

Social Work Services

Children, Families and Justice Services

**Service Plan
2026 – 2027**



The principal purpose of the Service is to:

Empower people to manage their own lives; promote people's independence; support people's social inclusion and participation in society; and help people to keep safe and well.

Social Work Services are delivered within a framework of statutory duties and powers imposed on the local authority with the requirement to meet national standards and provide best value. Social work delivers frontline services to the most vulnerable and at risk across the region. Delivery consists of a 24-hour, 7-day week service provision including social work statutory intervention, public protection as well as supporting vulnerable children, children at risk, children in need, early intervention and prevention, justice services.

We work in partnership with parents, families and a range of statutory and voluntary organisations to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway to make a positive difference to the lives of disadvantaged children and their families.

Health inequalities, poverty and deprivation continue to have an adverse impact on the life chances of many children, our vision is to improve outcomes so that children feel safe, nurtured, healthy, respected and included and can achieve their full potential.

We promote a more socially just, equitable and safer society, by supporting and enabling people to stop offending and participate positively in their communities. We are concerned with the management of offenders across the justice spectrum – pre-conviction, pre-sentence, post sentence community supervision and prison and community throughcare. Our role is rehabilitation and reintegration, balanced against the need for public protection.

The service leads projects within the following Council Plan Strategic Outcomes:

Economy

- Our Workforce and their skills base are growing.
- Rural communities and places are vibrant and thriving.

Travel, Connectivity and Infrastructure

- People have access to services that are modern, efficient and responsive.

Education and Learning

- We get it right for every child.

Health and Wellbeing

- Access to personal support and care helps keep people safe.

The service demonstrates the Council's Principles by:

Supporting our citizens:

Put customers at the heart of services: provide responsive and reliable services that achieve high standards of customer care.

Support the most vulnerable and in need: target resources to have a positive impact for the most vulnerable, people in need and those who are disadvantaged.

Address inequalities: assess the impact of change to ensure inclusivity, accessibility, celebrate diversity and secure social benefits of change.

Offer digital services: embrace the opportunities and potential of digital technologies to improve outcomes and services for citizens and staff.

Supporting our communities:

Empowering communities and individuals: empower customers, communities and staff and build skills and confidence to enable people and communities to achieve their ambitions.

Work in partnership: ensure that service delivery is achieved, working alongside communities and with local, regional and national partners.

Focus on local and place: use places, wards and school clusters as the basis of local planning and delivery; and embrace the creativity and resilience of our places and people.

Invest to enable change: encourage and attract inward investment to deliver the ambitions of communities and local people.

Be a responsive council:

Communicate openly: share ideas and invite contribution to decision making.

Maintain sustainable finances: balance spending and income to ensure finances are sustainable over the longer term and budgets are spent on achieving the Council Plan.

Be organised to deliver: be creative and responsive, organising services and workforce to ensure we deliver our Council Plan's strategic outcomes.

Maintain high standards: ensure transparency in decision-making and treat others with kindness and respect.

Make best use of resources: ensure that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best outcomes for local people.

Resource Plan

The following resources underpin the delivery of the Service Plan:

Budget:

This is the Budget Estimates Summary for the whole of Social Work Services including Integrated Joint Board.

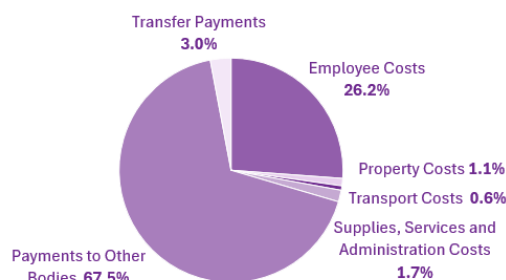
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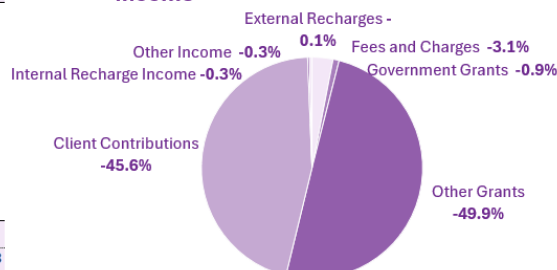
Budget:

