SIBLING GROUPS	Number that are unborn babies/babies
March 2023	30	13	7	8
March 2024	22	13	5	8
March 2025	19	12	4	7
March 2026	30	15	9	2

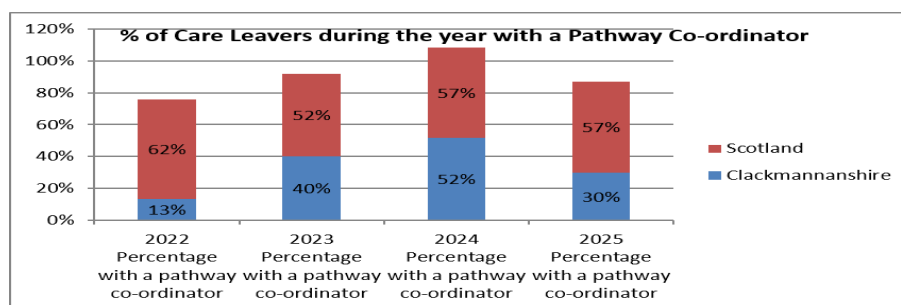
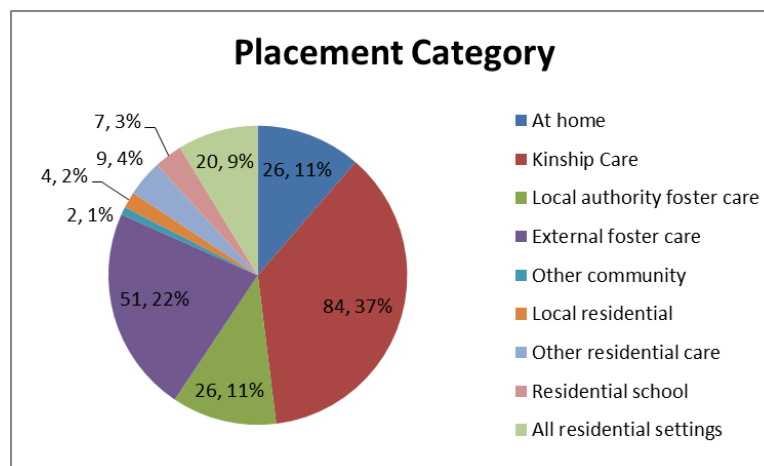


Age of Children at the point of Registration





Placement profile at 31 March 2026



Appendix 2: Adult Support and Protection performance data 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Total number of referrals between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 was **936** compared to 849 in 2024-2025

Source of referrals	Number of referrals 2022/23	Number of referrals 2023/24	Number of referrals 2024/25	Number of referrals 2025/26
NHS	65	141	170	131
GPs	8	17	18	24
Scottish Ambulance Service	17	12	28	38
Police	52	55	70	78
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	11	20	17	26
Office of Public Guardian	1	0	2	0
Mental Welfare Commission	0	0	0	0
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	0	0	0	1
Care Inspectorate	13	1	4	1
Other organisation	471	339	400	534
Social Work	27	30	35	20
Council	61	29	20	26
Self (Adult at risk of harm)	0	9	5	4
Family/Friend/Neighbour	17	2	27	16
Unpaid carer	0	2	0	1
Other member of public	1	1	0	8
Anonymous	4	0	0	0
Others	20	29	53	28
Total	768	687	849	936

Total number of investigations commenced under the ASP Act between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 was **20**.

Number of investigations commenced for the following age and gender.												
Age Group	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Number of investigations by age and gender							
					Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
16-18	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
19-24	2	3	2	2	0	2	3	0	1	1	1	1
25-39	4	4	3	6	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	4
40-64	11	6	3	5	4	7	3	3	1	2	1	4
65-69	0	4	2	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	1	0
70-74	5	1	3	0	2	3	0	1	2	1	0	0
75-79	4	2	1	2	3	1	2	0	0	1	0	2
80-84	3	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2
85+	5	8	2	2	2	3	6	2	1	1	0	2
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	30	18	20	14	20	20	10	9	9	5	15

Number of investigations commenced for clients in the following primary main client group				
Client groups	Number of investigations by client groups 2022/23	Number of investigations by client groups 2023/24	Number of investigations by client groups 2024/25	Number of investigations by client groups 2025/26
Dementia	5	3	2	2
Mental health problem	2	5	2	7
Learning disability	5	6	2	2
Physical disability	15	12	9	8
Infirmary due to Age	3	1	0	1
Substance misuse	3	2	0	0
Other	1	1	3	0
Total	34	30	18	20

Type of principal harm which resulted in an investigation (as defined under the ASP Act)				
Type of principal harm which resulted in an investigation	Number of investigations 2022/23	Number of investigations 2023/24	Number of investigations 2024/25	Number of investigations 2025/26
Financial Harm	7	9	4	6
Psychological harm	7	1	7	4
Physical harm	9	11	0	7
Sexual harm	2	0	1	3
Neglect	9	3	5	0
Self-harm	0	5	1	0
Other	0	1	0	0
Total	34	30	18	20

Location the principal harm take place which resulted in an investigation (as defined under the ASP Act)				
Location of principal harm which resulted in an investigation	Number of investigations under the ASP Act 2022/23	Number of investigations under the ASP Act 2023/24	Number of investigations under the ASP Act 2024/25	Number of investigations under the ASP Act 2025/26
Own home	19	18	11	9
Other private address	1	0	0	2
Care home	6	3	1	4
Sheltered housing or other supported accommodation	0	1	0	0
Independent Hospital	0	0	0	0
NHS	3	2	2	3
Day centre	0	0	1	0
Public place	0	0	0	1
Online	0	1	0	1
Other	0	1	3	0
Not known	5	4	0	0
Total	34	30	18	20

Number of cases were subject to an ASP Case Conference				
Type of ASP Case Conferences	Number of ASP Case Conferences 2022/23	Number of ASP Case Conferences 2023/24	Number of ASP Case Conferences 2024/25	Number of ASP Case Conferences 2025/26
Initial ASP case conference	11	26	21	33
Review ASP case conference	9	34	41	55
ASP case conference	0	0	0	0
Total	20	60	62	88