

Agenda Item	3
Report No	CC/12/20

The Highland Council

Committee **Caithness Area**

Date: **11 December 2020**

Report Title: **Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project**

Report By: **Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 In Caithness there has been a series of traumatic events and issues emerging involving young people and their families during the pandemic. These events and issues are having a significant impact upon the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people, their families and carers and also staff across a number of organisations, the community of volunteers and the public in general. The Members of the Caithness Area Committee have together committed to a focus on improving mental health and wellbeing and have previously invested time in considering the successful approach that was adopted in the 'Icelandic model' to taking a whole community approach to tackling widespread drug and alcohol issues. Meetings have taken place locally with key partners to identify immediate as well as long term actions.
- 1.2 This report sets out the context in Caithness recognising the serious issues affecting mental health and wellbeing of young people and their families, the engagement and consultation that has taken place in November and December in Caithness, the detailed feedback from the workshops and the first statement of a Project Action Plan which builds upon the five key workstreams of a 'Caithness Young Person and their families wellbeing programme'.
- 1.3 The report also sets out the need for the recruitment of a strategic lead to ensure the action plan makes progress at a pace and funding is directed appropriately to the action plan to ensure the steps required in Caithness begin to make progress early in 2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. note the five key workstreams identified through the workshops and community engagement that took place on Monday 30 November virtually in Caithness as detailed in **Appendix 1**;

- ii. agree to the development of the Project Action Plan as set out in **Appendix 2** of this report;
- iii. agree to the immediate recruitment of a Strategic Lead to oversee the Pathfinder and ensure the pathfinder work and good practice is shared and developed across other Highland Communities;
- iv. agree that a follow up workshop will take place early in 2021 when the strategic lead is in place to commit to the delivery of the action plan; and
- v. note the excellent contribution made by the elected Members ,Community and many young people during the workshops sessions.

3. Implications

3.1 Financial:

- 3.1.1 There are financial implications to this report. A grant award letter of £534,000 has been awarded to the Highland Council by the Scottish Government in response to children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing issues arising as a result of the pandemic. Initial investment will be targeted as a response to the traumatic events in Caithness to inform the expansion to a pan-Highland approach. Another grant award of £178,000 has also been awarded to the Highland Council by the Scottish Government. The main objectives of this grant relates to the expected delivery of community based services and as such it is intended that there should be work with Children’s Services partnerships and Community Planning partnerships with a view to taking a whole systems approach to supporting children, young people and their families. It was agreed at the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee on the 12 November that Caithness would lead as a Pathfinder and that the resources above would be available to resource the work agreed at the Caithness Area Committee in December 2020 and at follow up Caithness Area Committee meetings in 2021 as the Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project develops.
- 3.1.2 Should Members agree to the recruitment of a Strategic Lead to oversee Pathfinder, the funding will also cover the costs of this post.
- 3.2 Rural and Community implications: Many of our families and their children in Caithness are facing significant trauma as a result of the pandemic; immediate action is required to support communities in these unprecedented times.
- 3.3 Legal, Climate Change/Carbon Clever Risk and Gaelic: There are no Legal, Climate Change/ Carbon Clever or Risk implications expected as a result of this report.

4. Background

- 4.1 The background to this report is set out in **Appendix 1**, Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project .The subsequent action plan which requires further development and collaboration is set out in **Appendix 2**.

5 Community Engagement

- 5.1 **Appendix 1** evidences the significant and extensive community and agency commitment to tackling the recent issues affecting mental wellbeing in Caithness. It also outlines a great deal of community activity already in place; it is important that this is built upon and that the Pathfinder is inclusive in its approach as we move forward.

6 Resourcing

- 6.1 The main objectives of the grants from the Scottish Government relate to the expected delivery of community based services. It is intended that there should be work with Children's Services partnerships and Community Planning partnerships with a view to taking a whole systems approach to supporting children, young people and their families.
- 6.2 To ensure that a sustainable and inclusive approach is adopted it is recommended that a strategic lead for the Caithness Mental Wellbeing pathfinder is recruited urgently and that the job role and remit is agreed between the Strategic Chair of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee (H,SC & WB), Councillor Linda Munro in partnership with the Caithness Area Committee Chair and Vice Chair of the H,SC & WB Committee, Councillor Nicola Sinclair; the Chief Executive and the Executive Chief Officer linked to Caithness, Nicky Grant.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning

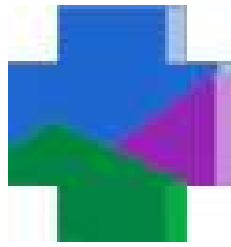
Date: 6 December 2020

Author: Nicky Grant, Executive Chief Officer

Background Papers:

[Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee report](#) – Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Services, dated 12 November 2020

[Education Committee report](#) – Developing a whole systems approach to supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing, dated 18 November 2020



Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project

**Workshops
30th November 2020**

**Draft Independent Report
4 December 2020**

Version 1.0

Higher Ground Health and Care Planning Ltd

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Executive Summary

1. Background

In Caithness there have been several suicides and increasing drug-related deaths, with the problem becoming more acute in 2020 due to Covid-19. Police Scotland has confirmed that Caithness is an area of key concern within Highland with increasing violent crime, addiction, and mental health challenges. However, it is not just anti-social behaviour that is of concern there are a range of reasons and issues affecting many young people and their families.

This Report briefly describes the National, Highland, and Caithness context including funding that has been made available and why Caithness has been chosen as a pathfinder.

2. Facilitated Workshop

To support the pathfinder, it was agreed to hold a Workshop to look at how to approach better management of crises response as well as seeking support for a 'whole systems approach' within Caithness.

Two workshops were held on 30th November (afternoon and evening) and were independently facilitated by Higher Ground Health Care Planning Ltd (Higher Ground) supported by Highland Council officers. At each session between 40 and 50 people attended with a wide range of stakeholders including senior officials and elected members.

3. Community Views

The event was informed by a series of hard-hitting quotes, comments and statistics collected in advance of the Workshop by way of representing community voices highlighting a very distressing situation.

4. Ambition, Overall Approach, and Principles

From the feedback at the Workshop a clear need was identified to enable hope, dreams, entitlement and purpose for the young people and their families to hold onto; and where Caithness is a place they can live, thrive, and access opportunities.

Fundamental to the pathfinder being successful is the need to engage, listen and co-produce solutions with young people. Pivotal to achieving this will be how we will increase capacity to reach people who, based on current approaches, are the most difficult to reach.

Overall a dual approach to delivering services was agreed: 1) Response to immediate crisis situations and 2) Preventative (longer term). There were differing views around where the balance should lie and whether work should progress in parallel or start by responding to the immediate crisis.

While there was support for a community-led approach this does not replace the statutory responsibilities of various agencies. Given some of the recruitment challenges across mental health specialities this will need to drive new approaches and innovative thinking. It was also recognised appropriate support for professionals to support young people is required.

5. Workstreams and Cross-Cutting Principles

Various work streams (Box 1) and cross-cutting principles emerged (Box 2). These will require further work, collaboration and refining in the new year.

Box 1 | Emerging Work Streams

1. Developing a range of activities for young people that are inclusive, age-appropriate, accessible, and relevant
2. Creating 'safe spaces' for young people to gather, such as spaces that are warm, connected, 'cool' and provide access to 'safe people' including peer-to-peer support
3. Supporting parents and carers alongside families at an early stage with practical help and interventions, to prevent escalating issues reaching crisis point and break the cycle
4. Building understanding of mental health and wellbeing through education programmes, both formal and informal curriculum and community/family based to improve knowledge and understanding and tackle stigma
5. Developing appropriate support for people in crisis on a 24/7/365 basis through a mix of community based 'listening ear' support, recovery, and professional mental health support, on-line and self-support strategies as required

Box 2 | Cross-Cutting Principles

1. Whole system approach – statutory service providers across health, education, housing, and emergency services, third sector delivery partners, politicians, community representatives, families, and young people themselves working together to move forward in a connected way
2. Empowered communities – wherever possible build capacity and sustainable coalition among existing local groups to scale up and deliver enhanced services alongside statutory service providers
3. Young people at its heart – voice of young people is critical in shaping services that are inclusive and relevant, not 'done to' but leading. Develop skills and empower young people to grow and learn and become ambassadors for the programme within their own community via peer-to-peer support and 'pay back'
4. Data and measurement – success depends on gathering data, benchmarking, reviewing, measuring success, capturing outcomes, and considering how project will adapt and scale up over time inspiring other localities across the Highlands to share good practice and evaluate progress
5. Hope and resilience – building hope in our community by celebrating success and tackling challenge openly, recognising role of educational opportunities, skills development, and a sense of place in building self-worth in individuals and communities to thrive.

6. Risks

Although risks were not identified as a formal part of the Workshop several other issues were raised which should also be considered as risks. This may inform the development of a risk register for the Pathfinder.

