

Equality Impact Assessment including Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

Part 1: Background and Information

Title of proposal	Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029
Brief description of proposal (including intended outcomes & purpose)	<p>The Strategic Plan (2026–2029) sets out the vision and future direction for health and social care services in Fife, as required by every Integration Joint Board in Scotland. Its purpose is to guide how the nine National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes and the six Public Health Priorities for Scotland will be delivered locally, ensuring services are person-centred, equitable and responsive to the needs of individuals and communities.</p> <p>This refreshed Plan builds on the previous Strategic Plan (2023–2026) and reflects significant changes in both national policy and local circumstances. It has been shaped by extensive engagement with people across Fife, including staff, partner agencies, carers, community groups and those whose voices are often less heard. Their feedback has helped identify what matters most to people across Fife and where our efforts should be focused over the next three years.</p> <p>The new Strategic Plan aligns with key national frameworks, including the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework and the Population Health Framework, which promote equity, sustainability and person-led care. Locally, it is informed by the Plan for Fife (2017–2027) and the NHS Fife Population Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023–2028) which together set out a shared vision for improving lives through integrated and sustainable service. Please see relevant links below.</p> <p>www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-service-renewal-framework/ www.fife.gov.uk/data/assets/file/0020/42248/Plan_for_Fife_2017_2027_a.pdf www.nhsfife.org/media/4cixmio8/phwb-strategy-web.pdf</p>

	A Strategic Needs Assessment carried out in 2025 has guided the development of this Strategic Plan, taking into account recent and projected demographic changes. As more people live longer with complex or multiple conditions, demand for health and social care services is increasing. This Plan responds to those pressures by setting out a clear framework for delivery, focused on prevention, innovation, and collaboration, with the aim of improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Fife.
Lead Directorate / Service / Partnership	Fife Health and Social Care Partnership
EqIA Lead Person	Vanessa Salmond, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance
EqIA Contributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leadership Team • Extended Leadership Team • Integrated Leadership Team • Participation and Engagement Team • Strategic Planning Team • Fife Wide Engagement Forum • Locality Core Groups • Strategic Planning Group • Armed Forces Lived Experience Group • Members of the public involved in some of the Partnership’s public engagement events, including but not limited to Carers Meetings, People’s First, Link Living, The Well Community Led Support Group.
Date of EqIA	February 2026

How does the proposal meet one or more of the general duties under the Equality Act 2010?

The Strategic Plan (2026–2029) sets out a clear commitment to equality, inclusion and human rights. It aligns with the Equality Act 2010 by embedding the three general duties: eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations across its three strategic priorities: Prevention, Communities and Digital, and its Framework for Delivery (Financial Sustainability, Integration, and Transformation).

In developing this Strategic Plan, Fife Health and Social Care Partnership has proactively engaged with a range of individuals and groups representing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, this included targeted engagement to ensure any potential barriers or adverse impacts were clearly identified.

Phase 2 engagement further strengthened this approach by involving a wide range of seldom-heard groups, including people with learning disabilities, sensory impairments, unpaid carers, LGBTQ+ groups, ethnic minority communities, and individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. This provided richer insight into the lived experience of inequality across Fife and helped identify specific barriers relating to digital access, communication, and primary care.

These findings will continue to directly inform our Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), which will be updated regularly over the next three years throughout the Strategic Plan’s lifecycle. This ongoing process ensures that equality considerations remain central to our decision-making, enabling us to identify and address any unintended impacts promptly.

As part of our ongoing commitment to mainstreaming equality, our Equality Outcomes were reviewed in 2026 and refreshed in line with national policy direction, updated evidence and feedback from people and communities across Fife. The refreshed outcomes, set out on page 31 of the Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029, strengthen our focus on accessible information, inclusive communities, improved equality data, participation and lived experience, and a diverse and confident workforce. These outcomes continue to guide how we design, deliver and evaluate services, ensuring equality remains central to all planning and decision-making. Further information about our Equality Outcomes and our wider equalities duties is available in our Mainstreaming the Equality Duty and Equality Outcomes Progress Report (January 2025), available on our website: www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/about-us/equalities

General duties	Please Explain
Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation	<p>The Strategic Plan includes a strong commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation both within the workforce and across service design and delivery. This is achieved through a comprehensive approach that combines mandatory training, inclusive policies, and proactive redesign of services to meet diverse needs.</p> <p>All employees are required to complete mandatory equality and diversity training every three years. This is supported by additional modules on harassment, victimisation, bullying, and disability discrimination, available through learning platforms such as Turas (NHS Fife), Oracle (Fife Council). Managers also complete training on mentally healthy workplaces, stress management, and inclusive recruitment practices. These resources are</p>

complemented by guidance on whistleblowing, reasonable adjustments, home and flexible working, and support for maternity, paternity, carers, and menopause ensuring that staff are protected and empowered throughout their working lives.

Services are designed to be fair, inclusive, and compliant with equality legislation, with Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) embedded into all major decisions, policies, and redesigns. These assessments ensure that services and support reflect the needs of people with protected characteristics and actively remove barriers to access and participation.

A clear example of inclusive service redesign is the Meals on Wheels Service, which was updated to better meet the needs of ethnic minority communities. This included changes to menu options, cultural considerations, and communication materials to ensure the service is welcoming and accessible to all.

The Partnership also ensures that key documents are available in Easy Read formats and has piloted tools such as Simply Readable to produce translations in multiple languages including Arabic, Chinese, Polish, and Ukrainian so that more people can participate in consultations and access information. We are making sure that the images and examples used in our leaflets, websites, and other materials show people from diverse backgrounds, so that everyone in Fife feels included and represented.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG) leads strategic workforce inclusion, supported by the Equality Pathfinders Recognition Scheme, with Bronze Level achieved in 2024 and Silver targeted for 2025. Over 470 staff participated in engagement sessions, and 30 facilitators were trained to lead inclusive conversations across the organisation.

The Partnership Wellbeing Oversight Group further embeds equality into workplace culture, with a Workforce Wellbeing Action Plan aligned to national strategies. This includes objectives focused on leadership, equality, and staff voice, ensuring that employees feel safe, valued, and supported.

	<p>The Ministry of Defence (MOD) Employer Recognition Scheme recognises employer support for the Armed Forces Community. There are three tiers Bronze, Silver and Gold; the Gold Award is the highest level and requires employers to become advocates for defence and the Armed Forces Community.</p> <p>Fife Council have been holders of Gold Award accreditation since August 2022. Revalidation for accreditation will be March 2027 with notification of award outcome expected in August 2027. NHS Fife was awarded the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award in August 2025.</p> <p>Together, these actions demonstrate a proactive and embedded approach to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation ensuring that both staff and service users experience fairness, dignity, and respect across all aspects of health and social care in Fife.</p>
Advancing equality of opportunity	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 promotes equity by removing barriers, meeting diverse needs, and encouraging participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Prevention Priority, the Strategic Plan commits to tackling health inequalities and improving access to care, particularly for groups disproportionately affected by poor outcomes. This is achieved by focusing on early intervention, promoting healthy behaviours, and ensuring that services are easier to navigate and more responsive to individual needs. To advance equality of opportunity, the Plan prioritises actions that reduce barriers to care such as improving access to mental health support in communities and primary care and expanding digital options for those who face transport or mobility challenges. It also includes targeted support for people affected by drug and alcohol use, recognising the stigma and systemic barriers they often face. The Plan commits to building knowledge and confidence in responding to self-harm across a range of settings. This includes training staff to provide compassionate, non-judgemental support, ensuring that individuals in distress who are often among the most marginalised receive timely help. By embedding this approach across services, the Strategic Plan helps prevent crisis, reduce harm, and promote recovery, particularly for those who may otherwise struggle to access care. These actions are designed to reduce variation in outcomes

across communities, improve equity in service delivery, and empower people to manage their health with confidence regardless of their background or circumstances.

- The Strategic Plan's **Communities** Priority plays a central role in this by ensuring that care and support are shaped around what matters most to people, carers, and families wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. This priority advances equality of opportunity by embedding inclusive locality planning and co-production at the heart of service design. It ensures that people's voices, especially those from marginalised or underserved groups, are heard and acted upon. Services are tailored to reflect local realities, reducing inequalities in access, experience, and outcomes. Support for unpaid carers is a key focus, delivered through the refreshed Carers Strategy (2023-2026). This includes funding for breaks, advocacy, and income maximisation, removing financial and emotional barriers that can prevent carers from maintaining their own wellbeing and participating fully in society. By strengthening community-led support, improving access to information, and ensuring timely, coordinated care at home, the Strategic Plan helps people live independently and with dignity. It also promotes fairness by recognising and responding to the different needs across Fife's communities, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- The Strategic Plan's **Digital Priority** promotes digital inclusion, ensuring that everyone can access services and manage their health confidently. This means more than just providing technology, it is about making sure people have the skills, support, and confidence to use digital tools in ways that work for them. To promote digital inclusion, we will expand access to care through video consultations, online prescriptions, and remote support making it easier for people to get help from home. We will build digital confidence by offering tailored training for individuals, carers, and staff, especially those less familiar with technology. Our infrastructure will be strengthened by improving connectivity and ensuring platforms are secure and user-friendly. Digital tools will be promoted in community spaces like libraries and GP (local doctors) practices, with services designed to be inclusive and available in multiple formats. We will also maintain non-digital options to ensure choice and

