



Mainstreaming the Equality Duty and Equality Outcomes Progress Report

July 2026

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Introduction

This report sets out the approach of Fife Integration Joint Board (IJB) in making the public sector equality duty integral to its functions. This includes the IJB's progress towards mainstreaming equality and an update on the IJB's Equality Outcomes for 2023 to 2026.

Fife Health & Social Care Partnership has refreshed its Strategic Plan for the period 2026–2029. In alignment with the updated Strategic Plan, the Integration Joint Board (IJB) has also revised its Equality Outcomes for 2026-2029 and the new Equality Outcomes are shown on page 46.

As a result, this Mainstreaming Report has been published slightly earlier than originally anticipated and is structured around providing updates on progress relating to the 2023-2026 equality outcomes.

Legislative Context

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty (Section 149) which requires public bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not.
- foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Some public authorities, including Fife Integration Joint Board, are also required to publish reports on the progress they have made integrating the general equality duty into the exercise of their functions, to better perform that duty. These progress reports are usually published every two years.

The public sector equality duty covers these protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity

- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

Fairer Scotland Duty

The Fairer Scotland Duty (the Duty) came into force in 2018 and places a legal responsibility on named public bodies in Scotland to actively consider (pay 'due regard' to) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

The Duty defines "socio-economic disadvantage" as living on low income compared to others in Scotland, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Socio-economic disadvantage can be experienced in both places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion. Examples of socio-economic disadvantage include low wealth, material deprivation, and area deprivation (experienced by communities of place and communities of interest).

The Fairer Scotland Duty is intended to reduce the inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. Inequalities of outcome is defined as any measurable differences between those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and the rest of the population, for example in relation to health and life expectancy or educational attainment. Socio-economically disadvantaged households have a greater risk of experiencing negative outcomes.

Ongoing cost-of-living concerns continue to have a significant impact on people already experiencing disadvantage including minority ethnic communities, disabled people, older and younger people, and women.

NHS Fife, Fife Council and Fife Integration Joint Board have all amended their Equality Impact Assessment Templates to reflect the Fairer Scotland Duty, and equality impact assessments are undertaken and published in line with the Duty.

Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming equality means integrating equality into the day-to-day activities of an organisation and ensuring compliance with the requirements of equality legislation.

This approach has several benefits for organisations including:

- equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture of the organisation.

- the organisation knows and can demonstrate how, in carrying out its functions, it is promoting equality.
- mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement and better performance.

The Mainstreaming the Equality Duty Report 2025 summarised the actions that had been taken towards integrating the general equality duty into the day-to-day working of Fife Integration Joint Board and provided an update on progress towards achieving the equality outcomes established for 2023 to 2026.

A regular Fife Strategic Needs Assessment is produced to support the ongoing development of the Plan for Fife 2017 to 2027. The 2024 Assessment is an evidence-based snapshot of the current circumstances across Fife, in the context of many contributing factors. It is intended to provide insight and constructive challenge to encourage us to think about problems and opportunities in new ways.

A Health and Social Care Evidence Review was also produced for the partnership in July 2025.

Fife continues to face key challenges including:

- ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis, for example employment opportunities, energy costs, and weekly family budgets.
- increased demand for public services when funding is reducing
- poverty
- inequality
- national housing emergency
- healthy life expectancy is lower than the Scottish average
- digital exclusion
- ageing population and rising complexity of needs
- mental wellbeing is declining

Fife IJB set equality outcomes for 2023 – 2026 and these outcomes have been reviewed against the key messages contained in the 2024 Strategic Needs Assessment and the 2025 Health and Social Care Evidence Review. This Mainstreaming the Equality Duty and Equality Outcomes Progress Report – July 2026 provides updates on progress made towards these outcomes.

Fife Integration Joint Board

Fife Integration Joint Board (IJB) was established on 1st April 2016 and is responsible for the planning and delivery of integration arrangements and delegated functions in Fife. The IJB issues formal Directions to the partners, Fife Council and NHS Fife, setting out the services to be delivered by these partner bodies. The partners then provide assurance to the IJB that the services have been delivered. The IJB retains responsibility for strategic planning, operational oversight, and performance management of these health and social care services:

- all adult and older people Social Work Services.
- community health services, for example district nursing, physiotherapy, and mental health services.
- children's community health services, such as health visiting.
- housing services which provide support services to vulnerable adults, and disability adaptations.
- the planning of some services provided in hospital, for example medical care of the elderly.

The IJB includes representatives from Fife Council and NHS Fife, it also has several professional advisors and other specialists. The IJB is commonly referred to as Fife Health and Social Care Partnership. This is the public facing aspect of the Integration Joint Board and is essentially the employees from both organisations working in partnership, along with colleagues in the independent and third sectors, to deliver health and social care services.

The IJB meets its equality duties both through its own actions and those of the wider Partnership.

Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026

Every Integration Joint Board in Scotland must have a Strategic Plan that sets out the vision and future direction of their health and social care services. This includes how the nine National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes for Health and Social Care will be delivered locally, along with the six Public Health Priorities for Scotland. Strategic Plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are still relevant to the needs of the area and the people who live there.

Fife's Strategic Plan incorporates the aims outlined in the Plan for Fife 2017 to 2027 which includes actions to reduce levels of preventable ill health, and premature mortality across all communities, particularly around obesity, alcohol and smoking.

The Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026 sets out the Partnership's agreed vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities over this timescale.

Vision

To enable the people of Fife to live independent and healthier lives.

Mission

We will deliver this by working with individuals and communities, using our collective resource effectively. We will transform how we provide services to ensure these are safe, timely, effective, high quality and based on achieving personal outcomes.

Values

Person-focused	•	Integrity	•	Caring	•	Respectful
Empowering	•	Inclusive	•	Kindness		

Strategic Priorities



Further information about the Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026 is available on our website: www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/publications.

Locality Planning

An important part of Fife health and social care integration was the creation of localities, bringing decision making about health and social care local priorities closer to communities. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 puts in place the legislative framework to integrate health and social care services in Scotland. Section 29(3)(a) of the Act requires each Integration Authority to establish at least two localities within its area.

Localities provide one route, under integration, for communities and professionals (including GPs, acute clinicians, social workers, nurses, Allied Health Professionals, pharmacists, and others) to take an active role in, and provide leadership for, local planning of health and social care service provision. Promoting equality and improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for the people in Fife is at the heart of locality planning.

Fife has established seven locality groups aligned to Fife Council's local area committees. These groups are the driving force behind a collaborative approach that ensures decisions are made where they matter most close to the people and communities they serve.



Participation and Engagement

Participation is central to the work of the Health and Social Care Partnership with the people of Fife. We are committed to listening to people and taking views into account to achieve the best possible outcomes for everyone.

The Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022 to 2025 set out the principles, and approaches for participation work across all adult health and social care services in Fife. This Strategy supported the Health and Social Care Partnership not just to listen, but also to act on the thoughts and feelings of the public on health and social care services, and to use feedback as part of ongoing quality and service improvement. The Participation Team provide an important service in helping Teams and Services across the Health and Social Care Partnership to develop their participation practice.

Fife Integration Joint Board is committed to the elimination of discrimination and promotion of equality and human rights. This will be embedded into public engagement and participation activities fulfilling the public sector duty under the Equalities Act 2010 by the following: -

- engagement activities will be planned to remove barriers by being flexible, accessible, and inclusive.
- working collaboratively with stakeholders.
- adhering to reflective practice to continually seek improvement in public participation including learning from the experience of others.
- ensuring engagement is appropriate, proportionate, and effective for the participation and engagement activity.
- employing a variety of innovative methods along with tried and tested methods to ensure maximum participation.
- working in collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the appropriate people, communities and organisations are involved.



Carers

Changes to the way that services are delivered can impact on individuals, and the people who care for them. For example, reductions in service provision for an individual can have a negative impact on the carers' health and wellbeing, financial situation, work role, family relationships or other commitments.

Under the Equality Act 2010, carers are considered as 'associated' with someone who is protected by the law because of their age or disability. This means that carers have the right to be treated fairly, and are protected from being discriminated against, harassed, or treated differently because of their responsibilities as a carer.

All carers are included in the Partnership's Carers Strategy 2023 to 2026 and the supporting delivery plan, guidance, and procedures. This approach ensures that recognition of carers human rights, priorities and requirements, and potential impacts on their health and wellbeing, as well as their capacity to undertake their caring role, are considered in all planning and decision-making.

Communication

The IJB's Communication Strategy outlines key communication aims that enable us integrate equality and diversity including:

- keeping people, communities and organisations up to date and supported to participate in the planning and delivery of our services - particularly to share their views and ideas. This can include stakeholders who are directly or indirectly affected, may have an interest or concern or may be impacted in the future.
- ensuring people know how to access services (both provided and purchased/contracted) including those who are harder to reach, so they can make better informed choices and decisions about how they can be supported to meet their health and social care needs or that of others.
- keeping our staff and partners updated, promoting integrated working and providing mechanisms to share feedback and learnings.
- promoting our shared culture and 'Team Fife' approach – on integration, our shared identity, values and behaviours.

Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA)

An equality impact assessment is an evidence-based approach that assesses the potential impact on equality of a new strategy, policy, or decision. It provides a positive opportunity to:

- take effective action on equality.
- develop better policies and practices, based on evidence.
- be more transparent and accountable.

Fife Integration Joint Board uses EQIAs in governance processes and reporting templates. This helps us to understand the potential impacts of our decisions, whether our services are meeting everyone's needs, and where any changes may be required. Fife Council and NHS Fife also use EQIA's, further information is available [here](#):

- Fife Council: www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/council-and-democracy/equality,-diversity-and-human-rights/equality-impact-assessments
- NHS Fife: www.nhsfife.org/about-us/equality-and-human-rights/equality-impact-assessment-eqia

During 2023, Fife IJB updated and improved their processes to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 following a Scotland wide audit by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). A new EQIA Template was developed along with guidance and good practice examples. The EHRC produced Good Practice Examples for their 8 Step Checklist and Fife IJB processes were highlighted for two of these: - 'Collect equality evidence' and 'Document decisions and how due regard formed part of that decision'.