7. Next Steps

A verbal report and draft action plan will go to the Caithness Committee on 11th December for members consideration and a more detailed action plan will be prepared in early January 2021. This will strive to give 'real inspiration and aspiration.' Meanwhile local engagement and listening exercises will be ongoing.

1. Background

1.1 Overview and National Context

Supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is a high priority for the Scottish Government, across communities, schools, early learning, and child-care settings. The benefits to the individual and to wider society to preventing problems from arising and intervening early are self-evident, however, there are also people in immediate crisis requiring support bringing significant distress.

There has been a concern for some time around the increasing mental health difficulties by children and young people across Scotland and the recent challenges posed by Covid-19 has only served to exacerbate the difficulties being experienced for many including children and young people and indeed some professionals.

Seeking to start to address such concerns A Transition and Recovery Plan, was published on 8 October, outlining the Scottish Government's response to the mental health effects of the pandemic, containing more than 100 actions. It has a section devoted to Children, Young People and Families.

Following on from this the Scottish Government announced funding with £15 million specifically to respond to children and young people's mental health issues. The funding is being distributed to local authorities to support a local response for five to 24-year-olds (26 if care experienced), their families, and carers. Of this, £11.25 million will be for services in response to the pandemic, such as support for children who are struggling emotionally due to returning to school under new restrictions.

The remaining £3.75 million will be the first instalment of an annual £15 million fund to provide new and enhanced community mental health and wellbeing services. These new services will have a focus on prevention, early intervention, and the treatment of distress and encourage taking a holistic approach. Announcing the funding the Minister for Mental Health Clare Haughey said:

"The pandemic has been very hard for everyone, but for many children and young people it has been particularly difficult.

"Families have told us they need more support for mental and emotional distress and for their wellbeing and resilience, delivered in a community setting. By providing funding to tackle the impacts of the pandemic, alongside a separate fund to provide long term mental health and wellbeing support, we aim to deliver help where it is needed."

Letters were issued by the Scottish Government to all 32 local authorities inviting them to apply for a share of the funding.

1.2 The Highland Context

Of the overall package of funding being made available across Scotland, Highland will benefit from more than £700,000.

This total is made up of: £178,000¹ to enable close working with existing partners to build upon support which is already in place within communities. A further £534,000² is being

¹ Payable in November 20 for planning and preparation costs relating to the development of community mental health and wellbeing service

² The £534k payable over the year 2020/2021 (which can be carried forward into financial year 20/21/2022).

made available for the development and introduction of new mental health services for children and young people arising because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the specific focus of this report.

Welcoming the [Investment](#) Cllr Linda Munro, Chair of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, said:

“This funding announcement was made by Scottish Government just two weeks ago and I am heartened to see the progress and pace at which it’s already moving. Investing and developing additional local services to enable early intervention to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the children and young people within Highland is crucial, particularly within the current circumstances.”

‘Developing a Whole Systems Approach to Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing’ was presented to the Education and Learning Committee on 18 November 2020 and sets out the context and the detail as it relates to education. The ‘whole system approach’ to supporting mental health across Highland communities will be further informed by the outcomes from a mental health and well-being summit which is being organised for February 2021. Young people who have first-hand experience of mental health issues, along with elected members, will participate in the summit.

1.3 Caithness Context

The Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee agreed on Thursday 12 November that the first tranche of funding should be provided to Caithness to develop a ‘pathfinder’ project.

The selection of Caithness as the Pathfinder was in part due to the recognition of successful partnership working across the county during the pandemic. This included a huge humanitarian response with 25+ community groups all meeting weekly (virtually). This was coordinated through Caithness Voluntary Group with strong partnership working with Highland Council (local elected members), NHS Highland and Police Scotland. Building on this collective effort it was felt there was a good degree of confidence that Caithness would be able to work quickly and effectively to make positive change in Caithness and facilitate wider learning to support work across Highland.

Chief Executives of The Highland Council (Donna Manson) and NHS Highland (Pam Dudek) are both cognisant of Caithness needing a new approach to improve mental wellbeing, particularly in the immediate context, and are very supportive of the pilot.

The Members of the Caithness Area Committee have committed to a focus on improving mental wellbeing and have invested time in considering various approaches. One such approach known as the ‘Icelandic Model’ has been recognised as being successful and took a whole community approach to tackling widespread drug and alcohol issues³.

The pathfinder funding is timely as all key partners, statutory and voluntary, are fully sighted on the issues in Caithness, with several strands of activity already in progress. Best practice and reflection of which methods and services work well within Caithness will then inform the expansion to a pan-Highland approach. The wider framing and some key elements for wider considerations that specifically relate to Caithness are summarised (Appendix 1).