	<p>equity. Technology will be used to join up care through integrated records and smart devices, helping people stay safe and independent at home. These actions will support a more connected, confident, and equitable health and social care system across Fife.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan supports inclusive workforce development, ensuring staff are equipped to meet the needs of Fife’s diverse population. This includes training and development programmes that promote person-centred care and inclusive communication. Initiatives such as “Coach Approach” and “Good Conversations” training help staff build skills in active listening, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. These approaches empower staff to have meaningful interactions with individuals, ensuring services are responsive to what matters most to them. These programmes are part of a wider commitment to nurturing the workforce, as outlined in the Fife Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy (2022–2025). The Workforce Strategy includes actions to support wellbeing, leadership development, trauma-informed practice, and fair work principles. <p>These commitments are reinforced by the Strategic Plan’s Framework for Delivery, which prioritises financial sustainability, integration and transformation to ensure services are responsive to the needs of all individuals including those with protected characteristics.</p>
Fostering good relations	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 fosters understanding, trust, and connection across communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Participation and Engagement Strategy (2022-2025) ensures that people with lived experience of inequality are involved in shaping services. This is reflected in the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on co-production and community-led support. • The Plan promotes inclusive communication, including Easy Read formats and translation tools, to ensure everyone can access information and participate fully. • Initiatives such as Veterans First Point, Peace of Mind, and Playlist for Life help build empathy and challenge stereotypes, supporting the Strategic Plan’s goal of creating connected, compassionate communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HSCP’s Locality Planning approach ensures that health and social care services are shaped around the specific needs of local communities. This means working closely with people, both with and without protected characteristics to understand what matters most to them and to design services that are inclusive, responsive, and collaborative. By focusing on local priorities, this approach helps ensure that everyone has a voice in how services are planned and delivered. For more information on how Locality Planning works in Fife, including examples and ways to get involved, please visit: Fife Health and Social Care Partnership – Locality Planning. www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/about-us/locality-planning/ <p>These efforts contribute to the Strategic Plan’s overarching vision: ‘To enable the people of Fife to live independent and healthier lives’.</p>
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If the decision is of a strategic nature, how does the proposal address socio-economic disadvantage or inequalities of outcome?

Fairer Scotland duty	Please Explain
Socio-economic disadvantage	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 recognises that socio-economic disadvantage including low income, material deprivation, and limited access to services can lead to poorer health outcomes, reduced life expectancy, and social exclusion.</p> <p>In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Fairer Scotland Duty 2018, the Strategic Plan actively considers how to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. This commitment is embedded across the strategic priorities and the Framework for Delivery, which focuses on financial sustainability, integration, and transformation.</p> <p>The Strategic Needs Assessment 2025 highlights the scale and impact of socio-economic disadvantage across Fife, including significant variation in life expectancy between localities, higher rates of hospital admissions due to drugs and alcohol in deprived areas, and a growing population of older people with complex needs, many of whom live in poverty. It also identifies that children living in poverty face long-term risks to their health and wellbeing, and that targeted early intervention is essential to improving outcomes.</p>

The Plan responds to these challenges by embedding inclusive service design, tailoring services to local needs through locality planning, and ensuring that strategic decisions are informed by evidence and aligned with national frameworks such as the Population Health Framework. These approaches ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most and that services are designed to be fair, inclusive, and compliant with equality legislation.

Engagement during Phase 2 highlighted how socio-economic disadvantage interacts with geography, with people in areas such as Cowdenbeath, Glenrothes and Levenmouth reporting barriers that disproportionately affect disabled people, older adults, carers, and ethnic minority communities. Participants in more deprived communities further emphasised digital exclusion, restricted access to devices, poor connectivity, and low digital confidence and raised concerns about an over-reliance on digital pathways. These insights reinforce the importance of locally tailored approaches and of maintaining accessible, non-digital routes into services for those on lower incomes. Participants also repeatedly raised concerns about difficulties accessing GP appointments in more deprived areas, reinforcing the importance of ensuring that primary care access is considered within wider system planning to avoid widening socio-economic inequalities.

Prevention

Under the Prevention priority, the Strategic Plan focuses on reducing avoidable illness and promoting healthier lifestyles, particularly in areas with higher rates of deprivation. It recognises that health inequalities are often rooted in socio-economic factors and commits to addressing these through early intervention, targeted support, and improved access to care.

This includes expanding access to mental health support and strengthening primary care services in communities with poorer health outcomes. The Plan also promotes health literacy and self-management, empowering individuals and families to take control of their wellbeing before reaching crisis point. A key example is the Child Healthy Weight Service, which offers self-referral and tailored support to families in deprived areas. This service helps reduce childhood obesity and supports children living in poverty to achieve healthier

outcomes, contributing to long-term improvements in population health. By prioritising prevention, the Strategic Plan aims to reduce future demand on services, improve quality of life, and address the root causes of inequality.

Communities

The Communities priority is designed to support people, carers, and families to live independently and well at home, with access to local care and support that reflects their needs and aspirations. It places a strong emphasis on co-production, community-led support, and inclusive planning particularly in areas experiencing deprivation.

The Plan strengthens support for unpaid carers, many of whom face financial hardship and limited access to services. Through the refreshed Carers Strategy, carers are supported with income maximisation, advocacy, and flexible options for respite and wellbeing. Locality planning ensures that services are shaped by the lived experience of those affected by poverty and exclusion, and that resources are allocated in ways that reflect local priorities.

Inclusive service redesign is a key feature of this priority. For example, Speech and Language Therapists worked with Inclusive Sports sessions to create communication-friendly environments for children and young people with additional support needs. This included training sports instructors to simplify language, use basic Signalong vocabulary, and provide visual supports like pictorial timetables. These changes improved participation and independence, reflecting the Plan's commitment to designing services that are fair, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of Fife's population.

Digital

The Digital priority promotes digital inclusion as a means of reducing barriers to care and improving access to support. It recognises that digital exclusion is a significant issue for people living in poverty, particularly in rural or deprived areas, and commits to removing these barriers through infrastructure, training, and tailored support.

The Plan includes actions to improve internet connectivity in health and social care settings, provide digital skills training for individuals and staff, and ensure that digital

	<p>platforms are secure, inclusive, and easy to use. It also prioritises accessible communication, with surveys and consultation materials translated into multiple languages including Arabic, Chinese, Polish, and Ukrainian and Easy Read versions of key documents produced to support participation from people with literacy, learning, or language barriers.</p> <p>Phase 2 engagement reinforced that digital exclusion is not only about access to equipment or connectivity, but also about confidence, literacy, and trust. Participants across multiple localities expressed concern that digital approaches must enhance, rather than replace, traditional routes into care. These perspectives are particularly important for groups already facing barriers due to poverty, disability, age, or limited English, and emphasise the need for ongoing investment in inclusive, user-friendly, and non-digital alternatives.</p> <p>Communications materials are designed to reflect the diversity of Fife’s communities, including people of different races, genders, and backgrounds. This ensures that digital services are not only accessible but also inclusive and representative.</p>
Inequalities of outcome	<p>The Strategic Plan (2026–2029) directly addresses inequalities of outcome through its strategic priorities; Prevention, Communities, and Digital and its Framework for Delivery (Financial Sustainability, Integration, Transformation).</p> <p><u>Locality Planning</u></p> <p>The Strategic Plan recognises that outcomes vary significantly across Fife, with some communities experiencing poorer health, lower life expectancy, and higher rates of preventable illness. Through its Communities Priority, the Plan commits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring services to local needs, using data from the Strategic Needs Assessment 2025 to identify inequalities and target resources accordingly. • Empowering locality planning groups to co-design services with communities, ensuring that interventions reflect lived experience and local priorities.

This approach ensures that services are responsive to the specific challenges faced by different areas, helping to reduce inequalities in outcomes.

Participation and Engagement

The Strategic Plan embeds participation throughout its delivery model, ensuring that people with lived experience of inequality—such as carers, disabled people, and the Armed Forces Community—are actively involved in shaping services. This commitment is reflected in:

- An inclusive approach to participation and engagement, which promotes meaningful involvement and co-production.
- The creation of forums such as the Fife Wide Forum, Carers Forum, and Veterans Lived Experience Group, which inform strategic decisions and service design.

By listening to those most affected by inequality, the Strategic Plan ensures that services are designed to meet real needs and improve outcomes.

Workforce Development

The Strategic Plan recognises that a skilled, inclusive workforce is essential to reducing inequalities. Through its Transformation and Integration workforce it promotes:

- Inclusive leadership and wellbeing, supported by training programmes such as “Coach Approach” and “Mentally Healthy Workplace”
- The work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, which has developed a three-year Action Plan to foster a culture of inclusion and equity across Fife Health and Social Care Partnership.

This ensures that staff are equipped to understand and respond to the needs of people experiencing inequality, improving the quality and equity of care.

Having considered the general duties above, if there is likely to be no impact on any of the equality groups, parts 2 and 3 of the impact assessment may not need to be completed. Please provide an explanation (based on evidence) if this is the case.

An Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Part 2: Evidence and Impact Assessment

Explain what the positive and / or negative impact of the strategy is on any of the protected characteristics. If there is no impact, please explain why.

Embedding Equality in Strategic Planning and Service Design (2026–2029)

The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 is shaped by extensive engagement and evidence and is committed to designing and delivering services that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of people across all protected characteristic groups. This approach is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010, the Fairer Scotland Duty 2018, the findings of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment and the Health and Social Care Evidence Review (2025).

Age

Fife's population is ageing, with a projected 30% increase in people aged 65+ over the next 20 years. Older adults face increased risks of isolation, bereavement, and physical health challenges, particularly in rural areas. The Strategic Plan supports age-inclusive service design through locality planning, improved transport access, and investment in community-based care. For children and young people, the Plan prioritises early intervention and trauma-informed approaches, recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences and poverty. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) services and support are being strengthened, and health education in schools is being expanded to support long-term wellbeing.