The EQIA Template also includes areas to support individuals with care experiences (particularly children), carers and the Armed Forces Community. A children's rights and wellbeing impact assessment has also been incorporated into the Template.

The IJB EQIA process is due to be reviewed in 2026.

Equality Outcomes 2023 to 2026

Fife Integration Joint Board is committed to promoting dignity, equality and independence for the people of Fife. Our Strategic Plan and collection of supporting strategies and delivery plans ensures that we continue to work effectively with partners, local communities, individuals, their families and carers, to challenge sources of inequality such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to promote equality of opportunity for all.



These are our equality outcomes for 2023 to 2026.

1. Improved collection and use of equality data, including protected characteristics, to support service planning and delivery, and promote mainstreaming of equality rights.
2. Individuals with lived experience of inequality and exclusion will have more opportunities to get involved and share their views, concerns, and suggestions for improvement across the Partnership.
3. Increased collaboration with communities and partners that have

experience and expertise working with groups that have a protected characteristic, leading to improved health outcomes for individuals, their families and carers.

4. Greater diversity and an inclusive workforce culture, with employees from all backgrounds and cultures reporting that they feel increasingly valued.
5. Improved understanding and better relations between individuals and groups who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

All the activities supporting the Strategic Plan are reviewed annually and aligned to the relevant equality outcomes.

Cumulative Impacts from Budget Savings

The IJB are committed to making financial decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and rights of the people of Fife, in line with the public sector equality and Fairer Scotland duties. To support meeting these duties, EQIA's were considered for each budget proposal put forward in March 2026, to understand the impacts, inform the development of the proposals and to take steps to mitigate any negative impacts identified wherever possible. Two of the proposals were part of overarching strategies where an EQIA had previously been completed for the strategy and it was identified that the proposals did not create any further impacts for those with protected characteristics. A further two proposals did complete a preliminary EQIA, but it was subsequently identified there were no negative impacts on protected characteristics from the proposals. The remaining proposals did not create equality impacts. On this basis, it was noted that the risk of cumulative impacts was very low.

Progress towards achieving our Equality Outcomes

Each year the Partnership produces an Annual Performance Report which describes the work carried out to support the outcomes of the Strategic Plan. These documents are available on our website here:

www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/about-us/publications.

The following outlines progress made towards achieving the equality outcomes. The examples provided are illustrative and do not represent a comprehensive list of all activities.

Equality Outcome 1

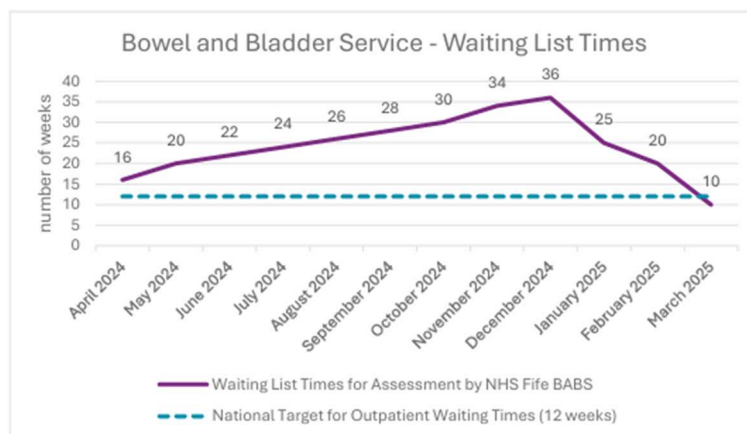
Improved collection and use of equality data, including protected characteristics, to support service planning and delivery, and promote mainstreaming of equality rights.

Service Improvement – Bladder and Bowel Services

Since initiating our Quality Improvement (QI) methodology, we have made significant strides in reviewing and enhancing our referral process for bladder and bowel services. Our primary goal was to address the extensive 36-week waiting list for patients.

- In September 2024 we initiated a process review to identify any bottlenecks and inefficiencies.
- Our first Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle that involved referral criteria implementation commenced in November 2024. We successfully implemented revised referral criteria, resulting in a more streamlined process that also prioritised urgent cases. For example, after 12 weeks the waiting list for palliative patients had improved to 20 weeks.
- Our second PDSA cycle involved education and training sessions that included collaborating with wider professionals.
- Our third PDSA cycle was to increase the weekly clinics offering online, telephone and face-to-face consultations when appropriate. To date our efforts have effectively reduced the waiting list from 36 weeks to 10 weeks, significantly improving access to necessary care.

The Scottish Government Health Care Standards state that 95% of all patients, should receive their outpatient appointment within 12 weeks of referral. Our Test of Change has successfully seen a reduction from 36 weeks waiting list time to 10 weeks in line with Scottish Government Health Care Standards.



NHS Fife Bladder and Bowel Services – waiting list times for non-housebound community patients

We will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of these changes, ensuring sustained improvements and responsiveness to individuals needs that will see a reduction to 5 weeks by August 2025.



CAMHS Parent/Carer Consultation Group

Following the necessary NHS Fife approval, we launched our Child and Adolescent Mental health Services (CAMHS) Parent/Carer Consultation Group in February 2025. The overall purpose of the group is to involve parents and carers in shaping the service, to help us provide the best care for children and young people. The group is an opportunity for parents and carers to share their ideas on how we can do things better in CAMHS. It is also an opportunity for us to get input from parents and carers about how we deliver our services. Communication within the group will be over email, meeting face-to-face or getting together virtually.

Parents and carers can sign up to the group using a QR code, which is displayed on posters in CAMHS waiting areas and in a leaflet sent out with all appointment letters. We are also writing to parents and carers of all children and young people currently being seen in CAMHS, inviting them to become members of the group. Once parents/carers sign up, they are sent a welcome email, which includes the group's Terms of Reference. This document outlines the purpose, aims, governance, and roles and responsibilities of the group.

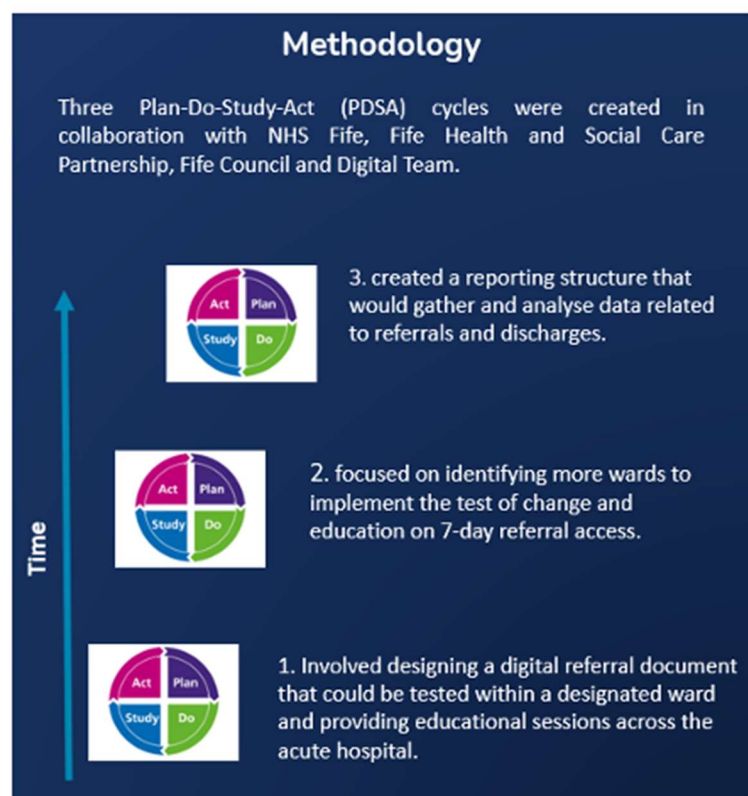
Once all invitation letters have been sent out, we plan to start engaging with the group. We have already had some ideas suggested, which will be taken to CAMHS management team initially, and then put forward to group members for discussion.

Streamlining Patient Transitions: A Digital Referral Initiative

The transition from hospital to home is a critical phase in patient care, often fraught with challenges that can lead to readmissions and compromised patient outcomes. This initiative explored the benefits of implementing a digital referral process within an Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership Discharge Hub aimed at streamlining communication and coordination among healthcare providers, patients, and community resources.

Over the course of the following 12 months, as we expanded our efforts to include additional wards, we observed noteworthy trends in referral patterns. Our analysis indicated a marked increase in the number of referrals received during the weekends, particularly between the hours of 4pm and 8am. This data highlights the significance of weekend referrals as a crucial component of our overall referral process.

Quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrated a notable enhancement in both the accuracy and 24-hour/7-day per week referrals. Staff feedback highlighted increased efficiency, attributed to the digital process. This shift has also provided us with valuable data indicating a rise in our activity levels. Future research will focus on expanding this initiative to encompass the front entrance of the acute hospital and community wards.



Evaluation of Shockwave Therapy in managing foot/ankle conditions

Extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT) is a widely used non-invasive treatment in orthopaedic and musculoskeletal (MSK) medicine. It is a valuable tool for promoting healing in soft tissue and bone. Radial shockwaves are used to treat superficial structures, delivering; rapid, high energy, short acoustic waves into the tissues and this encourages regeneration and tissue repair.

NHS Fife Podiatry Service offers Radial ESWT (rESWT) as an additional therapy for MSK disorders of the foot and ankle. Patients are referred for rESWT in line with NHS Fife Foot Pain Pathways. RESWT is used as an additional treatment where patients continue to be impacted by pain despite intervention.

We evaluated the impact of Shockwave Therapy through an audit, looking at both Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and MOxFQ (which is a validated Patient Reported Outcomes Tool).