Following various local meetings between agencies and elected members, some specific immediate actions were agreed (Box 1).

³ In common with other parts of Scotland, Caithness drug and alcohol issues are only one facet of a complex set of challenges facing children, young people, their families, and wider community.

Box 1 Immediate Strategic Actions
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A stakeholder workshop to be held in November to develop a pathfinder project based on crisis support and round-the-clock services, with clear a 'whole community' approach. 2. Hold a special meeting of Caithness Area Committee on 11 December to ratify the outcomes from the workshop. The special meeting will include in attendance the Chief Executives of The Highland Council (Donna Manson) and NHS Highland (Pam Dudek), as well as Divisional Commander for Police Scotland (Conrad Trickett) and representatives from Caithness Community Planning Partnership, Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Third Sector Interface and local Highland Council officers and members. This demonstrates strong and public support across all agencies to embrace and resource the changes required for Caithness. 3. Agree formalities to support the pathfinder – project lead, objectives, how to measure and assess progress, local steering group, timescales, governance, and reporting frameworks. 4. Consider the level of public engagement and consultation required including the involvement of young people, parents, carers, families and key campaign groups including 'No More Lost Souls' and Caithness Health Action Team (CHAT). |
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Actions three and four (Box 1, above) may be influenced by the outputs of the Workshops and the discussion at the special meeting of Caithness Area Committee on 11 December.

2 Caithness Pathfinder Workshops, Monday 30th November 2020

Higher Ground Health and Care Planning Ltd was commissioned by the Highland Council to advise and support the process including organising the Workshop(s) in November and to provide Independent Facilitation.

Given the extremely challenging timescale it was agreed to go with a set date of 30th November but to offer some choice it was agreed to hold two Workshops: one in the afternoon (1 – 4pm) and one in the evening (6-9pm) both virtually by Zoom.

2.1 Invitations

A collaborative approach across agencies and elected members was taken to identify key stakeholders. Invitations⁴ were issued personally by Councillor Nicola Sinclair to individuals and organisations. Thereafter senior managers from a range of organisations supported the process by ensuring appropriate representation whenever possible. The Head Teachers from Thurso and Wick High Schools helped to identify pupils who were able and willing to participate during the evening session.

⁴ Due to the limits of time and the practicalities of participating online attendance was by invitation. Some people who were not initially invited but who found out about the workshop requested to attend and were included.

2.2 Workshop Agenda, Participants and Facilitators

The Agenda and format were the same for both workshops (Appendix 2). Participants were asked to confirm in advance. This was to enable Zoom invitations to be issued with supporting information. It also allowed participants to be split into smaller groups (3-7, excluding facilitators) for the 'break-out' facilitated sessions. This was done by the Independent Facilitator for Higher Ground with local sense checking. Groups were deliberately mixed, except for one group in the evening session, which was for school pupils and had three participants.

Each group had a facilitator(s) provided by Highland Council Education Department. While some were locally based others were from other parts of the Highland Council area which will support learning and sharing of good practice of the Pathfinder as it gets rolled out across Highland.

Overall, around 100 people confirmed they would participate with equal numbers in both sessions⁵.

2.2.1 Preparation for Workshop

As part of the preparation for the Workshop, Higher Ground asked the question "*Do we have a problem?*" To sense check this on the run up to the event Cllr Sinclair asked a range of stakeholders in Caithness to share some key facts, comments, or quotes. These were brought together as series of slides.

2.3 Objectives of Workshops

The objectives of the Workshop were set in advance by the Highland Council (Box 2).

Box 2 | Workshop Objectives

- Bring interested stakeholders together in a "safe space" to talk about issues affecting the mental wellbeing of young people in Caithness.
- Begin to identify the core elements of a community-based response to address these issues.
- Write up the findings from the Workshop including setting out next steps.

2.4 The Workshops

By way of background the Workshop opened by reflecting local stakeholder views. These were shared on screen and read out by Nicola Sinclair and were presented at the Workshop in the order given (Appendix 4).

⁵ Higher Ground Health Care Planning Ltd are aware of one individual who attempted to join the evening session but were not able to be 'admitted' to the meeting. Three pupils were identified to attend from Wick High School but were not able to participate perhaps due to late invitation.

2.4.1 Reflections from the meeting

At both the afternoon and evening session following the sharing of the slides there was a brief discussion and agreement that “*We have a problem.*”

- There was a consensus that there is both a historic and growing problem recently exacerbated by Covid-19
- There are matters needing immediate attention ‘crisis’
- Going forward it will be important to also move towards preventative approaches
- We must not make assumptions on behalf of young people recognising that children and young people are as diverse as any other group and engagement and interventions must be age specific and issue specific.