Social Work Services	Budget
Budget Estimates Summary	Estimates
Service Analysis	Social Work Services £
Expense	
Employee Costs	52,507,065
Property Costs	2,144,907
Transport Costs	1,261,842
Supplies, Services and Administration Costs	3,347,937
Payments to Other Bodies	135,417,147
Transfer Payments	5,982,417
Expense Total	200,661,315
Income	
Fees and Charges	- 908,404
Government Grants	- 263,169
Other Grants	- 14,789,701
Client Contributions	- 13,514,500
Internal Recharge Income	- 78,500
Other Income	- 92,900
External Recharges	- 18,413
Income Total	- 29,665,587
Grand Total	170,995,728

Expenses



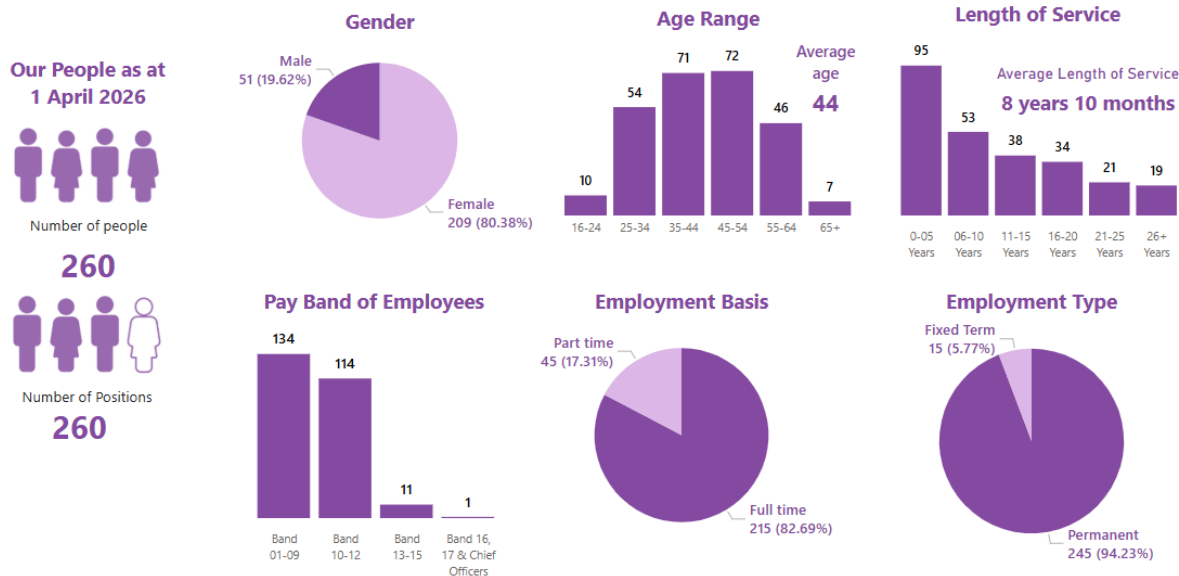
Income



Workforce:

Children, Families and Justice Services

Our People, Our Positions



Highlights of workforce engagement and planning in 2026/27:

Our Social Work Services Workforce Plan aims to provide a robust three-year framework that ensure our staff have the right skill sets in the right places at the right time. Through empowering our workforce to feel confident to carry out a variety of roles in a wide range of setting, we will ensure that our staff have the opportunities for continuous learning and development. The aim is to increase the resilience of our service and providing development and career opportunities for our staff.

It is our ambition to have a diverse workforce that is representative of the people of Dumfries and Galloway. Staff working in Social Work and Social Care Services in Dumfries and Galloway will feel valued and committed ambassadors of the local social work workforce.

We want to continue to build on our work to date and ensure our workforce remains committed to our core values –

Human Rights – Social Work is based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and other related UN declaration on rights and conventions derived from those declarations.

Social Justice – Social Workers have a responsibility to promote social justice, in relation to society generally, and in relation to the people with whom they work.

Professional Integrity – Social Workers have a responsibility to respect and uphold values and principles of the profession and act in a reliable, honest and trustworthy manner.