Disability

Disabled people in Fife experience higher rates of mental health conditions, social exclusion, and barriers to accessing services. The Strategic Plan commits to co-producing services with disabled individuals, ensuring accessibility in both physical and digital environments. This includes Easy Read materials, assistive technology compatibility, and inclusive appointment systems. The Mental Health Strategy highlights the need for tailored support and suicide prevention for individuals with a disability, which is reflected in service redesign and commissioning priorities.

Gender Reassignment

Trans and non-binary people face elevated risks of poor mental health due to discrimination and lack of inclusive services. The Strategic Plan supports gender-affirming care, staff training in inclusive practices, and the creation of safe spaces. Engagement with LGBTQ+ groups has informed the need for privacy options, inclusive forms, and respectful communication in service settings. These insights are being embedded into digital health platforms and frontline service protocols.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

While this characteristic is less directly linked to health outcomes, the Strategic Plan recognises the role of relationship status and caregiving responsibilities in accessing support. Services such as carer support, relationship counselling, and family wellbeing programmes are being expanded. The Plan also promotes flexible support for carers, many of whom are partners or spouses, to reduce stress and improve health outcomes.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Suicide is a leading cause of preventable maternal death during the perinatal period, alongside medical complications such as thrombosis and thromboembolism. The Strategic Plan supports specialist perinatal services, parenting programmes, and trauma-informed care for mothers and infants. Accessibility of venues, flexible appointment options, and safe spaces for breastfeeding are being prioritised. The Plan also promotes joined-up care across maternity, mental health, and social services. This commitment is reflected in initiatives such as the *Fife Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2022–2025*, which takes a multi-agency approach to early intervention and support for those at risk, including parents and carers. The Action Plan emphasises community engagement, co-production, and integrated pathways to ensure that mental health support is accessible and responsive to family needs.

Race

Ethnic minority communities in Fife face higher barriers to accessing culturally appropriate services and are disproportionately affected by poverty and discrimination. The Strategic Plan embeds anti-racist practices in service design, ensures representation in communications, and supports translation of materials into multiple languages. For example, the Deaf Communication Service provides bespoke British Sign Language (BSL) classes for Deaf refugees from Syria and Ukraine, offering support and communication via Arabic and Ukrainian Sign Language. This initiative demonstrates how services are being adapted to meet cultural and linguistic needs, ensuring inclusion and equity. Engagement with groups such as The Well and Job Clubs has highlighted the importance of trust, visibility, and community outreach.

Religion or Belief

Faith communities can be both protective and challenging in mental health contexts. The Strategic Plan promotes respectful care that acknowledges religious beliefs and collaborates with faith-based organisations to improve outreach. Engagement has shown that timing and location of services must be sensitive to religious practices, and that stigma within some communities must be addressed through education and partnership.

Sex

Gender differences in mental health prevalence and service access are well-documented. Women are more likely to experience anxiety and depression, and are disproportionately affected by poverty, violence, and caregiving responsibilities. Men are more likely to die by suicide but less likely to seek help. While suicide accounts for fewer than 50 deaths annually in Fife compared to over 2,000 male deaths overall, its impact on families and communities is profound, and Fife's rate (16.6 per 100,000) remains close to the national average (17.5). The Strategic Plan supports gender-specific messaging, inclusive service design, and targeted support for both men and women. It also promotes awareness of gender bias in diagnosis and treatment.

Sexual Orientation

LGBTQIA+ individuals are at higher risk of mental health issues due to societal stigma and discrimination. The Strategic Plan ensures inclusive services, promotes peer support, and creates safe spaces. Engagement with LGBTQ+ groups has informed the need for tailored digital tools, inclusive language, and visible representation in service materials. The Plan also supports trauma-informed care and targeted outreach to reduce isolation and improve access.

Intersectionality and Data-Informed Design

The Strategic Plan recognises that individuals may experience multiple, overlapping inequalities. For example, disabled LGBTQIA+ people or ethnic minority carers may face compounded barriers. Co-production with people who hold intersecting identities is central to service redesign. Improved data collection and analysis, highlighted as a national gap is being prioritised to monitor outcomes and inform continuous improvement.

Further narrative for each protected characteristic is included below.