2.5 Icelandic Model

The ‘Icelandic Model’ took a whole community approach to tackling widespread drug and alcohol issues⁶ and has been internationally recognised as being successful. Without prejudice it was felt it was useful to share a short film clip (with subtitles) to understand their issues and key activities which helped to address some of their challenges. The short film clip ‘*How Iceland Saved Its Teenagers*’ can be viewed [HERE](#) and in summary their key interventions were as follows:

1. Introduced a curfew
2. Parents signed a pledge
3. Activities to keep young people busy/occupied
4. Based on the science / evidence
5. Politicians actively involved

2.5.1 Reflections from the meeting

- There was support for some elements of the Icelandic Model but a general feeling that ‘curfew’ and ‘pledge’ might not work/be appropriate for Caithness. One professional thought it would ‘*cost a fortune*’.
- It prompted discussion on other models/ approaches e.g. Raploch (Stirling), Canada and South-Central Alaska ‘Citizen-owned’.
- NHS Highland representative referred to rapid access to emergency /unscheduled care in Skye and Lochaber.
- Another participant highlighted that ‘*big problem needs big ideas*’ and whatever those ideas are they need to be owned by the people of Caithness.
- These reflections highlighted there was support for researching what has happened elsewhere and adapt/adopt for Caithness.

⁶ The issues under consideration in Caithness are wider than drug and alcohol although this an important element.

2.6 Ambition, Approach and Principles

Based on the discussions there was consensus on an emerging ambition, overall approach, and a set of principles to support the work in Caithness.

2.6.1 Ambition

There was a strong sense of the need to promote opportunities, hopes and dreams. A clear need to move from a lack of hope and purpose for so many to gaining hope for Caithness where it is a place that young people and families can live, thrive, and access opportunities. Building self-worth so they know how to ask for help, where to get it, and that they feel and believe they deserve it, and it will be safe.

2.6.2 Approach

Fundamental to the approach is the need to engage and co-produce solutions with young people of all ages, backgrounds, and situations such as care experienced young people. Pivotal to some elements of the programme will be to reach people who, based on current approaches are the most difficult to reach⁷. A dual approach will be required:

1) Response to immediate crisis situations and 2) Preventative (longer term).

There were differing views around where the balance should lie and whether work should progress in parallel or start by responding to the immediate crisis. There was also a recognition around the need to break the vicious circle of repeating generations experiencing difficulties and stigma - reference back to one of the opening quotes.

"I didn't do well in school and find it hard to go along to the nursery - scared of being judged."

Finally taking a community-led approach while very necessary does not replace the statutory responsibility for agencies. Equally it was recognised that there will also be a need for appropriate support for professionals to support young people.

2.6.3 Principles

1. **Whole system approach** – statutory service providers across health, education, housing, and emergency services, third sector delivery partners, politicians, community representatives, families, and young people themselves working together to move forward
2. **Empowered communities** – wherever possible build capacity and sustainability among existing local groups to scale up and deliver enhanced services alongside statutory service providers
3. **Young people at its heart** – voice of young people is critical in shaping services that are inclusive and relevant, not 'done to' but that they lead. Develop skills and empowering young people to grow and learn and become ambassadors for the programme within their own community via peer-to-peer support

⁷ It was not within the scope of the Workshop to agree how best to achieve this but there was recognition that this will require some expertise some of which will come from young people and those with lived experiences in Caithness.

4. **Data and measurement** – success depends on gathering evidence, data, benchmarking, reviewing, measuring success, capturing outcomes, and considering how the pathfinder will adapt and scale up over time
5. **Hope and resilience** – building hope in our community by celebrating success and tackling challenge openly, recognising role of educational opportunities, skills development, and a sense of place in building self-worth in individuals and communities to thrive.

2.6.4 Group Work

Four questions to facilitate discussion were agreed in advance of the Workshop:

1. What might the five key “elements” or “workstreams” of a Caithness Young Person’s wellbeing programme be?
2. What would the core objectives of each of these workstreams be?
3. How might their role/remit change over time?
4. How could these workstreams use any new funding available to make a difference to young people, their families, parents, or carers?

2.6.4.1 Feedback from Groups

For this report individual feedback from each group on the four key question is not included (although it has been documented by facilitators for future reference) rather the main themes, issues and discussion points are captured from the plenary feedback sessions in both the afternoon and evening (Box 3). However, by way of illustration an example of feedback from one of the facilitated subgroup sessions is included (Appendix 5).