<u>Aim</u>	<u>Method</u>
To evaluate the effectiveness of rESWT in reducing foot and ankle pain. <u>Treatment Protocol</u> 1 x weekly for 4 weeks 6 week follow up appointment Further 2 sessions offered as required/appropriate (criteria VAS 3>)	All patients attending for rESWT over a 9-month period were asked to complete MOxFQ pre and post treatment, and VAS scores were recorded pre and post treatment. Data was then split into individual conditions (Plantar Fasciitis, Plantar Fibroma and Achilles Tendinopathy (mid portion). 94 patients in total were included. Data was excluded from the final audit results and write up, where there was incomplete data, due to: aspects of data not being collected by the Podiatrist (VAS and/or MOxFQ), patients being lost to follow up or not completing the initial 4 week block of treatment. 34 patents were excluded.

Key Results:

- Improved VAS and MOxFQ scores across all treatment groups.
- Plantar Fasciitis and Achilles Tendinopathy had the largest proportion of treatments carried out.
- Plantar Fasciitis treatment resulted in 54.56% of patient reporting a VAS <3 post treatment and Achillies Tendinopathy 50% of patients reporting a VAS <3 post treatment.

Musculoskeletal pathways have now been updated to support access to Shockwave Therapy for patients who are most likely to benefit from this treatment. This information has been shared at National Foot and Ankle Conference and Royal College of Podiatry Conference to share and inform practice out with Fife.

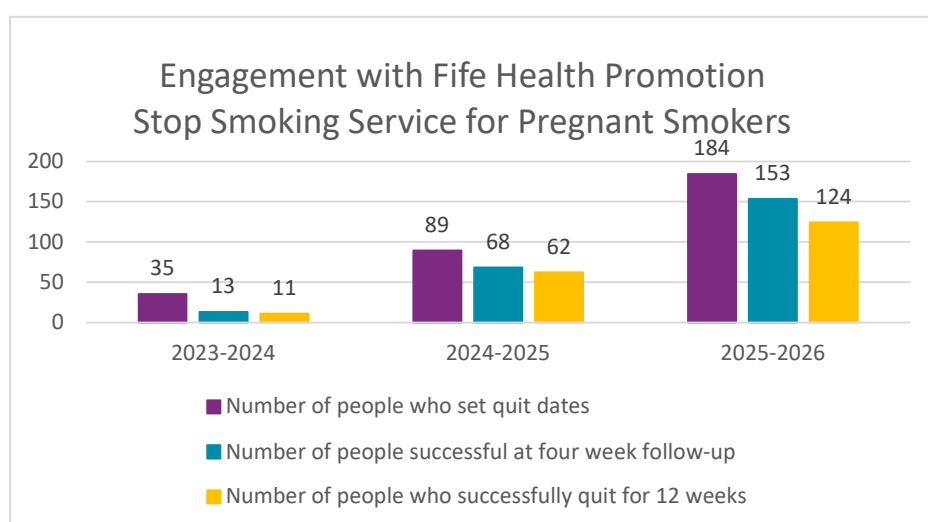
Smoking Cessation - Maternity services support for pregnant smokers

Tobacco dependence during pregnancy poses significant risks to both mother and baby, including increased rates of stillbirth, preterm birth and low birth weight. Effective support to help pregnant women stop smoking is therefore essential.

Our work has been to increase engagement with pregnant smokers and support them through a stop smoking programme. This includes:

- **Specialist Advisors:** Dedicated staff provide personalised support tailored to the needs of pregnant women and their partners.
- **Quit Your Way Service:** A free, confidential, and specialised service offering support to stop smoking during pregnancy.
- **Convenient Support:** Offers phone support or in-home visits, allowing for flexible options that suit the user.
- **NRT Access:** Eligible individuals can receive vouchers for free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products, including patches, gum, and lozenges.
- **Family Support:** Support is extended to partners and other family members to create a smoke-free environment.
- **Referral Pathway:** Midwives can directly refer expectant mothers to the service, or people can self-refer by calling 0800 025 3000.

We have improved the successful quits of pregnant smokers from 62 in 2024-2025 to 124 in 2025-2026. This achievement has been possible due to the commitment and consistency of the specialist Smoking Cessation Team along with the collaborative work and support from Fife Maternity Services.



This project and ongoing work continue to identify opportunities to support pregnant smokers and maximise benefits for families in Fife.

Equality Outcome 2

Individuals with lived experience of inequality and exclusion will have more opportunities to get involved and share their views, concerns, and suggestions for improvement across the Partnership.

Mental Health Awareness at Work: Health & Social Care Forum

Fife Health Promotion Service, Workplace Team offer free and confidential workforce health safety and wellbeing advice and guidance to reduce health inequalities which in Scotland, are widest in the working age population.

The Health and Social Care Forum identified a training need, and the Workplace Team assisted the Forum to develop an appropriate training session. Thirteen colleagues from local organisations attended the session. This is some of the feedback from attendees:

- 73% (8) said the presentation was 'very good' and 27% (3) said it was 'good'.
- 64% (7) said the activities were 'very good' and 36% (4) said they were 'good'.

"(Awareness of) how my own professional and personal behaviours/habits blurred my own lines/thoughts".

"Good balance between presentation and group work"

Carers Community Chest Fund

The Carers Community Chest is a recent example of how we are extending the reach, scale and scope of the support available to unpaid carers to meet our carers strategy's main intent. The Carers Community Chest fund is supporting 54 projects in the year with over £400,000 of funding in total. In doing so each of these projects is able to establish new



supports in local areas and open the door to hundreds, if not thousands, of carers, giving them the chance to live a positive life alongside their caring role.

Each project has short term funding available to establish itself. In each instance the project will have to secure longer term resources to be able to ensure it continues to have a positive impact in its local area.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion: Interim Plan and Action Plan

Since February 2025, Fife Health and Social Care Partnership has continued to progress its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) priorities through the delivery of the EDI Action Plan 2024–2027. Activity has focused on embedding inclusive practice, strengthening staff engagement, and building leadership capability across services.

A key development has been the launch of the EDI training programme in March 2026, supporting staff to build knowledge, confidence, and practical skills in applying inclusive approaches within their roles.

The Reverse Mentoring Programme pilot concluded in September 2025, with 11 mentor–mentee pairs achieving 100% completion. Feedback was consistently strong, demonstrating increased understanding, strengthened relationships, and a positive impact on leadership awareness and behaviours. Building on this success, a second cohort commenced in May 2026, with 16 pairs participating, reflecting sustained organisational commitment and demand.

Targeted engagement has supported priority areas, including neurodiversity. The Neurodiversity Natter event, held in December 2025, brought together over 50 participants to share experiences and identify practical actions to improve inclusion. This directly informed the development of key resources, including:

- *Neuroinclusion in the Workplace: A Comprehensive Guide*
- *A Guide for Neurodivergent Colleagues, by Neurodivergent Colleagues*

These outputs provide practical, accessible guidance for staff and managers and demonstrate how lived experience has shaped tangible improvements.

The Partnership Equality Network (PEN) continues to play a central role as a staff-led forum, supporting connection, peer support, and contribution to EDI developments, while ensuring staff voice remains central to progress.

Recognition of this work has been achieved through the Equality Pathfinders programme, with Fife HSCP attaining Silver Award status in 2025 and remaining on track to achieve Gold.

Through continued engagement and delivery of the Action Plan, Fife HSCP is strengthening its commitment to an inclusive workplace where diversity is valued, staff feel heard, and inclusive practices are embedded across services.

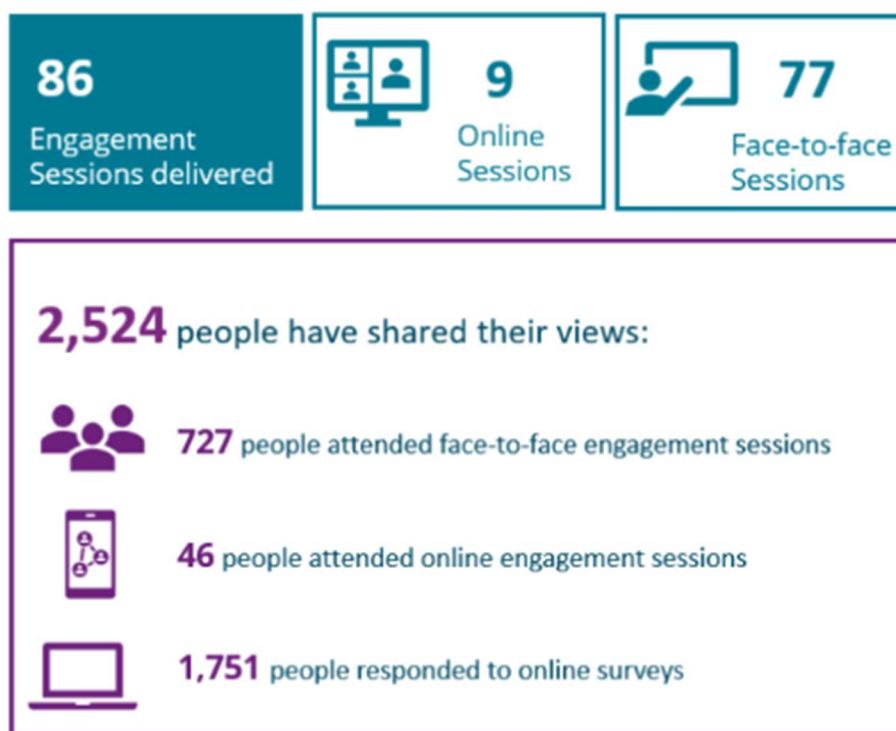
The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report was presented to the Integration Joint Board on 26 November 2025 and a copy can be found

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/about-your-council2/politicians-and-committees/committees/fife-wide-or-strategic/health-and-social-care-integration-joint-board>

Participation and Engagement

Over the past year (2025/2026), Fife Health and Social Care Partnership has worked to design and improve services around what matters most to people. We listened to the experiences of people who use services, unpaid carers, communities and staff across Fife, and used this insight to shape service improvements and inform longer-term planning. Between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026, we progressed 25 engagement projects. Ten were completed and we are already helping to shape improvements, while fifteen are underway to inform future service and strategic planning.