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
Age (including older people aged 65+)	The Strategic Plan recognises the substantial projected increase in the older population over the coming decade, which will significantly impact demand for community-based care, prevention services, and long-term support. This demographic shift directly influences the Plan's strong focus on prevention, sustainability, and early intervention to ensure services remain equitable, accessible and fit for the future	Despite these commitments, older adults may face disadvantages due to digital exclusion. The Strategic Plan Engagement Report clearly identified concerns among older people about overreliance on digital tools, limited access to devices, poor internet connectivity, and low confidence in using technology. These barriers can prevent older adults from accessing	To reduce the risk of disadvantage, the Strategic Plan commits to maintaining non-digital alternatives and ensuring that digital services are complemented by face-to-face and telephone-based options. Services will be delivered in locations and at times that are accessible for older adults, including outside standard hours and in venues with good transport links. The Plan also supports digital literacy initiatives and training for older people, alongside investment in infrastructure	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 is designed to benefit people across all age groups, with a particular focus on older adults and children. For older adults, the Plan supports improved access to services through locality-based planning, flexible appointment times, and venues with good transport links. It promotes the use of easy-read materials and age-appropriate formats to support understanding and engagement. The Health and Social Care Evidence Review (2025) highlights that older adults in Fife experience higher rates of emergency hospitalisation and chronic conditions such as Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and</p>	<p>essential services, particularly as more health and social care functions move online. The Evidence Review also shows that older adults in rural areas are more likely to experience isolation and reduced access to services, which can exacerbate health inequalities. Additionally, older people may be reluctant to seek help due to stigma or lack of awareness, and may struggle with navigating complex service systems, especially when digital-first approaches are used. Phase 2 engagement highlighted significant digital exclusion among older adults, including limited digital confidence,</p>	<p>to improve connectivity. Easy-read materials and multi-format communications will be used to ensure accessibility. The Partnership will continue to engage older adults in service design through locality planning and targeted outreach, ensuring that their voices shape the development of inclusive, age-friendly services. The Partnership will maintain non-digital access routes for key services, including telephone and face-to-face options, in response to older adults’ concerns about digital exclusion. Expand digital skills support through community-based training and targeted assistance for older adults.</p>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>cardiovascular disease. In response, the Plan prioritises community-based care, preventative health, and integrated support to reduce reliance on hospital services. For children and young people, the Plan aligns with the Children’s Services Plan 2023-2026 and The Promise, supporting early intervention, trauma-informed care, and mental health education in schools. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) services are being strengthened to address persistent and complex mental health needs, and the Plan promotes healthier lifestyles from an early age, recognising the long-term impact of</p>	<p>low skills, and concerns about the shift toward online-first access to services. Participants expressed a strong preference for traditional, face-to-face support and concerns that digital-only pathways may create barriers to essential care. Older adults also repeatedly identified difficulty accessing GP appointments as a major barrier to prevention and early intervention, which disproportionately affects those with multiple conditions or mobility challenges.</p>	<p>Continue to work with partners to understand and explore opportunities to support improvements in access to primary care, reflecting feedback that timely GP access plays an important role in prevention and early help.</p>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	childhood poverty and adverse experiences.			
Disability (Mental, Physical, Sensory, and Carers of Disabled People)	We will work with disabled people and carers to design services and support that are fair, inclusive, and easy to use. We will prioritise improvements to physical access in high-use venues and ensure alternative arrangements (home visits, digital consultations, community hubs) where full upgrades are not immediately feasible. Information will be available in accessible formats such as British Sign Language (BSL), Braille, and Easy Read. Digital tools will be designed to work with assistive technology like screen readers and voice controls so everyone can	Disabled people told us they face many barriers when trying to use digital health services. These include websites and apps that are hard to use, not having information in the right format, and not feeling confident with technology. Some people also worry about online safety, scams, and getting incorrect information. Carers, especially young carers, said it is hard to find support and that services do not always work well together. The Health and Social Care Evidence Review also shows that disabled people in Fife are more likely to have poor mental health and	To mitigate this, we will keep offering non-digital ways to access services like phone calls, printed leaflets, and face-to-face support. We will use digital translation tools to make digital content clearer and easier to understand. We are also expanding Technology Enabled Care (TEC), such as smart sensors and community alarms, which can be tailored to each person's needs. Staff will get training to help them support people with different types of disabilities, and we will work with local sensory services to make sure our tools and services meet everyone's needs. We will share information in community	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>use them. We are adding more peer support roles and training staff to be more inclusive, so they can better understand and meet the needs of disabled people, including those with sensory, cognitive, or physical challenges. We are also improving mental health services in the community and making transitions between children's and adult services easier. These changes will help reduce stigma, build confidence, and ensure people get the right help at the right time.</p>	<p>feel excluded. If we do not make services easier to use and more joined-up, disabled people and carers could miss out on the support they need. Carers may also experience overlapping inequalities, such as disability or poverty. Our approach embeds intersectionality to ensure support reflects these combined challenges.</p> <p>Phase 2 participants with disabilities reported barriers linked to digital access, including inaccessible platforms, poor compatibility with assistive technology, low digital literacy, and concerns about online safety. These issues risk widening inequalities if</p>	<p>places like libraries, GP (local doctors) and dentist practices, and as well as local hubs, and we will keep listening to disabled people and carers to make sure services continue to improve.</p> <p>We will ensure digital tools are accessible, compatible with assistive technology, and available in multiple formats. Maintain non-digital service options and provide tailored digital support, including one-to-one assistance where required. We will also improve coordination between services to reduce the need for individuals to repeat their story and strengthen access to primary care for disabled people and carers.</p>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
		digital services replace traditional access routes. Disabled people and carers also highlighted challenges accessing primary care and community-based support, exacerbated by fragmented systems and the need to repeat information to multiple professionals.		
Gender Reassignment	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 is committed to ensuring that services are delivered in ways that respect and affirm gender identity. This includes offering confidential service options, using inclusive language and pronouns, and ensuring that facilities such as toilets and signage are appropriate for transgender and non-	Trans and non-binary individuals often face elevated risks of poor mental health, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, as a result of discrimination, stigma, and exclusion. The Mental Health EQIA identifies that inappropriate facilities, lack of privacy, and non-inclusive communication can create significant	To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that services are inclusive and affirming of diverse gender identities. This includes reviewing facilities to ensure appropriate signage and privacy, offering confidential engagement options, and ensuring that forms and systems allow individuals to express their gender identity accurately. Staff will receive	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>binary individuals. We will train staff in gender-affirming care and inclusive practices, and promote safe spaces for support. These actions support our Communities priority by fostering dignity and inclusion, and our Digital priority by enabling private, secure access to services. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy EQIA highlights that transgender and non-binary individuals are more likely to experience poor mental health due to discrimination, social isolation, and lack of inclusive services. By embedding inclusive design and trauma-informed approaches, the Strategic Plan aims to improve access,</p>	<p>barriers to accessing care. Forms and systems that do not recognise diverse gender identities, or staff who are not trained in inclusive practice, can lead to distress and disengagement. Without targeted action, there is a risk that transgender and non-binary people will continue to experience poorer outcomes and reduced trust in health and social care services.</p>	<p>training in gender-affirming care, inclusive communication, and trauma-informed approaches. We will work with trans and non-binary individuals and representative organisations to co-produce improvements in service design and delivery. These actions will be supported by ongoing engagement and monitoring to ensure services remain responsive to the needs of people with lived experience of gender reassignment.</p>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	experience, and outcomes for people with this protected characteristic.			
Marital Status (Marriage and Civil Partnerships)	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 ensures that individuals are treated with dignity and respect regardless of their marital or civil partnership status. While this characteristic is not directly linked to poorer health outcomes, the Plan recognises that relationship status can influence access to support networks, caregiving responsibilities, and overall wellbeing. Support for carers and partners is embedded within the Communities priority, including access to flexible respite, advocacy, and family support services. These measures promote fairness and	Although no direct negative impacts are anticipated based on marital or civil partnership status alone, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy EQIA highlights that caregiving responsibilities often undertaken by spouses or partners can lead to increased stress, reduced access to support, and poorer mental health. If services do not adequately recognise or support individuals in caring relationships, there is a risk of exclusion or unmet need. This is particularly relevant for carers who may also have protected	To mitigate these risks, the Strategic Plan commits to inclusive service design that recognises diverse family structures and caregiving roles. Staff will be supported to understand the impact of relationship status on access to care and wellbeing, and inclusive language will be used across all communications and service pathways. Carers and partners will be actively involved in service planning and delivery, and flexible access options such as telephone, digital, and in-person support will be maintained. These actions will ensure that individuals in caring relationships are not disadvantaged and can	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	equity in service delivery and acknowledge the role of partners and spouses in supporting health and social care outcomes.	characteristics such as age or disability, compounding the potential for disadvantage.	access the support they need.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 supports pregnant women, new parents, and families by promoting safe, flexible, and accessible services. We will prioritise improvements to physical access in high-use venues and provide alternative arrangements such as home visits, online consultations, and community hubs where full upgrades are not immediately feasible. Venues will be breastfeeding-friendly and designed to support comfort and dignity. The Plan aligns with the national focus on perinatal	Without appropriate adjustments, pregnant women and new parents may face barriers to accessing services. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy EQIA highlights that women may experience anxiety, depression, or trauma during and after pregnancy, and that access to support can be limited by venue suitability, timing of appointments, or lack of awareness of available services. Breastfeeding mothers may struggle to find safe and private spaces, and those with	To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that services and support are delivered in accessible, welcoming venues with appropriate facilities for pregnant and breastfeeding individuals. Flexible access options including digital, telephone, and face-to-face will be maintained to support choice and convenience. Staff will be trained to understand the specific needs of pregnant women and new parents, and community-based support will be strengthened through collaboration with perinatal mental health services and family support	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>mental health, recognising that pregnancy and early parenthood can be associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression, and trauma. Suicide remains a leading cause of preventable maternal death during the perinatal period, alongside medical complications such as thrombosis and thromboembolism. The Strategic Plan supports access to specialist perinatal mental health services and parenting programmes to improve outcomes for mothers and infants. These actions contribute to our Prevention priority by promoting early intervention and to our Communities priority by enabling family-centred</p>	<p>young children may find it difficult to attend appointments in person. If services are not designed with these needs in mind, there is a risk of exclusion, delayed support, and poorer health outcomes for both parents and children.</p>	<p>organisations. Appointment scheduling will be coordinated to reduce travel time and stress, and information about available services will be promoted through trusted community channels. These actions will help ensure that pregnancy and maternity are supported through inclusive, responsive, and person-centred care.</p>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	care.			
Race (All Racial Groups including Gypsy/Travellers)	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 commits to working with ethnic minority communities to ensure services are culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible. This includes providing translated materials, interpretation services, and engaging with community leaders to build trust and improve visibility. We will embed anti-racist practices in service design and delivery, ensure representation in decision-making, and continue to build partnerships with organisations that support ethnic minority groups. These actions support our Prevention priority by addressing health inequalities, and our	The Strategic Plan Engagement Report identified several barriers faced by ethnic minority groups, including asylum seekers and individuals with limited English proficiency. Participants highlighted the need for translated leaflets, clear language, and culturally sensitive communication. Concerns were raised about inconsistent awareness among professionals particularly GPs (local doctors) regarding local support services, which can result in missed opportunities for early help. The Mental Health EQIA further evidences that ethnic minority communities face higher barriers to	To address these risks, the Strategic Plan will support the development of accessible resource packs and increase the presence of health and social care information in community venues such as GP practices, libraries, schools, and churches. We will work with frontline professionals to improve signposting and ensure that ethnic minority communities are actively involved in shaping service design. Staff will receive training in culturally competent practice, and interpretation services will be made available where required. These actions will be informed by ongoing engagement, to ensure services continue to reflect the needs and priorities of	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	Communities priority by ensuring culturally competent care that reflects the lived experience of diverse populations across Fife.	accessing culturally appropriate mental health services and are disproportionately affected by poverty and discrimination. Without targeted action, these groups may continue to experience poorer health outcomes and reduced access to care. Phase 2 engagement highlighted digital literacy barriers for some ethnic minority groups, particularly where English is not a first language. Limited digital confidence combined with language barriers can reduce access to online health information and digital consultations. Individuals from minority groups also noted that traditional access routes must	different ethnic, racial and cultural communities. The Partnership commits to providing digital and non-digital information in accessible formats and relevant languages. Traditional access routes will be maintained and local signposting will be strengthened so that people with limited English or digital confidence can access timely support.	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
		remain available to avoid disproportionate disadvantage.		
Religion, Belief, and Non-Belief	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 recognises the importance of respecting religious beliefs, practices, and worldviews in the design and delivery of health and social care services. We will ensure that services are inclusive and sensitive to faith-based needs, including avoiding scheduling services or engagement activities on religious observance days, using neutral venues, and ensuring that materials are respectful and inclusive. Inclusive engagement will respect diverse beliefs, including faith-based and non-faith perspectives such as atheism,	Stigma surrounding mental health in some religious communities can prevent individuals from seeking appropriate care and support. If services and support are not designed with cultural and religious sensitivity, individuals may feel excluded or reluctant to engage. Additionally, holding events in religious venues or failing to consider religious observance times may unintentionally disadvantage people of certain faiths or beliefs. There is also a risk that materials or messaging may contain language or imagery that is perceived	To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that community-based support is available in suitable, neutral locations and that scheduling takes account of religious observance. Staff will be supported to understand the role of faith and belief in shaping health behaviours and service engagement, including through training and partnership working with faith-based organisations. Information and advice will be provided in formats that promote awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing within religious, belief and non-belief communities.	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	humanism, and secularism. We will continue to collaborate with faith-based organisations to improve outreach, build trust, and promote understanding of available support. These actions support our Communities priority by fostering inclusive engagement and our Prevention priority by reducing barriers to early help and wellbeing.	as insensitive or exclusionary, particularly for those with minority or non-religious beliefs, including atheists, humanists and secularists.	Inclusive communication practices will be embedded across all services, and feedback from individuals with lived experience will continue to inform improvements.	
Sex (Women and Men)	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 recognises that women and men may experience different health needs and barriers to accessing care. We will address gender-specific needs by providing flexible engagement options for those with caregiving responsibilities, promoting	Gender bias in diagnosis and treatment can lead to misdiagnosis, underdiagnosis, or inappropriate care. Women may be disproportionately affected by poverty and caregiving responsibilities, which can limit their ability to	To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that staff are trained to recognise and challenge gender bias in service delivery. We will promote inclusive, gender-sensitive communication and ensure that services are flexible and responsive to the needs of	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>gender-sensitive messaging, and training staff to recognise and respond to gender bias in diagnosis and service access. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights that women are more likely to experience anxiety and depression, often linked to poverty, violence, and caring roles, while men are more likely to die by suicide and may face stigma when seeking help. The Strategic Plan supports inclusive messaging and tailored support to ensure both women and men can access appropriate care. These actions contribute to our Prevention priority by tackling stigma and promoting early help, and to our Communities priority</p>	<p>access services. Men may be less likely to seek help due to stigma or cultural expectations, increasing the risk of untreated health or mental health conditions. The Health and Social Care Evidence Review (2025) shows that women in Fife have lower healthy life expectancy than the national average, and that men are more likely to die prematurely from suicide and other preventable causes. Without targeted action, these disparities may persist and contribute to poorer outcomes for both women and men.</p>	<p>people with caregiving responsibilities. We will ensure that all services provide safe, private, and confidential environments for individuals to discuss sensitive health, mental health, and wellbeing concerns. For women, this includes ensuring privacy when disclosing experiences of domestic abuse, trauma, reproductive or sexual health issues. For men, this includes private spaces and confidential pathways that encourage open conversations about mental health, suicide risk, and conditions that may carry stigma. Staff will be trained in trauma-informed, gender-sensitive and confidential communication practices to ensure that individuals feel safe sharing</p>	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	by enabling equitable access to care.		personal information without fear of judgement or breach of trust. Mental health services will be designed to support both men and women, with targeted outreach and peer support models to reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking. We will continue to monitor gender-based health outcomes and engage with individuals and organisations to ensure services reflect lived experience and evolving needs. The Strategic Plan also promotes an inclusive workforce culture through Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) training, wellbeing initiatives, and leadership development—ensuring staff are equipped to deliver equitable care and that the workforce itself is	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
			supported through measures such as flexible working, mental health resources, and peer support networks.	
Sexual Orientation (Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual)	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 is committed to ensuring that LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and plus) individuals feel safe, respected, and supported when accessing health and social care services in Fife. Our approach will be inclusive, trauma-informed, and shaped by lived experience. We will embed co-production by involving LGBTQIA+ individuals in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services, ensuring that inclusive practice is informed by those with lived and living	LGBTQIA+ individuals are significantly more likely to experience poor mental health due to discrimination, stigma, and exclusion. National data shows that 45% of trans young people and 22% of cis LGBTQIA+ young people have attempted suicide, compared to 13% of girls and 5% of boys in the general population. LGBTQIA+ individuals are also disproportionately affected by homelessness, abuse, and negative experiences in healthcare settings.	To address these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that services are inclusive, affirming, and responsive to the needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Staff will receive training in inclusive practice, gender identity awareness, and trauma-informed approaches to ensure respectful, person-centred care. We will offer confidential engagement options and use inclusive language across all services and communications to promote dignity, trust, and accessibility. Service access, experience, and outcomes will be monitored to identify gaps and inform	