Box 3 | Feedback from groups in response to four key questions posed above

Q1 What might the five key “elements” or “workstreams” of a Caithness Young Person’s wellbeing programme be?

While there was some overlap across the groups there was also quite a lot of diversity of ideas and variation in strength of feelings and is summarised as follows:

- Developing a range of activities for young people that are inclusive, age-appropriate, accessible, and relevant
- Creating ‘safe spaces’ for young people to gather, such as spaces that are warm, connected, ‘cool’ and provide access to ‘safe people’ including peer-to-peer support
- Supporting families at an early stage with practical help and interventions, to prevent issues escalating and reaching crisis point. A need to break the cycle
- Building understanding of mental wellbeing through education programmes, both formal curriculum and community/family based to improve knowledge and understanding and tackle stigma
- Developing appropriate support for people in crisis on a 24/7/365 basis through a mix of community based ‘listening ear’ support, recovery, and professional mental health support, on-line and self-support strategies as required

Q2 What would the core objectives of each of these workstreams be?

The feedback on objectives did not always relate directly back to the workstreams. At this stage, the core objectives, as described, were often more general statements and aspirations and require some further work to make them SMART⁸. There was some overlap with the workstreams that will require further consideration and reflect the complexity and importance of work being inter-connected.

Workstream 1 - Activities and skills

- To deliver a diverse range of activities that are not imposed, are age-specific
- To provide positive experiences that build resilience and complement the creation of 'safe spaces' and 'safe people'

Supporting points

- Develop a range of activities that are inclusive, non-threatening, accessible and relevant for all our young people, based on what young people tell us they want
- Not all activities should be led by schools and format settings like youth clubs e.g. street football programmes – go to where the young people are
- Think about outdoor opportunities including activities and learning
- Different age groups will require different approaches
- Youth workers could help deliver and shape – ideally young people should act as ambassadors for their peers
- Not just about anti-social behaviour out of hours
- Consider funding – access to activities may require grant direct to young people as per Icelandic model or wraparound support e.g. transport for those in rural areas
- Skills development opportunities – do not just focus on sports but also enable young people to develop life skills, community skills, skills that benefit their CV and skills that will enable them to become ambassadors for their peers

Workstream 2 - Safety - sense of place, safe place with safe people including peer support (ambassadors, young people influencing young people)⁹

- To create a sense of place where people want to live, work, and stay in Caithness
- To improve our local environment (gardens, parks, buildings and removing rubbish and litter)
- To work in partnership with employers to help reduce stigma associated with mental health
- To improve self-esteem and sense of belonging for young people
- To provide role models for those in difficulty as safe people to turn to

⁸ SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound

⁹ Some elements overlap with 'safe people'

Supporting points

- Spaces matter. Need positive opportunities but out of the house – the issue of ‘gaming’ was raised
- Safe spaces – Create safe spaces where young people can gather e.g. Café with Wi-Fi, affordable food, open in the evenings, informal access to youth workers and community ambassadors as needed.
- Safe spaces – When people are in crisis, we need a safe space where they can sleep, recover, wash, rest, talk and access specialist support as required. This could be a fixed building or a mobile unit, but it must be available 24/7 and provide wraparound support
- Safe people – This ranges from young people acting as ambassadors for the project, to trusted adults delivering outreach activities and mental health support to specialists such as social workers and mental health professionals¹⁰.
- Caithness as a safe place – wider theme emerged around making Caithness a hopeful place to grow up. A place where you will be safe, you can thrive, grow, learn. The right environment and a sense of hope in the face of what has regrettable decades of decline

Workstream 3 - Support for families and get family buy-in

- To develop an inclusive approach so all people can be involved

Supporting points

- Recognition of the cyclical nature of some of these issues – generations being ‘lost’ and ‘voiceless’
- Early intervention and support for families, parents, and carers to provide practical help and build resilience and self-esteem
- Consider scale-up and make sustainable existing groups such as Home Start Caithness to continue to deliver early intervention before social work becomes involved
- Consider how social work services are resourced locally and what they need to reach more families

Workstream 4 - Education

- Understand the role of education and school curriculum in addressing mental health issues including addressing stigma
- Consistently roll out mental health support across schools to enable young people to access the level of support they need, in a timely manner
- To set up health and wellbeing groups in all schools, run by pupil ambassadors

¹⁰ Clearly health professionals, teachers, counsellors, police officers should be points of safety. A recurring theme, however, highlighted that some young people will not seek support from professionals who they perceive or have had experience of as not being safe from their perspective. People at risk do not respond positively to statutory services. This should be a matter for some reflection and consideration as if such concerns are not addressed it will drive people away from services seeking alternative solutions or none. In the short-term there may need to be some acceptance that this is the reality and support and effort for online solutions, self-help, and peer support, third sector prioritised until trust can be built back into the system.