These are highlights from the ten completed engagement projects:



51 people registered as members of Fife Wide Public Engagement Forum, the Forum offers a welcoming space for people to influence key work and to share feedback. Staff feedback is guiding updates to digital mental health resources.

Key achievements this year

- The Participation and Engagement Team email network is for people who want to have a voice in issues that matter most to them across health and social care. By joining the network, members receive updates on live engagement opportunities, helping them to stay informed and take part in shaping services and decisions in their community. Since April 2025, the email network has increased by 43%, with a membership of 468 people.
- Ongoing support for the Fife Carers Forum (led by Fife Carers Centre) is helping to shape the new Adult Carer Support Plan and improving recognition of carers. Of the people we engaged with, 45% identified as unpaid carers, with 13 requesting an Adult Carer Support Plan, and 53 seeking information or support.
- Local voices, and community priorities, have actively shaped the development of the new Strategic Plan 2026-2029.
- Extensive feedback from over 300 people is informing Fife's Local Dementia Action Plan.
- Development of Fife's Bairns' Hoose, shaped by children and families, includes co-design of the vision, layout, and engagement frameworks to create a supportive, therapeutic environment.
- The Community Hospitals Transformation Programme gathered patient, staff and community insights to modernise rehabilitation pathways.
- The Patient Safety Oversight Group continues improving inpatient mental health safety through lived experience involvement.
- Feedback from over 1,200 people informed improvements to Urgent Care, especially around clarity of access routes and transport challenges.
- A six-month Test of Change in North East Fife explored access to mental health support, informing a new Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Strategy for Fife.
- Community Pharmacies gathered feedback from over 300 people, showing improved awareness of services and areas for better communication.
- Access Therapies Fife and Moodcafé.

Bairns' Hoose

This initiative forms part of the Fife Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder Programme and aligns with the National Bairns' Hoose Standards and the Healthcare and Forensic Medical Services Standards (April 2025). The Pathfinder framework and funding enabled the Partnership to prioritise trauma-informed improvements that uphold children's rights, minimise distress, and support Fife's role as a national pathfinder test site, while a purpose-built Bairns' Hoose facility is in development.



The Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy Children's Ward environment was adapted using trauma informed design principles, with a focus on privacy, calm, and emotional safety. Improvements were concentrated in the areas below:

- **Arrival and waiting area:** the previously open waiting space was partitioned to improve dignity and reduce exposure to busy ward activity.
- **Adolescent specific space:** a separate area to provide greater privacy and a more suitable environment for teenagers and young people.
- **Discreet video door entry system:** a controlled access point with a small camera, enabling staff to verify visitors and release the door entry near the examination suite without drawing attention in public areas. This supports privacy and safeguarding by helping manage arrivals sensitively and reducing the risk of unplanned contact.
- **Multi agency professional room:** created to enable confidential discussion and coordination between health, police, and social work reduces duplication, supports continuity, and ensures children experience a joined-up response away from child and family areas.
- **Consulting/interview room (repurposed):** adapted to support assessment, conversations, and planning as part of the Investigative Medical Examinations (IME's) pathway.

Across these spaces, sensory friendly décor, soft lighting, and trauma informed furnishings were introduced to reduce anxiety and sensory overload, now a predictable, integrated pathway. Trauma-informed principles were embedded across clinical and support teams, supported by Pathfinder training. Staff emphasise child led pacing, clear explanations, and emotional regulation, supported by child friendly resources.

Quantitative measures are in development, however early qualitative evidence shows calmer experiences for children and families, improved alignment with Bairns' Hoose Standards (notably environment and planning for children), elimination of

unnecessary transfers during Investigative Medical Examinations, and improved consistency of care.

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Fife Schools

Around half of all mental health conditions begin by the age of 14, rising to 70% by age 18. Schools are therefore a vital setting for prevention and early intervention—helping ensure young people learn in environments that are safe, inclusive and free from stigma.

In January 2025, Fife Health and Social Care Partnership's Health Promotion Service partnered with Fife Council's *Our Minds Matter* programme to provide mental health and wellbeing training and resources to pupils and staff across Fife high schools. The work aligns with many local and national strategic priorities particularly the Partnerships Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2024-2027 and Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2029 '*Let's talk about mental health*'.

Alongside direct delivery in schools, the programme has contributed to wider system change. This includes involvement in the Fife Suicide Prevention Multi-Agency Core Group and the Young Person's Reference and Decider Skills Group, helping ensure that young people's voices shape local approaches.

Reach and Activity to date:

The *See Me See Change* Programme—focuses on reducing stigma and improving understanding of mental health—this national programme has been delivered to:

- 18 staff across nine high schools
- over 120 pupils across eight high schools

Participating schools include St Andrews, Balwearie, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Queen Anne, Beath and St Columba's High Schools.

As a result, each school is developing a whole-school action plan to:

- Tackle mental health stigma.
- Promote wellbeing for pupils and staff.
- Create peer support opportunities for senior pupils.

Impact

1. Building staff confidence: In-service training on suicide prevention and anxiety management has strengthened staff capacity to support young people.
2. Curriculum Development: See Me See Change has been incorporated into the new PSE guidance in Fife to ensure that anti-stigma is at the core of pupils learning about mental health.
3. Amplifying pupil voice: Young people's perspectives are increasingly invited to feed into service development, including contributing questions and priorities in commissioning processes.

4. Growing peer support: For example, at Kirkcaldy High School, pupil-led wellbeing drop-in sessions now attract an average of 20 young people each week, providing a safe and supportive space for discussion and connection.

This work is helping to create a more open, supportive culture around mental health in Fife schools—where young people feel better equipped to understand their wellbeing and seek help when they need it.

Quotes from pupils after See Me See Change training.



Equality Outcome 3

Increased collaboration with communities and partners that have experience and expertise working with groups that have a protected characteristic, leading to improved health outcomes for individuals, their families and carers.

Major Trauma Coordination

In 2024, the Fife Major Trauma Service received 68 referrals. 81% of referrals received were for patients who had sustained major trauma (Injury Severity Score greater than 15) and 19% were for patients who sustained trauma not classified as major trauma. The mean caseload number for the service was 60, the median caseload number was 60 (range 54 to 72), and the mode was 54.

The Fife Major Trauma Service Team carried out their first Major Trauma Rehabilitation Plan Roadshow event in September 2024 at the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. This education event was hosted and facilitated by the Major Trauma Service Team and included a range of learning activities including presentations and interactive work. The event was aimed at major trauma link therapists and therapists in Fife who frequently complete Rehabilitation Plans. The event provided attendees with the opportunity to:

- Hear more about the Scottish Trauma Network and the South East Trauma Network.
- Meet members of the Major Trauma Service Team.
- Learn more about the Rehabilitation Plan (purpose and use in practice).
- Share learning with other therapists involved in the completion of Rehabilitation Plans.
- Participate in a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity which meets Health and Care Professions Council CPC Standards 2, 3 and 4.

The event is part of an ongoing quality improvement project with the Fife Major Trauma Service, and preliminary data following the event has been positive and encouraging. A total of 16 therapists, working in services across NHS Fife and the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, from a range of professions including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy attended the event. The results showed 38% fewer prompts were required to request Rehabilitation Plans be completed, and 50% fewer corrections were required on the Rehabilitation Plans after the event, when compared with data collected three months prior to the event. Feedback from attendees at the event was very positive and another event is planned for April 2025.

Feedback from attendees at the Major Trauma Rehabilitation Plan Roadshow.



Compass

Compass is a Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership commissioned service providing a holistic, intensive care management social work service for individuals affected by long-term alcohol and drug use.

The service launched in September 2023 and has received 129 referrals between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, with most cases currently allocated and active. Despite full staffing, the service is at capacity with a waiting list. The Team is co-located with the NHS Addictions Service, and works closely with the hospital liaison teams, third sector, housing and health colleagues. The focus on collaboration supports a “team around the person” approach which helps to deliver more personalised experiences and improve outcomes for people supported by the service. The Compass Team are regular attenders at local support groups for people who use substances across Fife and have received multiple messages of positive feedback for adults with lived experience and their families over the 18 months. Going forward, the Team will incorporate critical information from substance use risk assessments, formulation, and information based on the SURE (Substance Use Recovery Evaluation) structured assessment tool and develop a programme of audit activity to support quality assurance oversight.

Adult Support and Protection Biennial Report

The purpose of the Biennial Report is to provide assurance in relation to the Adult Support and Protection Committee's work towards supporting the application of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 (the Act) and our shared vision to ensure that all adults at risk feel safe, supported, and protected from harm. The Biennial Report provides a degree of statistical data in respect of the characteristics of adults at risk of harm. The report contains a summary of local activity over 2022 to 2024 and how the functions of the Adult Support and Protection Committee were

maintained during the coronavirus pandemic, the challenges faced, our response to these and sets out priorities for the future.

Fife Adult Support and Protection Committee (ASPC) has a shared vision that all adults at risk feel safe, supported and protected from harm. The Committee is a statutory body established under section 42 of the Act. The ASPC is the primary strategic planning mechanism for inter-agency adult support and protection work in Fife. The Committee is made up of senior representatives of key agencies who work together to effectively discharge its obligations in respect of policy and practice in adult support and protection matters. Fife's ASPC reports on its work and progress and is accountable to the Chief Officer Public Safety Group. The report highlights our Communication and Engagement Strategy which builds on already impressive work to listen to the voices of those with lived experience and involve those we aim to protect in service design and delivery. The strategy has seen an intensive media campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the types of harm that adults can be at risk from and encouraging reporting. Working in partnership with Kingdom FM the ASPC has initiated quarterly radio campaigns supported by Kingdom FM's social media pages. Whilst the overall impact of such campaigns is hard to assess the hard data of follow up social media hits indicate that the results are on a par with any major local commercial camp. The report contains a range of statistics which the ASPC use as part of their evaluation of trends and to validate our improvement journey. The report looks forward to the current reporting period and the ASPC has recently signed off the committee improvement plan for 2025 to 2027.