Protected characteristic	Positive impact (May benefit an equality group.)	Negative impact (Could disadvantage an equality group.)	Mitigations (Steps we will take to reduce the risk of disadvantage by an equality group.)	No Impact
	<p>experience. We will improve the visibility and accessibility of inclusive services through targeted outreach, accessible information formats, and partnerships with LGBTQIA+ organisations and community groups. These actions support our Prevention priority by reducing stigma and promoting mental wellbeing, and our Communities priority by ensuring inclusive, person-centred service design.</p>	<p>These intersecting inequalities can lead to delayed help-seeking, reduced access to appropriate care, and poorer outcomes. Without targeted action, LGBTQIA+ people may continue to face barriers to accessing services and experience a lack of trust in health and social care systems.</p>	<p>improvements. We will continue to build partnerships with LGBTQIA+ organisations and community groups, and ensure that LGBTQIA+ individuals are actively involved in shaping service design and delivery. These actions align with the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework, reinforcing our duty to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p>	

Please also consider the impact of the policy/strategy/process change in relation to:

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Mitigations	No Impact
Armed Forces Community	<p>Fife’s Armed Forces Community is estimated to include between 40,000 and 50,000 people. This includes approximately 1,000 serving personnel, 500 reservists, and around 21,000 veterans, along with their partners and families.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan for 2026–2029 is aligned with the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, which places specific responsibilities on Fife’s partner bodies. These include having due regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces. • the principle that it is desirable to remove 	<p>Individuals currently serving in the armed forces, veterans, and their partners and family members may experience problems when accessing health and social care services compared to the civilian population. This can include delayed or reduced access to essential services such as health and social care, housing, and education.</p> <p>Members of the Armed Forces Community may experience a range of challenges, including disability, mobility issues, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mental health difficulties, and problems related to alcohol or drug use. Financial concerns such as debt, as well as feelings of loneliness and family or relationship problems, are also common. Employment can be a particular issue, especially for partners or</p>	<p>We will continue to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and its significance for the Armed Forces Community among Fife partner agencies. As part of this effort, we are working to expand the number and variety of services and support available through the Forces Connect App, which serves as a national online directory of local resources for the Armed Forces Community. We are also enhancing training and guidance for employees, including the provision of mandatory e-learning modules and additional materials to help identify individuals covered by the Covenant. This will support consistent recording in medical records and social work systems during key contacts. Working with our partner agencies we can support</p>	

	<p>disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces; and,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces. 	<p>spouses who may have multiple short-term roles or gaps in their employment history. Additionally, many individuals lack local knowledge about the services, support, or grants available in Fife, which can further hinder access to help.</p> <p>A contributing factor to these challenges is that employees and other colleagues may be unaware of the Armed Forces Covenant, how to identify members of the Armed Forces Community, and the range of services and support available across Fife.</p>	<p>individuals to move into volunteering and/or learn new skills, and to become part of their local community. We are also improving data sharing and the transfer of paperwork between agencies. This includes facilitating the transfer of military records to GPs (local civilian doctors) and streamlining processes such as linking military leaving certificates with housing applications.</p>	
Carers	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 recognises the vital role of unpaid carers, including young carers and kinship carers, in supporting health and wellbeing across Fife. In line with the National Carers Strategy for Scotland, we will ensure that carers’ rights, wellbeing, and capacity to care are considered in all</p>	<p>Carers often face multiple and overlapping challenges, including financial hardship, social isolation, and poor physical and mental health. Many carers do not identify themselves as unpaid carers, and may be unaware of their rights or the support available to them. Young carers, in particular, may experience stress, tiredness, and reduced time for education</p>	<p>To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will continue to deliver against the commitments of the National Carers Strategy by embedding carer support into locality planning and service design. We will improve identification and referral pathways, ensuring that carers are recognised and supported early. Flexible access options will be</p>	

	<p>planning and decision-making. We will expand access to Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements, and provide flexible support including income maximisation, advocacy, and breaks from caring. We will maintain the Carers Forum and Carer Providers Forum to ensure carers' voices shape service delivery. These actions support our Communities priority by enabling carers to thrive and our Prevention priority by reducing crisis and promoting wellbeing.</p>	<p>and social activities. The Health and Social Care Evidence Review (2025) shows that areas with higher levels of unpaid care provision also experience poorer health outcomes and increased demand for support services. Without targeted and flexible support, carers may struggle to balance their caring role with other responsibilities, leading to burnout and reduced wellbeing.</p>	<p>maintained, including digital, telephone, and face-to-face support. We will work with partners such as Fife Carers Centre and Fife Young Carers to co-produce tailored support, including for kinship carers. Staff will receive training to understand carers' rights and the impact of caring responsibilities, and we will promote awareness through community outreach and inclusive communications. These actions will be informed by ongoing engagement to ensure services and support continue to reflect the lived experience of carers.</p>	
Care Experienced and Care Leavers	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 commits to supporting care experienced individuals and care leavers through trauma-informed, person-centred services and support that recognise their unique needs and experiences. We will work collaboratively with partners to deliver</p>	<p>Care experienced individuals and care leavers are more likely to face challenges such as trauma, disrupted relationships, mental health difficulties, and reduced access to stable housing, education, and employment. This group is at increased risk of poor mental health and social isolation, particularly during transitions to</p>	<p>To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that care experienced individuals are actively involved in service design and improvement. We will strengthen transition pathways between children's and adult services, embed trauma-informed approaches across all care settings, and ensure that digital solutions</p>	

	<p>national initiatives such as <i>The Promise</i>, <i>Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)</i>, and the <i>Education Maintenance Allowance</i>, ensuring that care experienced young people are supported through key transitions and have equitable access to opportunities. Their voices will be embedded into Equality Impact Assessment processes and wider planning frameworks to ensure services are inclusive, responsive, and shaped by lived experience. We will promote peer support and digital tools tailored to young people, helping to build resilience, improve access to information, and support self-management in ways that are flexible and empowering.</p>	<p>independent living. The Health and Social Care Evidence Review (2025) reinforces that care leavers often experience poorer health outcomes and face barriers to accessing services due to stigma, lack of continuity, and limited awareness of available support. Without targeted and sustained support, these individuals may struggle to navigate adult services and experience further disadvantage.</p>	<p>are inclusive and accessible. Staff will receive training to understand the impact of care experience on health and wellbeing, and services will be designed to promote connection, confidence, and choice. We will work with partners to ensure continuity of support, including access to housing, education, and mental health services, and monitor outcomes to identify gaps and inform continuous improvement. These actions support our Prevention priority by promoting resilience and early support, our Communities priority by enabling equitable access to care and opportunity, and our Digital priority by ensuring that technology is used to enhance inclusion and empower young people.</p>	
<p>Privacy (including information security, data protection, and</p>	<p>The Strategic Plan (2026–2029) commits to upholding robust data</p>	<p>No direct negative impacts are anticipated in relation to privacy as a result of</p>	<p>To address potential risks and ensure privacy is protected for all individuals,</p>	