Supporting points

- People in primary schools are anxious. Professionals doing their best to provide support, but they need access to professional expertise
- Crucial to have expert professional support to meet needs e.g. trauma, bereavement

Workstream 5 Support for people in crisis

As this was identified as an overarching theme further work is required to scope this out including objectives and prioritised key actions

Supporting points

- Challenges around recruitment for mental health specialities reflecting national shortages. Therefore, will need to think more laterally some pathways - *"It's not due to a lack of money it's a lack of people due to local, national and global shortage."*
- Consideration needs to be given to access to existing services e.g. and to inpatient treatment such as rehabilitation and. Can partners find a new approach to help progress these longstanding issues?
- To improve awareness of the range of support and service available
- To build flexibility to services especially out of hours
- To provide continuity and consistency of care by bringing everything together
- Very significant immediate needs for current care experienced population

There was some discussion around where using evidence and data would be a workstream or a cross-cutting principle though in reality it is both.

Using evidence (science, data, information, and practical examples)

- To use the science / evidence to develop options and target resources
- To identify alternative approaches from statutory providers to overcome recruitment challenges
- To identify targeted interventions for most vulnerable led by the community
- To understand what work has already taken place and assessment of our local situation to allow benchmarking.

Supporting points

- Need to look at whole 'journey' from pregnancy and early years through to late 20s
- Carry out a Needs Assessment and ongoing sense check with young people
- Transitions is an important time

Q3 How might the role/remit of workstreams change over time?

Most of the feedback was generic and applied to the overall approach and would be applicable across all workstreams.

- Overtime the balance from crisis management to prevention would hopefully switch
- Responding to changing needs and circumstances
- Guided by young people and families
- Making sure we are alert to new solutions and opportunities as they come along
- Have systems in place to learn from each other around what is working/ not working and respond

Q4 How could these workstreams use any new funding available to make a difference to young people, their families, parents, or carers?

As part of the governance process once the workstreams are agreed accompanying action plan would be prepared building on the proposed ideas from the workshops as well as ongoing engagement.

Access to Services

- Timely access and awareness of 24/7 online resources with anonymity guarantee
- Access to counselling and talking therapies
- Easy access to expert Children's Mental Health services
- Enhance 24/7 support from professionals
- Enhance access to existing local services such as CAHMS, rehabilitation, 'detox' and psychiatric services
- Funding for mental health professionals for children and young people (was identified by one group as their number one priority)
- Individuals able to refer themselves into services
- Local Practitioners specialising in Children's Mental Health

Activities

- Develop resources and a diverse range of activities for young people that is age and situation appropriate

Sense of place, Safe place, and Safe people

- Investment to improve existing infrastructure to have them open and more appealing
- Investment in apprenticeships, skills academy and 'grow our own'
- How can we better support other third sector partners e.g. Home Start Caithness and PPP in the intervention work they are doing? Consideration to five-year contracts?

Training and support

- Build and expand on the local work being developed and delivered in schools by young people
- Identify and address the support required for professionals
- Invest in a programme of resilience, coping strategies and self-management
- Promote and support participation in the SQA Wellbeing Award
- Promotion or creation of 24/7 online (anonymous) resources
- Deliver a Mental First Aid Programme

- Spend money on local people with lived experience employing and training them to become influential Ambassadors for all

Using evidence

- Appoint a programme manager to carry out a review of the evidence and interventions from other communities facing similar challenges that were transformational
- Commission expertise to support with co-production to support developing vision and ongoing engagement with young people
- Develop an evidence base to support setting up and managing Ambassadors

3. Risks

The Highland Council paper *'Developing a Whole Systems Approach to Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing'* presented to the Education and Learning Committee on 18 November 2020 highlighted the following risk:

"There is a risk that by not adopting a whole systems approach, we may focus on one part of the system and simply cause pressures elsewhere, which is not helpful. Addressing all aspects of universal, targeted and specialist supports and services within the same framework, allows us to be sighted on all parts of the system and make the joins in relation to service delivery, rather than duplicate effort or create gaps."

Although risks were not identified as a formal part of the Workshops several other issues were raised and may inform the development of a risk register for the Pathfinder.