Adult Support and Protection Locality Social Work Services lead the coordination and response to all adult support and protection (ASP) activities. During 2024 to 2025, ASP referrals in Fife rose by 26% (from 4,435 to 5,580). These referrals involved 3,173 adults. Multiple factors could contribute to the increase in referrals, including economic challenges, the impact of COVID-19, social care sector issues, awareness campaigns, and improved identification of harm. Partnership working under ASP remains a strength, with awareness raising activity, and shared learning from significant events. Fife took a multi-agency approach to enhancing our ability to consider system learning by commissioning training from Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCiE) for key partners in our ASPC. This work has resulted in improved mutual understanding of role and responsibility, shared decision-making platforms, and reflects the values of all partners in the ASP process.

Case Study

Social Work received a concern report from a partner agency highlighting concern that an adult had provided an inconsistent account of the reason for a physical injury. Due to the adults' physical needs a welfare check was initiated to ensure the adults care needs were being met. The Adults West Locality Team undertook a welfare check and utilised professional curiosity which resulted instantly recognising that the adult was fearful and in need of immediate support to seek refuge from their partner. The Team identified instantly through the adult's behaviour and non-verbal presentation that they were experiencing fear and distress. The Team supported the

adult to seek immediate safety by supporting to a place of safety. The Team coordinated an immediate safety plan with multiple partner agencies to ensure the adult was safe and supported. The Team continues to coordinate and collaborate with key agencies a holistic risk assessment and safety plan to support the adult to live free from harm and to ensure their human rights are upheld. The adult described the Team as "life savers," when they arrived to undertake a welfare check at the adult's home.

HENRY

Our workforce requires the skills to engage with parents on the topic of healthy eating, being active, sleep and dental health.

The HENRY approach is a unique and holistic approach of working with families underpinned by the evidence on risk and protective factors for whole-family nutrition, healthy weight and child development. HENRY integrates proven behaviour change models into a supportive and effective approach that increases parental confidence and their ability to provide a healthy start and healthy childhood for their child. The HENRY approach brings together support for parenting efficacy, family emotional wellbeing and behaviour change with information about nutrition, physical activity, oral health and more. Parents and children supported by HENRY become a healthier weight and make statistically significant lifestyle changes which independent clinical trials show are sustained at follow-up. You can find out more about HENRY here: <https://www.henry.org.uk>.

Over the last year we have increased staff confidence and knowledge on engagement techniques and clear messaging around key topics (healthy eating, being active, sleep and dental health) through training on the HENRY approach. The training was managed by the Partnership's Health Promotion Service and delivered through the Health Promotion Prevention and Early Intervention Training Programme. We now have six colleagues who are qualified trainers, and we have provided training sessions to multiple groups across Fife including:

- early years officers
- community partners
- health visitors
- dieticians
- principal teachers
- nurture teachers.



Adult and Older Adult Social Work Locality Teams

Adult and Older Adult Social Work Locality Teams Services are provided across twelve teams, six covering Older Adults (over 65) and six covering Adults (from age 16 to 65). Each of the teams are led by a social work qualified Team Manager and consist of senior practitioners, social workers, and social work assistants. There are three social work qualified Service Managers that lead locality teams. The Principal Social Work Officer provides professional advice and guidance to the teams and professional supervision to all Service Managers. Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, 263 Personal Outcomes Support Assessments (POSAs) were completed by the Adults Service and 230 by the Older People Service (total 793).



Empowering People With Diabetes: Podiatry Leads Community Foot Health Events Across Fife

Last year, the Podiatry Service launched a new series of community-based events designed to support people living with diabetes who have been identified as having a moderate risk foot score. With two successful events already delivered—first in Cowdenbeath and most recently in Levenmouth—plans are now underway to roll out these sessions across Fife on a recurring basis.

Why Focus on Moderate-Risk Foot Health?

National guidance emphasises the importance of diabetic foot surveillance, ensuring that people receive personalised foot-health advice aimed at preventing ulceration and reducing the risk of amputation. However, recent reviews identified challenges, including low engagement and high ‘Did-Not-Attend’ (DNA) rates at surveillance appointments. For over 2,000 people in Fife identified as moderate risk, a new approach was needed to better support understanding, self-management, and access to care.

Benefits of a Multidisciplinary Healthcare Presence

A key strength of these community events has been the involvement of a wide range of healthcare professionals, creating a truly holistic approach to diabetes care. The presence of services such as Retinopathy Screening, Diabetes Specialist Nursing, Smoking Cessation, Dietetics, and Active Options enables attendees to receive comprehensive, joined-up advice in a single setting. This multidisciplinary input reinforces the interconnected nature of diabetes management—highlighting how foot

health, eye health, blood glucose control, nutrition, smoking behaviours, and physical activity collectively influence overall wellbeing and long-term outcomes.

By engaging with multiple professionals at once, individuals gain a clearer understanding of how different lifestyle and clinical factors contribute to their personal diabetes risk. This supports earlier behaviour change, strengthens preventative strategies, and promotes consistency of messaging across disciplines. It also helps identify unmet needs, improves referral pathways, and encourages people to take proactive steps before problems escalate—ultimately reducing pressure on acute services and improving patient safety.

Carers and family members benefit too, gaining confidence in supporting across different aspects of diabetes self-management. This whole-person, whole-system approach is essential in reducing the risk of complications and ensuring individuals feel supported beyond foot care alone.

Event 1: Cowdenbeath—Laying the Foundations

Using the Diabetes Database, 220 moderate-risk individuals within the Cowdenbeath locality were identified and invited to the first event at the Benarty Centre. Around 34 people attended, rising to 55 including carers and family members. A range of health professionals supported the event, including Retinopathy Screening, Diabetes Specialist Nursing, Smoking Cessation, Dietetics, and Active Options.

Questionnaire results showed significant improvements in knowledge and confidence, including increased understanding of neuropathy, poor circulation, hyperglycaemia impacts, and—most notably—who to contact for a foot health concern, rising from 34.5% to 89%.



Event 2: Levenmouth—Growing Momentum

The second community event, delivered in Leven, exceeded expectations with high attendance and overwhelmingly positive feedback. Questionnaire findings will be published once collated.

Building a Staged, Sustainable Approach

Together, these developments support a broader model of diabetic foot care across Fife, including low-risk screening via CTAC, moderate-risk community engagement, and opportunistic surveillance for high-risk groups.

Looking Ahead

By taking these events into local communities, the Podiatry Service is empowering more people with diabetes to feel informed, confident, and proactive in managing their foot health—and strengthening preventative care for years to come.

Fife Whole Family Wellbeing Multi-Agency Sleep Project

The Whole Family Wellbeing (WFW) Multi-Agency Sleep Project is a Fife-wide early-intervention workforce development initiative designed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families experiencing sleep difficulties through a whole-system, preventative approach.

During 2025–2026, the project achieved substantial progress against its objectives and delivered several areas of good practice, including:

- Establishment and leadership of a multi-agency stakeholder group, meeting fortnightly to drive delivery, supported by regular coordination meetings with Sleep Action.
- Delivery of Sleep Awareness training to 392 staff across NHS, education, social work and third sector services, significantly increasing workforce reach and capacity.
- Completion of Sleep Counsellor training (12 staff) by November 2025, strengthening specialist and targeted sleep support for children, young people and families, particularly those with additional needs.
- Successful implementation of a whole-system workforce development approach, reinforcing the message that *'sleep is everyone's business.'*
- Demonstrable improvements in staff confidence, knowledge and skills, evidenced through pre- and post-training evaluation data.

- Strong qualitative impact evidenced through family and practitioner feedback, highlighting improvements in children's sleep routines, parental wellbeing, practitioner confidence and partnership working.
- Strengthened multi-agency collaboration, with partners reporting high levels of satisfaction with coordination, communication and shared purpose.
- Development of clear sustainability and legacy intentions, including plans for networks, refresher training, resources and integration into wider health promotion activity.

Evaluation evidence demonstrates marked improvements in workforce confidence, knowledge and skills, alongside positive feedback from families and practitioners, highlighting improved sleep routines, parental wellbeing and partnership working. Overall, the project demonstrates how targeted Whole Family Wellbeing investment can deliver measurable workforce change, improved early intervention capacity and positive outcomes for children and families, while also generating valuable learning for future system-wide initiatives.



Armed Forces Covenant

Across Fife the Armed Forces Community includes approximately:

- 1,000 serving personnel
- 450 reservists
- 21,000 veterans, and
- the partners and family members of serving personnel, reservists and veterans.



For most of these people, serving in the armed forces is or was a positive experience. However, some individuals experience adverse physical and mental health challenges, which can be compounded by other factors such as welfare and/or financial issues. Members of the Armed Forces Community may also experience problems accessing appropriate services in comparison to the civilian population. This can be further complicated by a lack of understanding of the armed forces culture within civilian services.

To support the Armed Forces Community and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant, Fife partner agencies set up a multi-agency Working Group in February 2023. Key achievements over the last year include:

- Continued development of the Armed Forces Covenant Working Group, which coordinates multi-agency efforts to improve compliance and service delivery.
- Delivery of awareness training through e-learning modules and online sessions.
- Strengthened housing support for veterans, including a review of allocation policies and a civic reception to enhance service offers.
- Expansion of welfare support through the Defence Medical Welfare Service.
- Continued delivery of suicide prevention support via Veterans Advice Fife, with 137 referrals and 64 active cases.
- Engagement of Fife Voluntary Action to support volunteering, community development, and carer grants.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

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.

Fife Council have been holders of Gold Award accreditation since August 2022. Revalidation for accreditation will be in 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.



Forces Connect App

This is a free directory of local services that people can access with a mobile phone, or online using this link: <https://www.forcesconnect.co.uk/>

The Forces Connect App includes details of 78 local services across Fife as well as information on national services and support.



Equality Outcome 4

Greater diversity and an inclusive workforce culture, with employees from all backgrounds and cultures reporting that they feel increasingly valued.