<p>human rights)</p>	<p>protection and privacy standards across all services. This includes ensuring that digital tools and platforms meet security requirements and are designed with user confidentiality in mind. The Partnership and its delivery partners have established policies and procedures that align with legislative requirements, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998. These measures support ethical use of technology under the Digital strategic priority and promote dignity and rights under the Communities priority.</p> <p>The Plan also aligns with guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and embeds human rights principles into service</p>	<p>implementing the Strategic Plan. However, potential risks could arise if digital tools or platforms are not adequately inclusive or accessible, particularly for individuals with disabilities or those unfamiliar with technology.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals may feel excluded if digital services do not accommodate assistive technologies or alternative formats. • There may be concerns about privacy in shared or public spaces, such as waiting areas or during virtual consultations. • Inconsistent understanding of data protection responsibilities across partner agencies could lead to variation in practice or breaches of confidentiality. 	<p>the following mitigations are in place or planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All digital tools and platforms will be assessed for accessibility and compatibility with assistive technologies. • Information will be provided in a range of formats, including easy-read versions and translated materials, to ensure inclusivity. • Staff will receive regular mandatory training on data protection, privacy, and human rights, including how to manage sensitive information and uphold confidentiality in both physical and digital environments. • Privacy preferences will be discussed with individuals during service interactions, allowing for tailored 	
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	<p>design. This includes a person-centred approach to care, transparency in service delivery, and respect for individual autonomy. These commitments contribute to improved trust, better service experiences, and enhanced protection of personal data.</p>	<p>These risks, while not currently realised, must be considered in the context of increasing digital transformation and data sharing across services.</p>	<p>approaches to communication and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership will continue to monitor and review its information governance policies to ensure alignment with best practice and legal standards. • Feedback from service users and staff will be used to identify and address any emerging concerns related to privacy or data protection. 	
Economy	<p>The Strategic Plan (2026–2029) is aligned with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure services are financially sustainable, responsive to economic pressures, and capable of adapting to future challenges. By investing in prevention-focused, community-based models, the Plan aims to reduce long-term costs,</p>	<p>Despite these positive intentions, there are risks associated with financial hardship, service affordability, and workforce pressures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals and families experiencing poverty may struggle to access services, particularly if eligibility criteria or referral pathways are unclear. • Rising living costs and 	<p>To reduce the risk of disadvantage and ensure economic impacts are managed effectively, the following mitigations are in place or planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan is underpinned by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, ensuring that resources are allocated based on 	

	<p>improve outcomes, and support economic resilience across Fife.</p> <p>The Plan supports carers and vulnerable individuals through income maximisation initiatives, financial advice, and access to crisis grants. Ethical commissioning and collaborative planning with the third and independent sectors will continue to strengthen local capacity and ensure that services are inclusive, person-centred, and value-driven. These actions contribute directly to the Prevention priority by reducing avoidable harm and to the Communities priority by promoting economic stability and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Plan also supports workforce sustainability by promoting fair work practices, investing in training and development,</p>	<p>constrained budgets may limit the availability or affordability of care, especially for those not eligible for financial support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce shortages, particularly in rural areas or specialist roles, may impact service delivery and increase pressure on existing staff. • Economic insecurity may disproportionately affect unpaid carers, disabled individuals, and those with long-term health conditions, exacerbating inequalities in access and outcomes. <p>These risks are particularly relevant in areas of high deprivation, where demand for services is increasing and financial resilience is lower.</p>	<p>need, evidence, and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income maximisation services, financial advice, and crisis support will be promoted and made accessible through community hubs, digital platforms, and frontline services. • Ethical commissioning will continue to prioritise value for money, social impact, and local economic development. • Workforce planning will include targeted recruitment, retention strategies, and investment in training, particularly in areas with known shortages. • Services will be designed to be flexible and responsive, with a focus on early intervention and prevention to reduce long-term costs and avoid crisis-driven 	
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	and creating new roles and career pathways. This helps build a resilient, skilled workforce capable of delivering high-quality care and support.		<p>demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement with communities, carers, and service users will inform service design and ensure that economic barriers are identified and addressed. 	
Consumer Duty (Fair Treatment, Transparency & Protection of Vulnerable People)	The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 supports fair, transparent, and person-centred service delivery, which aligns with consumer-focused principles. By improving access to clear information, strengthening locality planning, and expanding advocacy and support pathways, people are better able to understand their choices, navigate services, and make informed decisions. The Plan’s commitments to inclusive communication, accessible formats, and early support will particularly benefit individuals who may be	Without appropriate checks and safeguards, there is a risk that some individuals particularly those experiencing poverty, low health literacy, digital exclusion, cognitive impairment, or crisis may find it difficult to understand service information or navigate complex pathways. This could reduce their ability to make informed choices or understand their rights. Variability in how information is communicated across partner organisations may also create confusion or lead to inconsistent experiences. People in vulnerable circumstances may be disproportionately affected if services are not transparent,	To reduce these risks, the Strategic Plan will ensure that information about services, rights, pathways, and support options is communicated clearly, consistently, and in accessible formats. Staff will be supported to provide clear explanations, check understanding, and identify when individuals may require additional assistance or advocacy. Locality planning and community-based engagement will help ensure decisions reflect lived experience and local needs. The Partnership will maintain non-digital access routes, offer support for people who need help navigating services, and continuously	

	vulnerable, at risk of disadvantage, or unfamiliar with health and social care systems. These actions promote trust, confidence, and fairness in how services are delivered.	easy to understand, or designed with their needs in mind.	improve complaints, feedback and redress processes so that people can raise concerns easily and safely. We will work across NHS Fife, Fife Council, and third-sector partners to promote fairness, transparency, and protection of people who may be vulnerable.	
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- Please record the evidence used to support the impact assessment. This could include officer knowledge and experience, research, customer surveys, service user engagement.
- Any evidence gaps can also be highlighted below.

Evidence used	Source of evidence
National Policy & Strategy Evidence	<p>Equality Act 2010 – Legal basis for protected characteristics and public sector equality duty.</p> <p>Fairer Scotland Duty 2018 – Requirement to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Scotland’s Mental Health Strategy 2017–2027 – Emphasis on stigma reduction, prevention, and partnership working.</p> <p>Mental Health Equality Evidence Report 2023 – Highlights differential outcomes and intersectional data gaps.</p> <p>Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework – National principles: Prevention, People, Community, Population, Digital.</p> <p>Population Health Framework – Focus on prevention, equity, and collaboration across sectors.</p> <p>Consumer Scotland Act 2020 – Places a statutory duty on public authorities in Scotland to consider the impact of strategic decisions on consumers, including individuals, households, and small businesses.</p>

	<p>The Act requires authorities to assess how decisions may increase or reduce consumer harm and promotes fairness, transparency, and improved outcomes for people using public services.</p> <p>Using Intersectionality to Understand Structural Inequality (Scottish Government) – Guidance on embedding intersectional analysis in policy and EQIA.</p> <p>Human Rights Impact Assessment Guidance – Emphasises tailored actions for marginalised groups.</p> <p>The Promise & GIRFEC – National frameworks for care experienced children and young people.</p> <p>Armed Forces Act 2021 (includes the Armed Forces Covenant Duty) – Legal obligation to consider service personnel, veterans and their families when planning, funding and delivering health and social care services.</p> <p>Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill - Referenced to inform disability-related mitigations and guide inclusive, rights-based service design for neurodivergent individuals.</p> <p>National Carers Strategy (Scotland) Strategic direction for supporting unpaid carers, including young carers and kinship carers.</p> <p>BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 - Informs inclusive communication and digital accessibility for deaf and hearing-impaired people.</p>
Local Evidence and Strategic Documents	<p>Strategic Plan 2026–2029 – Vision, priorities, locality profiles, and delivery framework.</p> <p>Carers Strategy 2023–2026 – Rights-based approach to unpaid carers.</p> <p>Commissioning Strategy 2023–2026 – Ethical commissioning and service alignment.</p> <p>Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023–2026 – Economic sustainability and resource planning.</p> <p>Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2024–2027 – First of its kind in Scotland; informs Priority 1.</p> <p>Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2025 – Inclusive</p>

	<p>engagement principles and practice.</p> <p>Locality Delivery Plans and Annual Reports – Community-level needs and priorities.</p> <p>Mainstreaming Equality Duty and Equality Outcomes Progress Report (January 2025) – Evidence of progress and lived experience integration.</p> <p>Annual Performance Reports – Service updates.</p> <p>Strategic Plan Refresh Report – Engagement 2026–2029: Used to inform mitigations and wellbeing sections.</p> <p>Strategic Plan Phase 2 Outcomes Report: Provided validated lived-experience insight from a wide cross-section of the population, including protected groups.</p> <p>Health and Social Care Evidence Review (2025) Strategic Needs Assessment data for Fife. Locality-level health and wellbeing indicators. Analysis of socio-economic disadvantage, health inequalities, and service access trends. Insights into unpaid care, digital exclusion, and population health projections.</p> <p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment (2025–2028) Detailed impact analysis across all nine protected characteristics. Evidence on mental health inequalities, intersectionality, and service access. Specific risks and mitigations for groups including disabled people, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and care experienced young people.</p>
Evidence gaps	Planned action to address evidence gaps
<p>Intersectional Data - Some people face multiple challenges at once—like being disabled, LGBTQ+, and living in poverty. Without data that shows how these factors overlap, we risk missing</p>	<p>We are improving how we collect and use data by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating our Equality Impact Assessment templates to include more detailed questions.

