



Our vision is for socially and economically thriving communities with a focus on sustaining our quality of life, natural heritage, and Gaelic language and culture

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN

For the Period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD	4
DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE	5
MEASURES AND ACTIONS.....	5
RESOURCING THE PLAN	7

INTRODUCTION

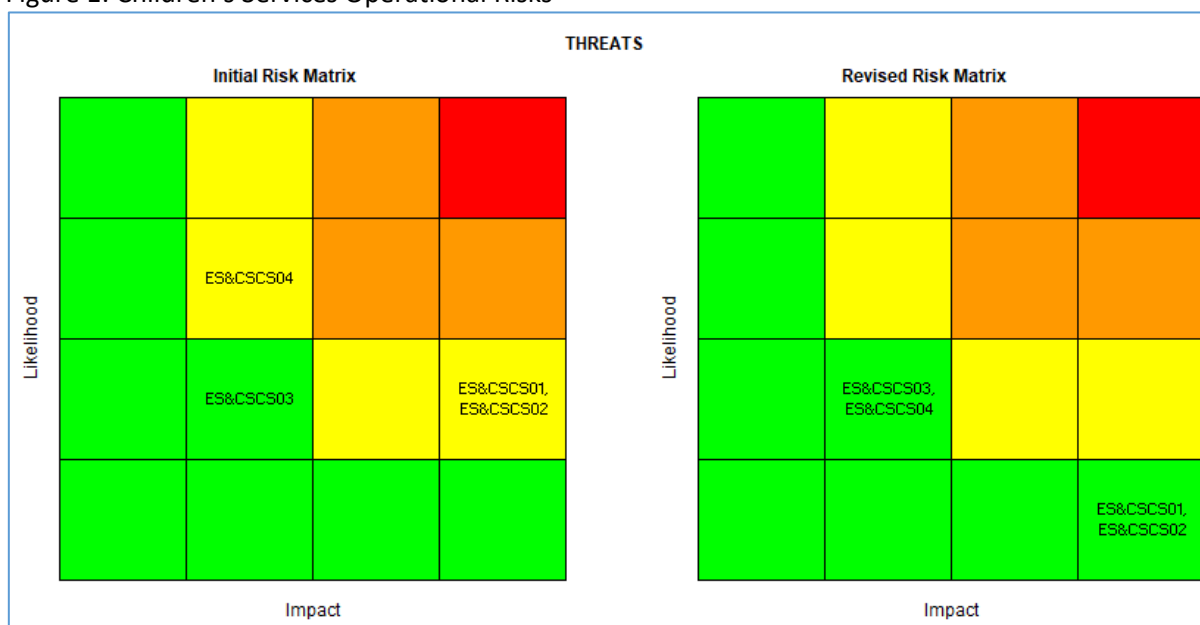
- 1.1. I am pleased to introduce our Service Business Plan for 2023-24 which sets out our outcomes and priorities for the coming year. This is the main annual business planning document for the service. It reflects the council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 and provides an overview of the service's main areas of activity.
- 1.2. Children's Services have a statutory responsibility to deliver targeted services to ensure that the Comhairle 'Gets it Right for Every Child'. The Service aspires to provide very good if not better support and protection to vulnerable children and young people through targeted interventions. This will be achieved through good partnership working. The Service will further embed a culture of continuous improvement.
- 1.3. Children's Services will ensure that the council operates successfully in an increasingly complex and challenging environment, and although diverse, each service is essential to the running of the council and the delivery of its vision, values and priorities. It will respond to emerging issues such as the response to supporting and protecting unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.
- 1.4. Children's Services covers the provision of responding to child protection concerns; services for children with/and affected by disabilities; throughcare and aftercare services; services that help to reduce offending and support children disengaged from mainstream education; management and delivery of Kinship, Fostering and Adoption, Residential, Respite, Throughcare and Aftercare and Supported Lodgings Services; and the day to day co-ordination and delivery of additional support needs through the Extended Learning provision.
- 1.5. Keeping The Promise, adhering to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and taking a trauma informed approach to all areas of work will be key priorities for Service going forward.

Jack Libby
Head of Children's Services

KEY AREAS OF RISK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- 2.1 The Comhairle currently recognises three levels of risk: Strategic risk aligned to the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy; Operational risk aligned to Service Business Plans; and Project risk concerned with specific projects.
- 2.2 Operational risks represent threats that may affect the achievement of service business plan actions, and the Service has identified significant risks for the coming year. These will be reviewed periodically throughout the year.
- 2.3 The Initial Risk Matrix at Figure 1 represents the current risk profile of Children's Services, and the Revised Risk Matrix represents the target risk profile once risk actions have been successfully implemented. 2.4 contains a list of identified risks, categorised by risk treatment.

Figure 1: Children's Services Operational Risks



- 2.4 The Service has identified four significant threats and these are listed below categorised by Risk Treatment:

Risks retained (acceptable level of risk)

1 risk identified are at an acceptable level and will continue to be monitored:

- ES&CSCS03 Lack of qualified Social Workers

Risks reduced (action will be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level)

3 risks identified will be reduced:

- ES&CSCS01 Clients are at risk.
 - Risk Action: Consider need for an independent reviewing officer.
 - Risk Action: Undertake a Case File Audit
- ES&CSCS02 Vulnerable 16-18 year olds unable to access more intensive supported accommodation.
 - Risk Action: Secure suitable accommodation for vulnerable 16-18 year olds
- ES&CSCS04 Lack of sufficient placements
 - Risk Action: Review Business Continuity Plans of Service Providers

- 2.5 Elected Members can view the full risk register in the Comhairle's performance management system, Interplan, within the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) module.