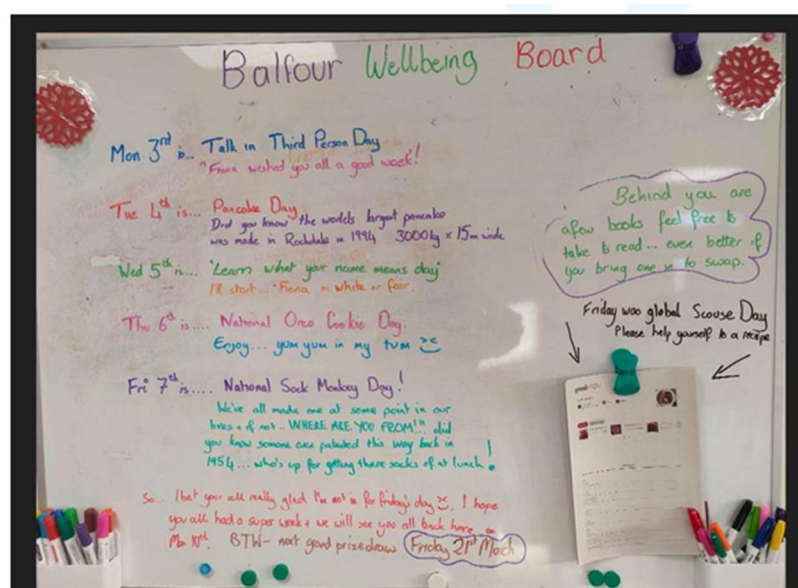
Learning and Development

The Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to continuous learning and development across all services. For example, the Adults and Older People Social Work Teams hold monthly protected learning days for staff. This year, 20 social work staff completed post-qualifying courses such as Adult Support and Protection (ASP), Dementia Postgraduate, Leadership and Management, MHO, Practice Educator, and Advanced Social Work courses. The introduction of a new supervision approach, which prioritises learning and development, has been well received. Additionally, the service provided placements for 13 social work students in 2024 to 2025, three of whom joined the workforce in permanent roles.

Wellbeing Champions within the Integrated Community Teams Portfolio

In October 2024, nine staff from the Integrated Community Teams Portfolio were supported by managers to participate in the NHS Fife Wellbeing Champions Course. This course offers a designed programme of support to help provide participants the evidence from neuroscience, translated into simple, well tested skills and practical ideas to support their own wellbeing at home and at work, with the specific aim of empowering them to support the wellbeing of their colleagues. The vision for supporting this attendance was then to embed Wellbeing Champions across all sectors of our Intermediate Care Teams Portfolio which includes community hospital in-patient therapy, community setting therapy and Hospital at Home capturing a workforce of over 300 staff. The establishment of biannual meetings with the Champions and Team Managers across the services promotes sharing of ideas and good practice.

This is a sample of the Wellbeing Board that was implemented within the Cameron Hospital Inpatient Therapy Team by their Wellbeing Champion.



Development and recruitment of Rehabilitation Assistant Practitioner (AP) Band 4 posts for Fife Intermediate Care Teams

The development of Band 4 Assistant Practitioner roles across our Intermediate Care Teams will enhance the current capacity and skill base within the teams to allow patients to flow through the whole system in a timelier manner, impacting positively on the pressures faced in acute and community hospital inpatient services by effecting earlier safe discharge and preventing unnecessary admissions. This in turn assures the home first approach and patients receiving their rehabilitation needs met within their own homes. During 2024 to 2025 we have:

- Secured budget for the new posts through realignment.
- No additional funding was required.
- Amended the existing Rehab Assistant Practitioner job description and achieved approval for this.
- Progressed vacancy management documentation through approval stages to advert.
- Identified suitable applicants.
- Interviews were held in May 2025.



Gypsy and Traveller Education Team (GATE) Practical Cooking Development Programme

The Gypsy and Traveller Education Team (GATE) have been working with teenage girls from the travelling community to provide training and support for a Practical Cooking Development programme. This has included Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) Food Hygiene training sessions and building capacity within GATE to deliver practical cooking sessions within the traveller community. Key achievements this year include:

- 5 pupils from GATE passed their REHIS Certificate.
- GATE staff advised that pupils had requested further engagement with food hygiene facilitators on related food work and committed to completing practical cooking training.

- GATE staff agreed to complete competency and become REHIS food presenters, this enables staff to run further practical cooking session moving forward.



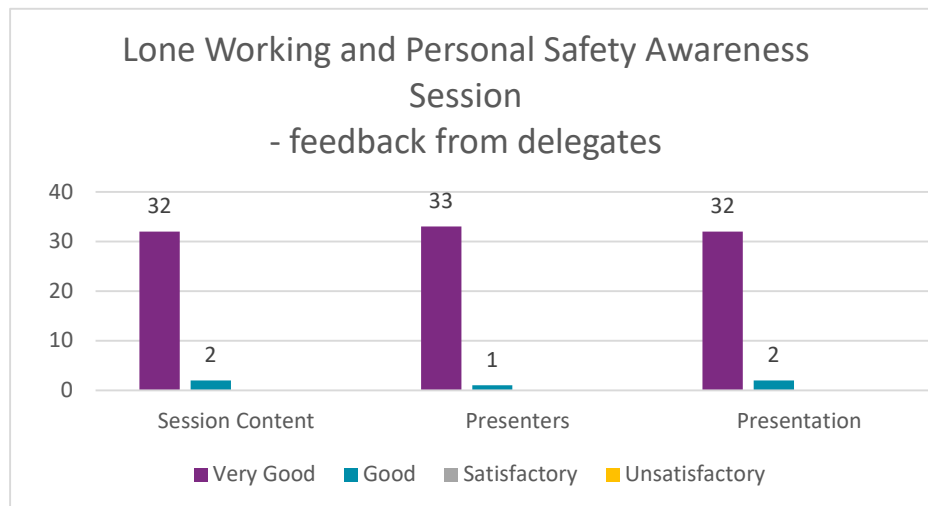
Lone Working and Personal Safety

The Fife Health Promotion Service Workplace Team Annual Needs Assessment Survey 2024 highlighted the requirement for workforce Lone Working and Personal Safety guidance with 66% of respondents requesting support.

Fife Health Promotion Service Workplace Team, Police Scotland Fife Division, and Fife Council Safer Communities collaborated to host a bespoke awareness session for Fife workplaces to attend.



- 34 delegates attended from 15 different Fife based organisations.
- All 15 of these organisations now benefit from increased Personal Safety and Lone Working knowledge to support improved workforce health, safety and wellbeing.



This graph shows the delegate experience of the session obtained by evaluation feedback; all of the delegates selected 'very good' or 'good'.

Transforming Fife's Workforce Capacity to Tackle Poverty: Building a Skilled, Confident Workforce through Poverty Awareness Training

Poverty continues to be a significant challenge in Fife, with many households struggling to meet basic living costs due to factors such as low income, rising living expenses, and inadequate benefits. This impacts poorer health, housing instability, educational disadvantage, and reduced life opportunities - all recognised across local services.

In 2015, the *Fife Fairness Matters Report* highlighted a crucial barrier to effective support; frontline staff lacked a practical, consistent understanding of poverty and its impacts. Existing Poverty Awareness Training was valued but limited, fragmented and unable to meet growing demand. A more coordinated, system-wide approach was essential. To address this need, the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership's Health Promotion Service secured funding in 2023 to establish a specialist Health Promotion Officer, the Poverty Awareness Training (HPO:PAT) post.

This role has transformed both the scale and quality of poverty-related workforce development, embedding early intervention and more compassionate, informed practice across all services. It has led to increased collaboration and multi-agency partnership working across all services.

Delivery

Delivery of face to face and virtual workshops during 2025-2026:

- 9 courses offered – 125% increase since the HPO:PAT has been in post
- 45 workshops delivered - 200% increase since the HPO:PAT has been in post

- 350 participants attended - 97% increase since the HPO:PAT has been in post

Learning Outcomes

The training has delivered measurable improvements in workforce competence:

- Increased knowledge and awareness of poverty and its drivers.
- Improved confidence in supporting people at risk.
- Strong intention to apply learning in day-to-day practice.
- Increased sharing of information across teams and services.
- Strong contribution to system-wide culture change, enabling earlier conversations about financial wellbeing and access to support.

Why this matters

The Poverty Awareness Training now plays a central role in Fife's preventative system with key areas of work such as the No Wrong Door (wellbeing and prevention model) and the Fife Advice Framework. Both aim to ensure people receive the right help at the first point of contact, without being passed between services or asked to repeat their story. It shifts services from being '*service-centric to person-centric*' and strengthens early intervention to prevent issues such as poverty, debt and housing instability from escalating into crisis.

All Poverty Awareness training equips staff with the skills and understanding to:

- Recognise vulnerabilities early on
- Provide compassionate, informed responses
- Ensure people access the right support first time
- Reduce crisis and improve wellbeing outcomes

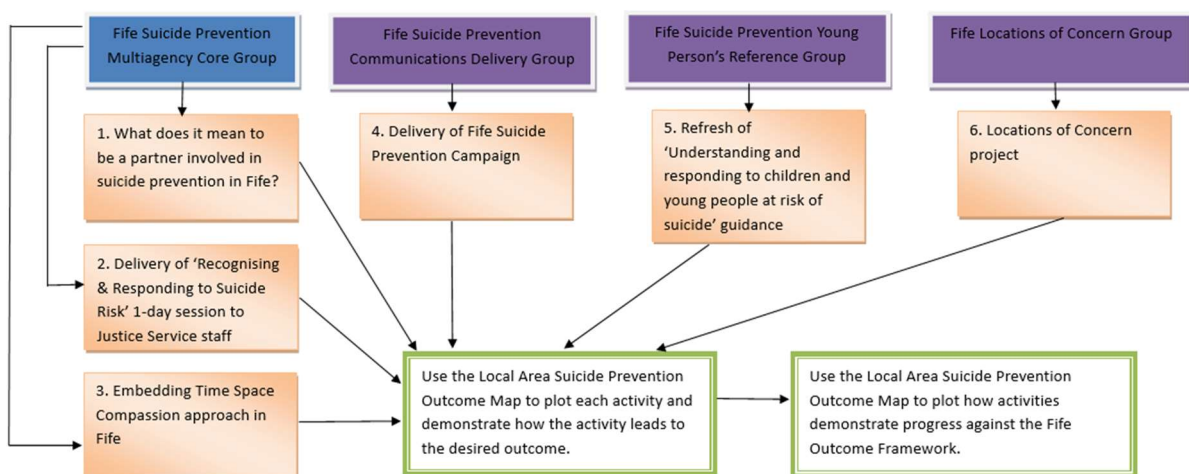
The creation of the HPO:PAT post has proven transformative - building a sustainable, multi-agency training network and embedding poverty-aware practice across sectors. Between 2022 and 2026, Fife has significantly strengthened its ability to tackle poverty through workforce development. The coordinated, high-capacity training model has improved consistency, expanded reach, and empowered hundreds of staff with the skills to make a real difference in people's lives.