Children and Families, and Justice Services Service Plan 2026/27 – all data will be recorded and reported through Pentana

Council Plan Delivery 2026/27

Strategic Outcome 2: Our workforce and their skills base are growing.

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Manage the whole service approach to recruitment and retention including delivery of our Workforce Plan	Head of Children and Families and Justice Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	DGC Workforce Strategy SWS Workforce Plan

Strategic Outcome 14: We get it right for every child.

Delivery Plan Action	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Deliver Corporate Parent Plan 2025/2028.	Head of Children and Families and Justice Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	Children Services Plan / The Promise
NEW – Implementation of the Commissioning Better Outcomes for Children and Families in Dumfries and Galloway Strategy 2024-2028	Head of Children and Families and Justice Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	A Commissioning Strategy for Children and Families Social Work Services 2024-2028

Service Delivery 2026/27

What are we planning to do?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
MULTI YEAR - Deliver on our Workforce Plan	Chief Social Work Officer/ Head of Service / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	Council Wide Workforce Strategy / HSCP Workforce Strategy
MULTI YEAR - Review and introduce a new model of delivery for residential children's houses with a view for more children to live in 'ordinary houses'; reduce residential placements cost; and fewer children and young people in care will be placed out-of-authority.	Children and Families Social Work Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	Council Plan
MULTI YEAR - Support the delivery of the Corporate Parent Plan for 2025-2028 and the national Promise Plan 2024-30, reporting through The Promise Progress Framework to allow the monitoring and tracking of our delivery across both early intervention and statutory areas of our services.	Children and Families Social Work Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	Children Services Plan / Corporate Parent Plan
MULTI YEAR - Review of our contract management arrangements in line with our Children and Families Commissioning Strategy.	Children and Families Social Work Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	Corporate Parent Plan / The Promise
MULTI YEAR Implementation of the Bairns Hoose in line with the National Standards.	Children and Families Social Work Services	Corporate Parent Plan
MULTI YEAR - Delivering on our quality assurance framework to ensure our most vulnerable children and young people have support that is right for them including: children looked after at home, children on the edges of care and children in residential homes.	Children and Families Social Work Services/Strategic Planning and Delivery team	Corporate Parent Plan / The Promise / Report of a Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young

What are we planning to do?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
		People subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders living at Home with their Parents in Dumfries and Galloway
MULTI YEAR - Deliver the Justice Social Work Strategic Plan 2024/28	Justice Services	-
NEW - Rationalisation of Assets in line with the Property Asset Management Strategy and Management Plan	Head of Children and Families and Justice Services / Strategic Planning and Delivery Team	Property Asset Management Strategy and Management Plan 2025 - 2035
NEW - Strengthening workforce capacity and stability – Improve workforce stability and ensure consistency of workers for our children and young people	Children and Families Social Work Services	Report of a Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders living at Home with their Parents in Dumfries and Galloway
NEW - Foster Care Recruitment Campaign 2026/27 together with developing and delivering on an enhanced Fostering Friendly Policy	Centralised Services, Children and Families Social Work	Corporate Parent Plan

Change and Improvement Activities 2026/27

What are we planning to do and what is the intended outcome?	What team will do it?	Linked Strategy / Plan
CARRY FORWARD - Review and development of Children's Assessment and Plan	Children and Families Social Work Services	-
NEW - Introduce wider mechanisms to allow for parents participation and engagement	Head of Children and Families and Justice Services / Children and Families Social Work Services	Report of a Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders living at Home with their Parents in Dumfries and Galloway

Children and Families and Justice Services Success Measures 2026/27

Success Measure	Annual Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
First direct contact with JSW following imposition of CPO within 1 day	80%	Annually	External
Attendance at CPO induction within 5 days of CPO imposed	80%	Annually	External
Start unpaid work hours within 7 days of CPO imposed	80%	Annually	External
Unpaid work hours completed within timescale	85%	Annually	External
Positive outcome to CPO	75%	Annually	External
Percentage of CJ SWS Reports Submitted within Timescale	95%	Monthly	External
Percentage of individuals subject to Throughcare Licence conditions seen within 24 working hours of release from custody	100%	Half Yearly	External