<p>the needs of those most at risk of poor health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing new approaches such as integrated care records to better understand people’s needs. • Creating policies that support better data sharing, including a new agreement between Fife Council, NHS Fife, and the Scottish Ambulance Service to support unplanned emergency admissions. • Working with partners like Fife Centre for Equalities to improve how we gather and analyse this information. <p>These improvements will help us make services more inclusive, targeted, and effective—especially for people who are often overlooked.</p>
<p>Mental Health Outcomes by Protected Characteristic - We know that some groups like ethnic minorities, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ individuals experience worse mental health outcomes. But we do not always have local data to show how well services are working for them.</p>	<p>We are looking at ways to improve NHS and social care data systems to better track outcomes. We are also using service-level feedback (e.g. from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Veterans First Point, and Link Workers) to understand where improvements are needed.</p>
<p>Care Experienced and Armed Forces Community - Care leavers and veterans often face unique challenges, including trauma, isolation, and difficulty accessing services. Without good data, we cannot be sure our services are meeting their needs.</p>	<p>We have added specific fields for these groups in our EQIA templates and survey forms. We have also set up lived experience groups and forums to hear directly from individuals, their carers and their families. We are also working with partners like Veterans First Point and The Promise to improve support.</p>
<p>Digital Inclusion - Not everyone has access to the internet or feels confident using digital tools. This can make it harder for people especially older adults, disabled people, and those in rural areas, to get the care they need.</p>	<p>We are testing tools to make information easier to understand. We are improving internet access in health and social care settings (such as care homes) and offering digital support through services like the Wells.</p>
<p>Children and Young People’s Voices - Children and young people have different needs</p>	<p>We have embedded Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) into our planning. We are using feedback from</p>

<p>and experiences, especially around mental health. If we do not hear from them directly, we risk designing services that do not work for them.</p>	<p>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and youth engagement activities to shape services and track improvements.</p>
<p>Economic Impact Monitoring - Poverty and financial stress can affect people's health, ability to care for others, and access to services. We need better data to understand how economic hardship affects outcomes.</p>	<p>We are developing a new Medium Term Financial Strategy to guide financial sustainability and service planning from 2026 to 2029. The Strategic Plan will align with this strategy to ensure resources are used effectively and responsibly. As part of this approach, we are supporting income maximisation, crisis grants, and ethical commissioning. We are also enhancing data systems to better track and understand economic impacts.</p>

If this proposal will impact on children/young people's rights either directly or indirectly, please complete Part 3. If this proposal will have no impact on children/young people's rights please provide an explanation below and continue to Part 5.

A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) is required.

Part 3 – Children’s Rights & Wellbeing Impact Assessment

<p>Which UNCRC Articles are relevant to the policy/procedure/strategy/practice (Please check Guidance for information)</p>	<p>Several rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are relevant to the Strategic Plan (2026 – 2029):</p> <p><u>General Principles</u></p> <p>Article 2 – Non-discrimination: All children have equal rights regardless of their background and must be protected from any form of discrimination or punishment.</p> <p>Article 3 – Best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions.</p> <p>Article 6 – Every child has the right to life, survival, and development.</p> <p>Article 12 – Right to be heard in decisions affecting them (Every child has the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and their views must be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity).</p> <p><u>Health and Wellbeing</u></p> <p>Article 23 – Rights of children with disabilities.(Every mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community).</p> <p>Article 24 – Every child has the right to the best possible standard of health and access to health care services.</p> <p>Article 27 – Right to an adequate standard of living. (Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development).</p> <p><u>Family and Care</u></p> <p>Article 5 – Respect for parental guidance and evolving capacities of the child.</p>
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	<p>Article 18 – Support for parents in raising children, including making sure that children of working parents have access to childcare services they are entitled to. .</p> <p>Article 20 – Protection for children unable to live with their families.</p> <p>Article 25 – Regular review of care and treatment for children living away from home.</p> <p><u>Protection and Safety</u></p> <p>Article 19 – Every child has the right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect.</p> <p>Article 39 – Support for recovery and reintegration of children who have experienced harm.</p> <p>These rights collectively emphasise the importance of ensuring children’s health and wellbeing is prioritised, their voices are heard, and they are treated as active participants in decisions that affect their lives, including about their own care.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan commits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for children and families. • Community-based support that respects family roles and promotes independence. • Digital inclusion to ensure children and young people can access services and information. • Mental health and wellbeing support, including trauma-informed care and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. • Participation and engagement of children and young people in shaping services.
<p>What impact will the policy/procedure/strategy/practice have on children’s rights?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Negative</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neutral</p>

<p>Will there be different impacts on different groups of children and young people?</p>	<p>Yes. The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 recognises that children and young people in Fife are not a single group with uniform needs. Their experiences and outcomes are shaped by a range of intersecting factors including disability, care experience, socio-economic background, mental health, rurality, and caring responsibilities. These differences are clearly evidenced across the Strategic Needs Assessment, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy EQIA, and the Strategic Plan Engagement Report.</p> <p>For example, care experienced children and young people may require trauma-informed support, continuity of relationships, and tailored transition pathways. Children living in rural areas may face barriers to accessing services due to transport limitations or digital exclusion. Young carers may struggle to balance their caring responsibilities with education and social life, while children affected by poverty may have reduced access to healthy food, safe housing, and mental health support. These factors can significantly influence health, wellbeing, and access to services.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan embeds the Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) into its equality processes, ensuring that the rights of children under the UNCRC are considered in all planning and delivery. Articles such as Article 3 (best interests of the child), Article 6 (right to life and development), Article 12 (right to be heard), and Article 24 (right to health) are particularly relevant. The Plan also aligns with national frameworks including <i>The Promise</i> and <i>Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)</i>, which guide how services should support care experienced children and young people.</p> <p>Fife’s role as a pathfinder site for the Bairns’ Hoose model further strengthens this approach. Bairns’ Hoose provides coordinated, trauma-informed support for children affected by abuse or violence, bringing together health, justice, protection, and recovery services under one roof.</p>
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	<p>This model reflects the Strategic Plan’s commitment to multi-agency working and child-centred care.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan also applies the PANEL principles—Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment, and Legality—to ensure that children’s rights are actively upheld. Participation is embedded through inclusive engagement with children and young people in service design. Accountability is supported by transparent monitoring and reporting of outcomes. Non-discrimination is addressed through targeted actions for groups facing multiple barriers. Empowerment is reflected in the commitment to co-production and trauma-informed care. Legality is ensured by aligning with the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024 and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>In practical terms, the Plan commits to improving access to mental health services through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), expanding digital tools and therapies, and tailoring services through locality planning to meet the needs of children and young people in different communities. These actions demonstrate that the Strategic Plan is designed to recognise and respond to the different impacts on children and young people in a way that promotes equity, inclusion, and improved outcomes across Fife.</p>
<p>What options have you considered to modify the policy/procedure/strategy/practice or mitigate any negative impact?</p>	<p>There are potential negative impacts for some children and young people, particularly those who face additional barriers or vulnerabilities. For example, children and young people living in poverty may struggle to access services if digital tools become the main route for support. While digital innovation is a key priority in the Strategic Plan, not all families have reliable internet access or the confidence to use online systems. This could lead to exclusion or delays in getting help. Similarly, children with disabilities or long-term health conditions may face challenges if services are not fully accessible or if transitions between services are poorly coordinated. Young carers may also be affected if service changes increase</p>

	<p>their responsibilities or reduce the support available to the person they care for.</p> <p>Care experienced children and young people are another group who may be disproportionately impacted. They often require consistent, trauma-informed support, and any disruption to services or relationships could affect their wellbeing. Children in rural areas may face transport barriers or</p>
<p>How will the policy/procedure/strategy/practice contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people?</p>	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 will contribute meaningfully to the wellbeing of children and young people in Fife, both directly and indirectly, across several areas of health and social care.</p> <p>At its core, the Plan is designed to support people to live healthier, more independent lives, and this includes children and young people particularly those who are care experienced, living with disabilities, affected by poverty, or facing mental health challenges. The Plan’s emphasis on prevention means that children and young people will benefit from earlier support, better access to information, and services that are designed to reduce the risk of poor outcomes later in life. For example, the expansion of mental health support in primary care and community settings, including improvements to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and digital therapies, will help children and young people manage distress, anxiety, and other challenges before they escalate.</p> <p>The Plan also promotes community-based care, which means children and families can access support closer to home, in familiar and inclusive environments. This is particularly important for young carers, children in rural areas, and those affected by social isolation. By strengthening locality planning and embedding lived experience into service design, the Plan ensures that children’s voices are heard and that services reflect their real-world needs.</p>

	<p>Insights from the Strategic Plan Engagement Report highlighted the importance of early support, particularly through schools and local services, and the need for clearer communication and more visible involvement from professionals such as GPs (local doctors) and social workers. Participants also emphasised the value of peer support and sharing lived experience to promote resilience and reduce stigma. In response, the Strategic Plan will continue to invest in trauma-informed approaches, strengthen links between education and health services, and promote community-based mental health support that is accessible and inclusive.</p> <p>Digital inclusion is another key area. While the Plan recognises the risks of digital exclusion, it also commits to improving access to online tools and resources, making it easier for children and young people to find help, manage their health, and stay connected. This supports their right to information (UNCRC Article 17) and their right to participate in decisions that affect them (Article 12).</p> <p>Importantly, the Plan aligns with national frameworks such as The Promise and GIRFEC, which guide how services should support children’s rights, wellbeing, and development. It also embeds the Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) process, ensuring that every strategic decision considers the impact on children and young people.</p>
<p>How will the policy/procedure/strategy/practice promote the Rights of the Child?</p>	<p>The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 supports children’s rights by making sure services are designed to help them grow up healthy, safe, and supported. It follows the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which says that children should be able to take part in decisions that affect them, have access to good health care, and live in safe and nurturing environments.</p> <p>The Prevention priority helps children by focusing on early support. This means spotting problems early and offering help before things get worse. For example, children and young people will benefit from better access to mental health services, including improvements to Child and Adolescent</p>