The Poverty Awareness Training stands as a powerful example of prevention in action - and a vital investment in creating a fairer, healthier Fife.

Measuring Impact of Creating Hope for Fife: Fife's Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2022-2025

The complexity of the Suicide Prevention workstream provides a challenge in measuring impact and outcome. Creating Hope for Fife: Fife's Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2022-2025 expired at end of 2025. An Outcome Framework was created to provide a framework to measure progress and outcome of the action plan.

To gather the evidence to inform progress against the Outcome Framework, a Local Area Suicide Prevention Outcome Map was used. There are 21 actions outlined within Creating Hope for Fife, it would not be possible to use the Local Area Suicide Prevention Outcome Map for all areas of work. Suicide Prevention Scotland advised selecting key areas of work or projects to carry out a detailed evaluation and impact assessment. Six areas of work were identified from Creating Hope for Fife; three areas of work for the Fife Multiagency Core Group and one area of work per each Delivery Group (Locations of Concern; Suicide Prevention Children & Young Person's Reference Group; Suicide Prevention Communications Delivery Group).

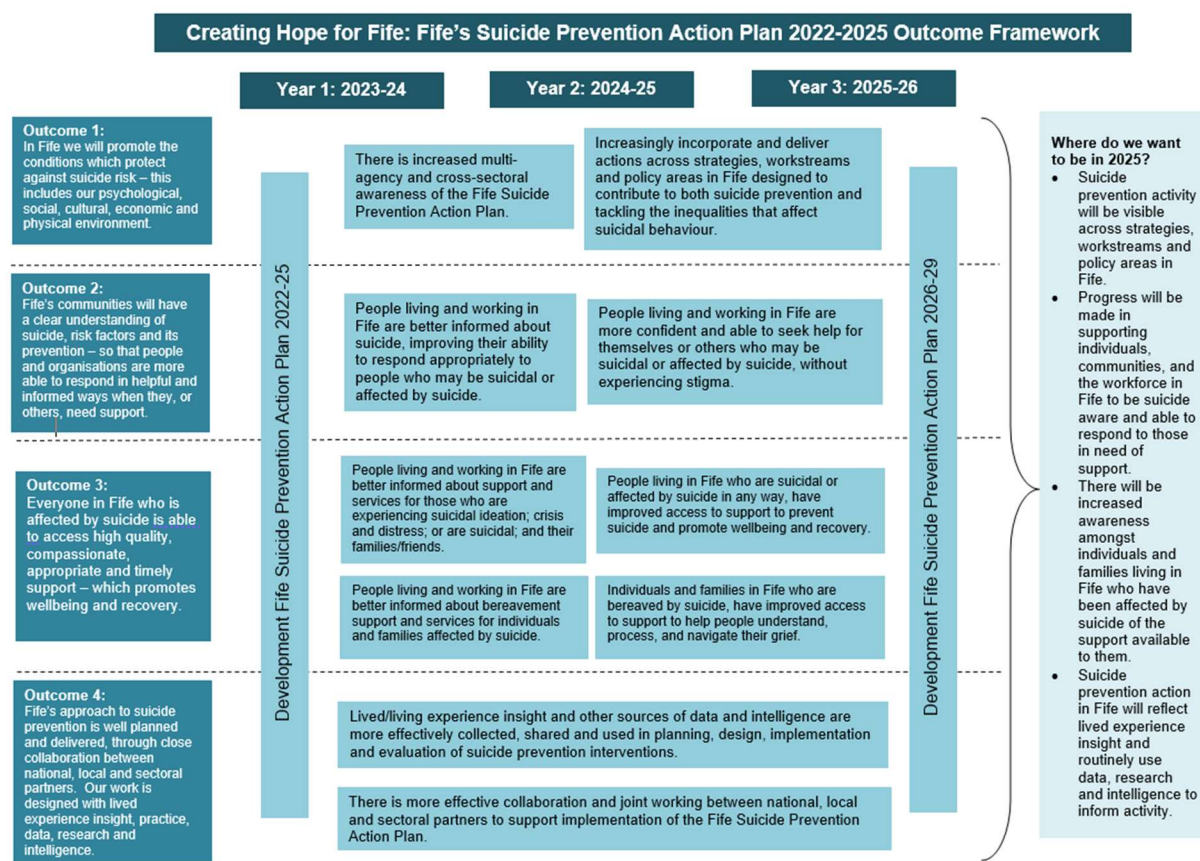


The Measuring Impact Report identifies at least one piece of work or project which delivers against each of the outcomes within the Outcome Framework and sets out progress made towards achieving the outcome.

In all cases, there is good or strong evidence to show progress has been achieved. While this is positive and demonstrates implementation of effective action, it is worth noting the six areas of work explored within the Measuring Impact Report are only a snapshot of work delivered against all 21 actions within Creating Hope for Fife.

Next Steps

The next National Suicide Prevention Action Plan was published by the Scottish Government and COSLA in January 2026. Work is underway to develop the next



Fife Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2026-2029. The next action plan will build on work which began under the previous action plan and identify new areas of priority for the next three year.

There are several areas identified which will be highlighted through the development process for consideration as priority areas for action in the next Fife Action Plan:

- Lived and Living Experience
- Bereavement Support
- 'At Risk' Groups
- Data and Intelligence
- Local Landscape
- Fife Suicide Prevention Multiagency Core Group and associated Delivery Groups: review membership and terms of reference for groups

Equality Outcome 5

Improved understanding and better relations between individuals and groups who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Integrated Working

The Adults Social Work Team in Cowdenbeath has been working with an individual who lives alone. The service user has been diagnosed later in life with autism and can display behaviours that often appear aggressive and threatening to a level that made it difficult to identify the correct support services for him. The allocated social worker has been visiting the person twice weekly to support with shopping and welfare. She was joined weekly by a nurse from the Learning Disability Team which enabled them a much deeper understanding through an ecological framework which resulted in understanding the service user's cultural and societal influences. These experiences throughout the adult's life course led to an improved understanding of how the adult copes and understands the world.

Using this relationship based approach the Team have been able to build a relationship and really understand how to communicate with the individual and understand their communication and behaviours enabling the creation of a robust plan for support. This has also resulted in the individual becoming more relaxed in the presence of others reducing what others may have perceived as threatening and aggressive behaviours while increasing and utilising the service user's skills. This has allowed much deeper insight to ensure any future support is person centred with a view to promote the service users' skills, independence and communication with others.

Mental Health Officer (MHO) Team

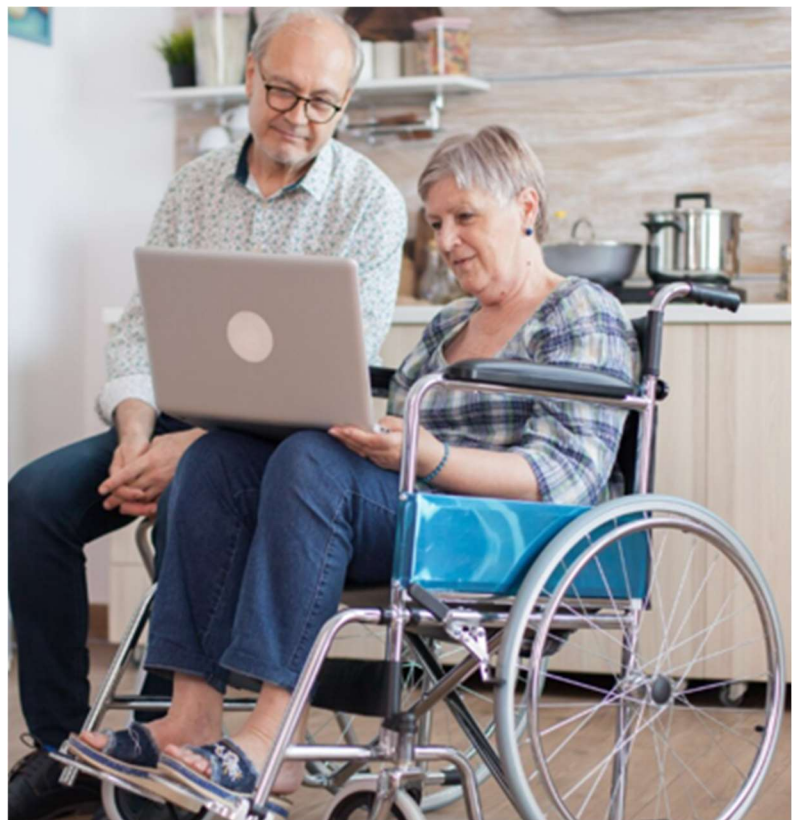
During 2024 to 20255 the Adults Service supervised 195 Local Authority Welfare Guardianship orders and 746 private Welfare Guardianships. To ensure good practice is embedded the service has updated Fife Council Supervision of Proxy Guidance to reflect the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland's best practice guidance and is developing a governance and oversight group to ensure effective and ongoing monitoring. Feedback from service users on our use of "Just Checking" and "Near Me" to support increased independence has been positive. Key challenges experienced by the service include managing transitions between services and securing appropriate resources for individuals with complex needs. An ongoing commitment to collaboration between Children and Families and Adult Services aims to address this through a "team around the person" approach, building on learning from the national Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) pathfinder work.

Improving service user and carer feedback will be central to all practice developments and this is a priority for all services in the coming year.