Council Wide Indicators

Success Measure	Annual Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
People			
The average number of days lost per all other (non-teacher) local government employees through sickness absence	9 days	Monthly	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of days lost per employee through sickness absence as a percentage of total possible attendances	4%	Monthly	Internal
Percentage of staff who have completed an appraisal in the last 12 months	95%	Monthly	Internal

Enquiries / Complaints			
Percentage of Elected Member enquiries dealt with through the Elected Members Enquiry Service within the agreed timescales	85%	Quarterly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Community Council enquiries dealt with through the Community Council Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale.	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of MP/MSP enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Youth Councillor enquiries dealt with through the Enquiry Service within the agreed timescale	85%	Quarterly	Internal
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 1 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses issued within statutory timescales	80%	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Stage 2 complaint responses where extension was authorised	Data only	Monthly	Internal / External: Local Authority Complaint Handling Network
Percentage of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations requests received that have been responded to within 20 working days of receipt	90%	Monthly	Internal/External
Percentage of requests for subject access requests completed within one month	85%	Monthly	Internal
Finance			
Revenue Budget Outturn - Projected Outturn as a % of Budget	100%	Quarterly	Internal

Health and Safety			
Number of Head of Service Safety Visits	4	Annual	Internal
Total Number Significant Health and Safety Risk Priorities with Actions Overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Number HSE/SFRS Interfaces resulting in legal enforcement action	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of HSE/SFRS Interfaces with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents outside of HSE legal reporting timescales	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Serious Incident Investigation Reports Overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Total Number of Serious Incident Reports with actions overdue	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of RIDDOR Reportable Dangerous Occurrences, Employee Injuries and Diseases	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of 3rd Party RIDDOR incidents	0	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Reported Near Misses	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Employee Reported Accidents	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal
Number of Reported Violent Incidents to Employees	Data only	Six Monthly	Internal

Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators

Success Measure	Annual Target	Timescale / Frequency	Benchmark
The gross cost of 'Children Looked After' in Residential Based service per Child per week	£5,477 (23/24)	Annual	Internal External: LGBF
The gross cost of 'Children Looked After' in a Community Setting per Child per week	£492.23 (23/24)	Annual	Internal / External: LGBF
Balance of care for Looked After Children: % of children being looked after in the community	88.8% (23/24)	Annual	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of Child Protection Re-Registrations within 18 months	0% (23/24)	Annual	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of Looked After Children with more than one placement within the last year	17.5% (23/24)	Annual	Internal / External: LGBF
Percentage of children living in poverty (after housing costs)	20.7% (23/24)	Annual	Internal /External: LGBF

Children and Families and Justice Services Service Plan Risk Register

Risk	Risk Factor	Mitigation / Contingency
Continued increase in residential placements	• Children and young people being placed out with region and isolated from siblings, family and wider support network/peers • Disruption to educational with the potential of establishment moves required • Financial pressures • Local intervention may not be received at the appropriate timing in new location (i.e. psychological / alcohol and drug services) • Young people being placed in secure care	• Review residential provision and present a strategic outline business case, with options for residential children's houses. • Examination of contracts and current contract management arrangements. • Review and analysis on the recommended allowances for foster and kinship carers. • Data analysis on current and recent residential placements; foster carers; looked after children/on edge of care/kinship data. • Benchmarking with Scottish Futures Trust, Social Work Scotland, Local Government Benchmarking Framework together with other local authorities • Introduction of revised governance arrangements for the management of high-cost residential care packages for children. • Established working group focusing on our young people aged 17 to 18 years preparing for transition to Adult Services enabling us to understand needs, costings and opportunities for alternative service provision and renegotiation of costs. • Review of our supported accommodation including working with local social housing providers.