DELIVERING THE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN AND ACHIEVING BEST VALUE

Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1 Children's Services contribute to the strategic outcomes 2.1.1 *Attainment rates continuously improve* and 2.1.2 *Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe* to support the delivery of the Comhairle's Strategic Priority 2.1 *Support children, families, and young people*.

Best Value

- 3.2 In working towards the two strategic outcomes, the service aims to ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public and to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions. Table 1 lists the service outcomes established to support the delivery of the Service Business Plan (SBP) and to achieve Best Value.

Table 1: Service Outcomes

Delivering the SBP and achieving Best Value
<p>Service Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care experience children in the Western Isles to have loving, supportive, and nurturing relationships which act as the foundation stone for a sense of safety, healthy development and mutual respect.• Young people are able to overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.• Children and young people's rights are respected.• All children and young people are supported to maintain good physical and mental health and wellbeing.• There is a concentration on the strengths and assets of children, young people and their families, with an awareness of adverse traumatic experiences, helping them find solutions that work for them.

MEASURES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 The Comhairle's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) advised that the Comhairle together with its partners responded well to the Covid-19 pandemic, but highlighted concern over the financial challenges ahead for the Comhairle and emphasised that service performance and public satisfaction with services has declined overall in the past five years. The performance measures for Children's Services are detailed in Tables 2 and 3.
- 4.2 The Comhairle's Corporate Strategy 2022-27 was approved in September 2021 and takes account of national priorities and local needs, but does not include actions to achieve its strategic outcomes as these have been developed by the Corporate Management Team and included in the appropriate SBP for monitoring and reporting to ensure that the Comhairle's mission is achieved. The actions for the Service are detailed in Table 4.

How we will measure our performance

- 4.3 The tables below are grouped by Strategic Priority and include the Corporate Strategy 2022-27 'Measures of Success' Strategic Outcome KPIs that the service contributes to, the Local Government

Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) SPIs that the service have prioritised for improvement, and the LPIs chosen by the service to strengthen its focus on improvement.

- 4.4 Each performance measure includes the baseline year and data, the target for 2023-24, and the aspirational target for 2030.
- 4.5 In 2021, the majority of Looked After Children (90%) were placed in the community. This included 33% of children and young people who were placed with Kinship Carers, 24% placed with Foster Carers provided by local authorities, and 22% were looked after at home.

Strategic Priority 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.1 Attainment rates continuously improve.

Table 2: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2023-24	Target 2030	Service
2.1.1. CS4 - ECS131 (SPI: CHN19b): School Attendance Rates (Looked After Children).	2021/22 87%	88%	94%	Children & Families, Resources and Child Protection

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

Table 3: Performance Measures

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2023-24	Target 2030	Service
2.1.2.CS5 - Percentage of children (0-17) with LAC status per 1,000 population. Figure for Scotland was 13.9 in 2020.	2020 10.4%	10%	9%	Children's Services
2.1.2.CS6 - Number of children referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 15.8	12%	10%	Children's Services
2.1.2.CS7a - Number of children referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) on care and protection grounds (non-offence), per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 10.8	9.5	8	Children's Services
2.1.2.CS7b - Number of children referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) on offence grounds, per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 10.9	5	5	Children's Services
2.1.2.CS8 - Number of Children's Hearings held, per 1,000 population aged under 16 years.	21/22 25.9	24	20	Children's Services
2.1.2.CS9 - Number of children with a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) in force at 31 March, per 1,000 population aged under 16 years. (Trend KPI)	2019/20 7.1	N/A	N/A	Children & Families, Resources and Child Protection
2.1.2.CS13 - Percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months.	2019/20 22.2%	10%	10%	Children & Families, Resources and Child Protection

Measure (KPI title)	Baseline	Target 2023-24	Target 2030	Service
2.1.2.CS14 - ECS129 (SPI: CHN23): Percentage Looked After Children (LAC) with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July).	2011/12 50%	19%	13%	Children & Families, Resources and Child Protection
2.1.2 ECS002 (SPI: CHN9): Balance of Care for looked after children: Percentage of "Looked After Children" (LAC) being cared for in the Community.	2020/21 80%	85%	90%	Children's Services
Percentage of children who through the use of outcome measurement tools, have shown an improvement in their wellbeing after 6 months.	2023/24 TBA	75%	90%	Children's Services

What actions we will take

- 4.6 The SBP strengthens the links with the Corporate Strategy and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The actions take into consideration the key areas of focus identified at section two whilst focusing on progressing the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priority: 2.1 Support children, families, and young people

Strategic Outcome: 2.1.2 Early intervention in place to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

Table 4: SBP Actions

Action	Service
2.1.2.1 Ensure delivery, quality assurance and development of services that meet statutory duties and support the outcomes of the Integrated Children's Services Plan.	Children's Services

RESOURCING THE PLAN

- 5.1 The funding and staffing resources identified to implement our SBP will be updated and summarised at 5.2 and 5.4 after the Comhairle's budget for 2023/24 is approved.

Revenue Budget 2023-24

- 5.2 Children's Services has a Net Revenue Budget of £#m.

Capital Budget 2023-24

- 5.3 There is no Capital Budget for Children's Services.

Service Employees

- 5.4 Children's Services have 27.28 FTE employees working across the service. We support these employees to deliver their duties through a range of policies including personal appraisal and a robust training framework.