	<p>Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and more support in schools and communities. This helps protect their right to health and development and gives them a better chance to thrive.</p> <p>The Communities priority makes sure children and families can get support close to home. It recognises that every community is different and that some children, for example those who are care experienced, disabled, or living in poverty may need extra help. By working with local groups and listening to families, services can be shaped to meet real needs. This supports children’s right to be cared for in a safe and supportive environment and to have their voices heard.</p> <p>The Digital priority helps children access services and information online. It supports their right to learn, communicate, and get help in ways that work for them. At the same time, the Plan recognises that not all children have the same access to technology, so it includes actions to make digital services more inclusive and easier to use.</p> <p>Overall, the Strategic Plan promotes children’s rights by making sure they are considered in every part of service planning and delivery. It does not treat children as a single group, it understands that different children have different needs, and it works to make sure those needs are met fairly and respectfully.</p>
<p>Have you engaged with children & young people in the development of this policy/procedure/strategy/practice?</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes – Please complete Part 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No – please explain why</p>

- Please record the evidence used to support the children’s rights and wellbeing impact assessment. This could include demographic information, academic research, service monitoring/inspection reports, user surveys etc. Look at what existing evidence tells you about children and young people’s views and experiences. Identify any gaps in the evidence base and advise how you will address these.

Evidence used	Source of evidence
Local Evidence	<p>Strategic Plan 2026–2029: Includes locality profiles, strategic priorities, and delivery commitments that affect children and families.</p> <p>Children’s Services Plan (Fife): Sets out multi-agency actions aligned with The Promise and GIRFEC.</p> <p>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) improvement actions: Used to assess access and outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2025: Ensures children and young people are involved in shaping services.</p> <p>Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy EQIA: Highlights risks and needs for children, including trauma and digital access.</p> <p>Locality Planning Reports and Stakeholder Feedback: Includes insights from families, carers, and professionals working with children.</p> <p>Wells service feedback and youth engagement activities: Provide input from children and families.</p> <p>Strategic Plan Refresh Report – Engagement 2026–2029: Used to inform mitigations and wellbeing sections.</p> <p>Strategic Plan Phase 2 Outcomes Report: Provided validated lived-experience insight from a wide cross-section of the population, including protected groups.</p>
National Evidence (Legislation and Frameworks)	<p>Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: Requires public bodies to consider and promote children’s rights.</p> <p>UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child): Legal framework for assessing impact on children’s rights.</p> <p>The Promise: National commitment to improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people.</p> <p>GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child): National wellbeing framework used locally to guide planning and support.</p>
Evidence gaps	Planned action to address evidence gaps
Fife does not currently collect detailed	The Strategic Plan embeds the Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact

<p>intersectional data showing how overlapping factors such as disability, poverty, and care experience affect children's outcomes.</p>	<p>Assessment (CRWIA) into all planning processes. EQIA templates have been updated to include care experience and young carers, helping to strengthen equality monitoring and build a more complete picture of children's needs.</p>
<p>Engagement with children and young people is not consistent across all Fife localities, particularly for those who are care experienced or living in rural areas.</p>	<p>The Participation and Engagement Team will expand targeted engagement activities, including easy-read surveys and youth-led sessions, to ensure children's voices are heard in every locality and reflected in service design.</p>
<p>There is limited local data on digital exclusion among children and young people, including how lack of access to devices or internet affects their ability to access services or participate in education and wellbeing activities.</p>	<p>Fife Health and Social Care Partnership is testing digital translation tools and improving digital infrastructure in health and social care settings. This will help identify and reduce barriers to digital access for children and families.</p>
<p>Fife does not yet have a robust system for tracking the long-term wellbeing and life outcomes of care experienced children and young people.</p>	<p>The Strategic Plan aligns with The Promise and GIRFEC and commits to working with partners to improve data sharing and monitoring. This includes strengthening links between children's services, education, and health to support continuity of care and long-term planning.</p>
<p>Mental health services such as CAMHS do not consistently report outcomes by protected characteristics like ethnicity, disability, or gender identity.</p>	<p>Feedback from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and youth services will be used to inform strategic decisions. Fife will work to improve data systems and reporting practices to ensure services are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children and young people.</p>

Part 4 – Children’s Rights & Wellbeing – Engagement and Participation of Children and Young People

Engagement and participation with children and young people should incorporate the 7 golden rules of participation. Please tell us how you made sure these were followed during participation and engagement

1.	Understand my rights	How did you ensure that the child/children or young people had an understanding about their rights? We ensured that children and young people were supported to understand their rights by creating safe, inclusive spaces for engagement. Tailored resources and clear communication were used to help participants feel confident in expressing their views. This approach was informed by the UNCRC and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and will continue to be strengthened through ongoing engagement.
2.	A chance to be involved	Did children and young people understand the project, and what is being asked of them How did you ensure that all communication was accessible? How did you meet the needs of all children and young people taking part? Children and young people were given meaningful opportunities to participate through engagement sessions, including those delivered in partnership with youth-focused organisations. These sessions were designed to be accessible and inclusive, with both in-person and online formats offered to suit diverse needs and preferences. This will continue to be strengthened through ongoing engagement.
3.	Remember it is my choice	How did you make sure you gave children and young people choices? Participation was voluntary and flexible. Children and young people were invited to contribute in ways that suited them, with no pressure to respond. This ensured that their involvement was based on genuine interest and comfort and respected their autonomy throughout the process.
4.	Value Me	How did you make sure that children and young people know their views have been taken seriously and have made an impact? Feedback from children and young people was analysed and reported in the Strategic Plan Engagement Report, ensuring their voices informed the development of the Strategic Plan. Their views were treated as essential contributions, and their lived experience helped shape priorities and mitigations within the CRWIA and wider EQIA.
5.	Support Me	How did you identify and overcome any barriers to participation?

	Barriers to participation were addressed through tailored engagement methods. This included the use of translated materials, simplified language, and trusted community settings. Staff were briefed to provide empathetic, trauma-informed support, and additional time was allocated to ensure children and young people could engage meaningfully.	
6.	Work Together	How well did working together achieve aims of participation?
	Engagement activity was developed and delivered by the Participation and Engagement Team, building on existing relationships with youth organisations and community groups. This approach helped ensure that children and young people were meaningfully included in the process, with their views informing the development of the Strategic Plan.	
7.	Keep in Touch	What have you planned to ensure that children & young people are informed of the outcome/decision?
	Children and young people will be kept informed of how their feedback has influenced the Strategic Plan through follow-up communications and future engagement activities. Ongoing engagement will provide further opportunities for dialogue, ensuring that participation is ongoing and not limited to a single event.	
What impact has the engagement/participation made?		
<p>Engagement during the Strategic Plan refresh surfaced several key themes relevant to children and young people, particularly through feedback from groups such as Link Living and the LGBTQ+ Club. These sessions highlighted the importance of early support, trauma-informed care, and consistent relationships with professionals, issues that are especially pertinent to care experienced young people, young carers, and those facing mental health challenges.</p> <p>This feedback directly influenced the Strategic Plan's commitment to expanding access to community-based mental health services, improving transitions between children's and adult services, and promoting peer support models to reduce stigma and build resilience. It also reinforced the need for inclusive communication and non-digital access routes, particularly for children and families affected by poverty, disability, or rural isolation.</p> <p>While Phase 1 engagement did not explicitly document direct participation from children and young people in all localities, it laid the groundwork for more targeted and inclusive engagement in Phase 2. Phase 2 expanded the overall reach of engagement significantly, involving 392 stakeholders through online and in-person sessions, including organisations working directly with families, young carers, and young people whose experiences influence children's rights and wellbeing. This wider engagement surfaced repeated themes around the importance of early intervention, accessible community-based support, mental health provision, and equitable access to services for those experiencing disadvantage.</p>		

The stronger engagement network built during Phase 2 involving family-focused organisations, carers' groups, mental health services, and equality-led community groups now gives us a better foundation for meaningful engagement with children and young people in the next phases.

These insights have further shaped the Strategic Plan's commitment to expanding youth-led sessions, easy-read surveys, and tailored engagement activities in partnership with schools, youth organisations, and community groups. These actions will ensure that children and young people are meaningfully involved in shaping services that affect them, and that their voices continue to inform strategic decisions.

Ongoing engagement will also support the delivery of the Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment by ensuring that feedback from children and young people is actively used to refine service design, monitor outcomes, and uphold their rights under the UNCRC. This ongoing dialogue will help embed participation as a core principle of the Strategic Plan and ensure that the impact of engagement is both visible and sustained.

Part 5: Recommendations and Sign Off

By signing off the EqIA including CRWIA, you are agreeing that the EqIA including CRWIA represents a thorough and proportionate analysis of the policy based on evidence listed above and there is no indication of unlawful practice, and the recommendations are proportionate.

Date completed: 12 th February 2026	Date sent to Compliance Team: 8 th December 2025 and 5 th February 2026 FOI.IJB@fife.gov.uk
Senior Officer Name: Vanessa Salmond	Designation: Head of Strategic Planning and Performance

FOR COMPLIANCE TEAM ONLY

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Date checked and initials	11/02/2026 AS/CT