		• Exploring additional provision with local social housing providers.
Failure to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults	• Increasing complexity of public protection needs, hidden harm, and reductions of early-intervention face to face supports may reduce ability to protect vulnerable people. • Increased demand for and complexity of public protection work across all areas of vulnerability. • Longer term impact of pandemic for individuals and families experiencing hidden harm. • Changes to face-to-face support services at a prevention level leading to longer term impacts.	• Public Protection Committee has an established Learning Review sub-committee to ensure that a robust and effective process is in place for providing oversight of both the undertaking of and implementing findings from formal Learning Reviews, both in adult and child protection. The findings will inform and develop safe and effective systems and practice, ensuring effective support and protection for all children, young people and adults in Dumfries and Galloway. • PPC has an established multi agency subcommittee for Violence against Women and Girls which aims to respond and prevent violence against women and girls in D&G through implementation of Equally Safe. • Child Protection and Adult Protection Social Work processes are in place and are developed in conjunction with partner agencies. • There is an established multi agency Child IRD and CPI Review Group and Adult IRD Review Group where risk planning and decision making is audited. Child protection and adult support and protection data reporting and single and multi-agency audits are utilised to identify any emerging protection themes & risks. A MASH development plan is in place.

		• ASP and Child Protection Peer audits in place. • The D&G JII /Scottish Child Interview model is now operational and embedded in child protection processes and expanding to Bairns Hoose Partnership to support improving standards for children who are in need of care, protection and recovery through the justice pathway. • Implementation group for D&G Child Protection Guidance is supporting learning and training around child protection practice with multi-agency perspective. • Implementation of Safe and Together model continues with the delivery of the Safe & Together implementation plan. • Ongoing and flexible development of recruitment, retention and career pathways in order to develop and innovate around critical service vacancies. • Development of model of improvement for service design, allocation and effective delivery across the service to ensure best value and effective intervention to meet needs of infants, children and young people is being progressed. • Promote and improve training, awareness and practice improvement of rights protecting, respecting and strength-based service delivery through GIRFEC, practice framework improvement models.
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		• Delivery of single and multi-agency training for child protection and adult support and protection.
Failure to be sustainable	• Due to the current financial challenges experienced by National and Local Government there is a risk of a reduction in public services funding. • Demographic pressures, means we are unable to commission and deliver services which meet our strategic priorities or fulfil our statutory duties. • Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified experienced social workers and Mental Health Officers.	• Progress multi-disciplinary working and whole system approaches with a focus on early intervention and prevention. • Implement the aspirations as set out in the Promise which in the medium to long term will reduce the demand on placements which is the highest expenditure after staffing. • Use opportunities to bid for development funding to support transformational change • Maintain a focus on transformational change programmes and service redesign to focus on activity which delivers positive outcomes for children, adults and for community justice and takes out activity that does not make a purposeful contribution. • Use data to anticipate demand and identify activity that will target services in a smarter manner. • Continue to innovate in relation to workforce planning, identifying and implementing interventions which will support retention and recruitment across the workforce. • Review of flexible working practices to promote improved wellbeing and work / life balance.

		• Council commitment to Organisational Framework • Deliver on our children and families commissioning strategy to deliver a more flexible framework to provide opportunities to utilise non-recurring funding in a more flexible and responsive way to better meet the needs of children and families.
Failure to manage and support change	• The scale and pace of change is significant. There is an imperative for LA change in order to be sustainable. • There is a risk that people become overwhelmed with the scale of change and become disengaged from the transformation agenda and our strategic priorities, leading to poor morale, and in turn to increased staff absences and further pressures on meeting demand.	• Ensure that work is appropriately delegated to managers/leaders with opportunities to be empowered and involved in change initiatives. • Social Work Services management team to continue to participate in the insight leadership development programmes. • Ensure that those leading change have the support and resource to do so effectively. • Explore & develop opportunities to access innovation support in relation to short-, medium- & longer-term change initiatives. • Good communication – strategic use of New Sharepoint Site, newsletter and engagement with teams. • Ensure consistent staff / team communication and learning & development opportunities. • Maximising opportunities for partnership connections and supporting strong multi-agency partnership working. • Development and delivery of clear service priorities and outcomes. This will be supported by the completion and