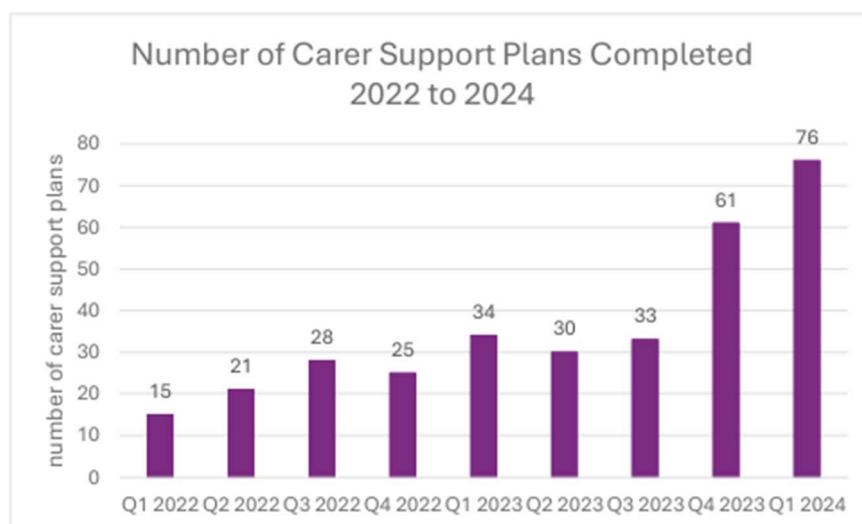
The dedicated Mental Health Officer (MHO) Team take forward MHO functions in line with the Adults with Incapacity Act (Scotland) Act 2000 (AWI) and the Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003. The demand for MHO services is significant and rising, with increasing requests for assessments and a notable rise in emergency and short-term detentions and out of hours detentions where MHOs are not present, all of which pose challenges to the service. Fife have experienced an increase in private AWI Guardianships, with the resulting increased requirement for MHO services placing demand on the team. The MHO Team is strengthening relationships with other social work teams, offering shadowing opportunities, and engagement with new staff to enhance understanding of MHO role and to encourage training. Despite pressures, the MHO Team demonstrates key strengths in performance and professionalism, consistently meeting statutory timescales and handling high demand with a skilled and dedicated workforce. The introduction of Social Work Assistants (SWAs) has enhanced the Team's capacity by supporting practical tasks, enabling MHOs to focus on statutory duties and improving discharge planning. Strong partnerships with NHS Mental Health Services and increased collaboration with other teams have further strengthened service delivery and communication.

Carers Support Plans

Fife Health and Social Care Partnership work in partnership with a wide range of third sector commissioned partners to identify and support carers in line with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. It is because of this wide range of accessible points for a carer that the Partnership is unable at present to report on the total number of carers supported or the number of Carers Support Plans completed. We are developing ways to collect this information across the wide range of third sector commissioned partners to better understand the impact and quality of our support to carers. The graph below shows



the number of Adult Carer Support Plans completed within the Partnership reflecting an increase in Support Plans completed which we attribute to the introduction of 10 Social Work Assistants whose role it is to identify and reach out to unpaid carers.



Number of Carer Support Plans completed – 2022 - 2024

EQUIP Team Learning and Development Programme

During 2025 to 2026, the EQUIP Team Learning and Development Programme delivered targeted workforce development activity to strengthen confidence, consistency and capability across Children's Services.

Key achievements include:

- Delivery of a Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) Quality Improvement Project, informed by workforce feedback identifying barriers such as confidence, time pressures and inconsistent use.
- Delivery of GCP2 refresher training across Health Visiting, Family Nurse Partnership and Allied Health Professional Teams.
- Training and establishment of GCP2 Champions to support practice, peer learning and spread of improvement.
- Development and piloting of a practitioner guide, "How to Use the Graded Care Profile 2 Tool in Practice", including non-stigmatising, strengths-based language for use with families.
- Introduction of ready-to-use GCP2 packs, reducing preparation time for practitioners.
- Securing Caldicott approval and procedures to enable collection of parent/carers feedback using Microsoft Forms, with early feedback indicating families felt supported during GCP2 assessments.
- In addition, the EQUIP Team co-designed and delivered a full-day Team Around the Child (TaC) to Initial Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD)

Training Programme, supporting implementation of the Child Wellbeing Pathway and National Child Protection Guidance. Evaluation demonstrated increased practitioner confidence and very positive qualitative feedback.

This work has strengthened multi-disciplinary collaboration, promoted a shared understanding of safeguarding responsibilities, and supported a confident, skilled workforce. Learning from this programme will continue to inform future learning and development priorities across Children's Services.

Cowdenbeath Early Years Collaborative Hub (with expansion to Kirkcaldy)

The Cowdenbeath Early Years Collaborative Hub is a multi-agency learning and collaboration forum that brings together practitioners from health, education, and the third sector to strengthen early intervention and prevention for young children and families. The Hub provides regular, structured sessions where practitioners share knowledge, develop practical skills, and build relationships across services, helping to improve confidence, reduce professional isolation, and support earlier identification of children's developmental and communication needs. The successful model, embedded in the Cowdenbeath locality, has now been replicated in Kirkcaldy, supporting wider learning and consistent, joined-up practice across Fife.

Key achievements this year include:

1. Sustained delivery of the Hub
 - Continued to offer termly collaborative sessions with morning and afternoon options.
 - Maintained an inclusive, safe learning space for practitioners across services.
 - Embedded model locally with strong ongoing participation.
2. Strengthened multi-agency relationships
 - Staff report reduced professional isolation, stronger peer networks, and easier access to guidance from other services.
 - Improved coordination between education, allied health professionals, health visiting and the third sector.
3. Improved practice and confidence - practitioners report:
 - Increased confidence in supporting children with developmental and communication needs.
 - Better understanding of wider services and referral pathways.
 - Expanded toolkit of practical strategies for supporting children and families.
4. Positive outcomes for children and families
 - Earlier identification of needs through better-informed practitioners.

- More coordinated support across agencies.
- Improved environments and play opportunities that encourage children's development.



Recognising and Responding to Suicide Risk – training for Criminal Justice Social Work

The Health Promotion Service worked with Fife Criminal Justice Social Work to develop, create and deliver a bespoke one-day session, '*Recognising and Responding to Suicide Risk*'. This was a targeted delivery to support staff identified as working with individuals at increased risk of suicide. Fife Criminal Justice Social Work is responsible for providing a statutory social work service for those living in Fife, involved in the Justice System.

To develop the session, we listened to needs of staff; identified potential gaps in knowledge and understanding; and identified suitable content which would meet these needs. We identified face-to-face delivery would be most appropriate to meet these needs. We utilised a combination of video resources, case studies and opportunities for participants to take part in personal reflective practice and small group conversations.

Aim of session: to support practitioners to recognise and respond to people experiencing suicidal thoughts, distress and crisis. The session outlines key evidence, concepts and practices underpinning our understanding of suicide and how it can be used to prevent and support people experiencing suicidal thoughts, distress and crisis.

Between June 2025 – January 2026, we delivered the training to 103 staff from Criminal Justice Social Work. This was a significant commitment of service time to enable staff to attend the training. It is important to recognise the commitment shown

by Service Managers who understood the value of the training for staff and supported this.

At the end of each training session, an evaluation was carried out to ascertain if the session met their knowledge and understanding needs. From the 102 evaluation forms returned:

- 88% gained improved knowledge
- 72% gained improved confidence
- 51% gained improved skills
- 94% said they would use the learning in their practice
- 39% said they would use the learning to improve service delivery
- 42% said they found the course extremely valuable to their job
- 43% said they found the course very valuable to their job
- 9% said they found the course valuable to their job

In June 2025, we sent a follow up survey to 84 participants who attended the training between September 2024 and March 2025. The aim of this follow up survey was to identify the impact on practice following the training. The survey was disseminated to 82 recipients and received a 19% return rate.

Key findings from the follow-up survey:

- Confidence levels amongst respondents remained high with 80% stating on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), they scored their confidence at either an 8 or a 9.
- 60% of responders indicated their confidence level had increased since undertaking the training.
- 60% of responders stated since undertaking the training, they've discussed suicide with an individual they support: 33% of the 60 had initiated the conversation; 27% had responded to a disclosure.

- 58% stated they believed the training had directly influenced their ability to have the conversation about suicide with the individual they support.

As a direct result of the training, Criminal Justice Social Work developed a suicide risk assessment protocol for their service. Finally, as part of the work with Criminal Justice Social Work, a referral pathway to the Fife Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) Service was established. To date, the Fife DBI service has received 18 referrals through the Criminal Justice Social Work pathway.

'Recognising and Responding to Suicide Risk' is now available through the Health Promotion Service Prevention and Early Intervention Training Programme. This will ensure new staff to Criminal Justice Social Work can access the training.



Conclusion

The examples included in this report evidence some of the improvements and changes the Integration Joint Board has progressed over the last two years to support equality and diversity across Fife. Despite these achievements there is still more to do, we are committed to tackling sources of inequality such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Equality Outcomes 2026 – 2029

Fife Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect, and to supporting people in Fife to live as independently as possible. Our Strategic Plan 2026-2029 sets out how we will continue working closely with partners, local communities and individuals to tackle inequality – such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation – and to make sure everyone has a fair chance to thrive.

The new Equality Outcomes were developed alongside the Strategic Plan 2026–2029. During the planning process we asked stakeholders for their views and

feedback on the proposed outcomes. This helped us consider equality from the start and ensured that people's feedback shaped the final Equality Outcomes.

These are our Equality Outcomes for 2026 – 2029, a progress update report will be published in 2028.

1. Accessible information, services, and support.
2. Safe and inclusive communities.
3. Equality data that informs service design, delivery, and evaluation.
4. Lived experience, participation, and co-production.
5. Workforce training, awareness, and diversity.



Additional Information

Further information about our equality outcomes, and our commitment to integrate equality into the day-to-day working of the Integration Joint Board and the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership is available on our website:

www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/about-us/equalities