		implementation of our Service Improvement Plans. • Shared leads for areas of development within and across services to support collaborative working and learning. • Regular review and timeline realignment where necessary to ensure prioritisation, achievability, reduce duplication and provide opportunity. • Promoting positive use of language and regular communication around the Transformation and Innovation agenda. • Real time and flexible management of vacancies across the service with integrated planning ahead of advertising. • Proactively engage with and escalate digital risks as these arise through Council, NHS and national workstreams, ensuring appropriate service mitigations can be developed, and through participation in cyber security workshops delivered by Resilience colleagues. • Engage with and influence the Council's Digital Strategy to ensure service digital requirements are understood and met maximising the full potential of Mosaic
Failure to meet standards of care	• Due to workforce development and planning issues, inconsistent practice across services. • Inconsistent or poor practice mean we are not meeting the needs of our service users or communities' needs in a way that is	• Management/leadership team lead by example in displaying positive behaviours. • Continue to support regular extended management development sessions. • Clear expectations around adherence with professional codes of conduct.

	safe for them, is of good quality, or that meets our own or statutory standards. • Reputational damage.	• Robust governance arrangements; complaints procedures, investigation procedures, significant occurrence procedures. • Consistent and positive application of Check In and Staff Supervision processes • Professional supervision protocols. • Up to date practice standards require to be implemented. Prioritisation action to update policy and practice standards (as above). • Cascading of national policy and guidance with support to implement. • Learning & development programmes to support practice and reflective learning. • Organisational development support in developing and meeting high standards. • Quality assurance measures from the recommendations of the findings of the Care Inspectorate's Delivering on the outcomes of the Care Experienced Thematic Review for Children with Disabilities inspection and the Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders living at home. • Governance measures (such as Significant Occurrence, Learning Reviews) which identify escalation and support practice. • Implement The Workforce Development Plan.
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		• Professional specific issues identified and action plans in place / adverse event review groups; duty of candour. • Agile working and promotion of policies to support a work life balance. • Closer links with HR (to improve understanding of service/ staffing issues). • Continue to deliver learning & development programmes in line with practice standards • Develop and implement an improved induction programme for all new starts • Provide weekly support session to NQSW's
Failure to move to a more preventative and early intervention delivery model	• That we fail to sustain our models of care - service users are no longer able to access appropriate support at an early stage. • Service users and their families will require more intensive supports which are unsustainable. • We fail to support preventable re-offending.	• Service realignment and effective redistribution of roles and responsibilities across the service in line with improving effective intervention in line with needs of the service user. • Develop sustainable request for assistance improvement model to early intervention and prevention and build on good multi-disciplinary working at the earliest opportunity founded on positive working relationships. • Building on existing relationships seeking to find more effective ways to collectively improve practice and services, through multi-agency implementation and steering groups for service improvement. • Strong multi-agency partnership involvement in development and

		progressing of Service Improvements Plans. • Priority focus on early intervention and prevention through dedicated Whole family approaches and service with development of service designed around young people in conflict with the law and including transition planning. • Improved co-ordination of planning and performance support and link to service delivery improvement with development of service wide quality assurance and self-evaluation framework. • Development of support framework for recording and completing children's plans, improving advocacy and participation of plans and decision making with infants, children, young people and adults at their meetings, continue to promote rights respecting and protecting practice. • Investment via Scottish Government funding and other funds to develop innovative early intervention e.g. family support; school counselling etc • Development and multi-agency collaboration and implementation in relation to service delivery in respect of neurodivergent pathway planning.
Failure to deliver Critical/Essential Services	• Death or significant harm of a service user. • Legal redress. • Sustained reputational damage.	• Following a Cyber Attack on NHS D&G, the Information Management Group is managing this risk for DGC. A Data Breach Triage Group is in place to further support

		this work with cross directorate representation. • The risk is that loss of one or more critical or essential activity beyond the maximum tolerable period of disruption, potentially leading to loss of life, injury or significant legal or financial ramifications. • Contingency plans are in place within delegated services for managing those risks. • Business Continuity Plans to be reviewed and updated for all services. • Ensure resources are targeted towards high-risk areas. • Compliance with GDPR and implement effective monitoring tools. • Implementation of the Corporate Information Management Risk register and records management plan. • Work towards the digitalisation and effective control of case management systems. • Implementation of the new solution for accessing the Orion Portal through a permission based solution on Mosaic.
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