3.1 Acute Episodes and Events

A failure to put support in place to address immediate crisis events will undermine longer term planning.

3.2 Age range

The age range 5-26 is very broad with different issues and requiring different interventions and approaches. There is a risk the Pathfinder is too broad to deliver SMART objectives.

3.3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

The recruitment challenges are not likely to be easily resolved soon. If partners are not able to find new approaches to help address some of the longstanding issues which are acceptable to the community this poses a risk.

3.4 Co-production and Engagement

The commitment to put young people at the heart of the programme will require a new approach to engagement and co-production. This will require expertise and capacity which may not be currently available locally.

3.5 Gravity of the Situation

The long-standing problems will not be addressed through superficial approaches. Concern was raised that it is *'not just what can be thrown at it'*. If all the component parts do not

come together in a planned, creative, and sustainable way with appropriate buy-in any activities will not flourish. There is a natural desire to see 'quick wins' but this must not detract from the challenge of creating the right conditions and relationships to support progress and commitment for the long haul of a whole system approach.

3.6 What else is going on?

This piece of work needs to be set in the context of what else is currently going on across Caithness and Highland both from statutory agency point of view but also third sector and community capacity.

4. Next steps

A verbal report and draft action plan will go to the Caithness Committee on 11th December for members consideration and a more detailed action plan will be prepared in early January 2021. This will strive to give 'real inspiration and aspiration.' Meanwhile local engagement and listening exercises will be ongoing.

Appendix 1 The Framing of Mental Health and Wellbeing in Caithness

The selection of Caithness as a pathfinder follows several suicides and increasing drug-related deaths, with the problem becoming more acute in 2020. Police Scotland has prepared a community impact report on the subject and submitted this to the Scottish Government, and Commander Trickett has confirmed that Caithness is an area of key concern within Highland as a result of increasing violent crime, addiction and mental health challenges.

To support the pathfinder it was agreed to hold a Workshop to look at how 'out of hours service' provision could be developed to create a 24 hour seven day a week crises response to different levels of need e.g. from acute mental health response to a 'listening ear to support the de-escalation of mental health matters.

The workshop will also look at how a 'whole systems approach' could be developed within Caithness ensuring that improvements are made across the tiered levels of mental and emotional health service provision whilst addressing very specific issues that have been identified. The work will focus within key ages of children and young people and within localities within Caithness.

Some initial thoughts for consideration were set out in advance of the workshop

- National approach is focused on crisis support – scale up Listening Ear service to provide round-the-clock community-led crisis support as and where patient requires it.
- Consider complementary facility to act as a Caithness Crisis Centre – a safe place for people in acute distress, initial community support but triage up to specialist services and provide help to access those as required. Physical building or 1-2 mobile units?
- Consider Icelandic Model rollout for addiction support, including focus on education, early intervention, and positive youth activities. Potential to work with High Life Highland, schools and UHI on changing culture and providing safe activities to promote mental and physical health and wellbeing. Funding available locally for capital and revenue via Crown Estate.
- Consideration needs to be given to access to existing services e.g. CAMHS and to inpatient treatment such as rehabilitation and access to psychiatric services. Can partners find a new approach to help progress these longstanding issues?
- How can we better support other third sector partners e.g. Home Start Caithness and PPP in the intervention work they are doing? Consideration of moving to five-year contracts?
- The pathfinder funding is timely as all key partners, statutory and voluntary, are now sighted on the issues in Caithness, with several strands of activity already in progress (Table 1).

Table 1 Range of work underway in Caithness

Organisation/ Group / Forum	Activity	Notes
Action Group for Social Isolation and Mental Wellbeing, a subgroup of the Caithness Covid-19 resilience effort	Undertaken a survey of existing mental health provision; online campaign 'It's okay not to be okay'; and creating online resource hub as one stop shop for people to access support.	Run under the banner of Highland Third Sector Interface and Community Planning Partnership with reps from statutory service providers and community groups.
Caithness Drug and Alcohol Forum	Running community cafes to support people to access recovery	
Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership (HDAP)	Funding Education Officer at Highland Council to further develop Icelandic Model in Caithness.	
Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership (HDAP)	£80k funding to both secondary schools to hire inhouse school counsellors.	
Highland Council	Rollout of Decider and Life Skills training to all S3 pupils.	
Listening Ear	Provides community-led crisis support out of hours and is ready to scale up	New social enterprise
NHS Highland	Appointed emergency care practitioner (Band 7) based at Caithness General Hospital.	
NHS Highland	CPNs in three GP practices (in hours only)	
NHS Highland	Vacancy in psychiatry advertised repeatedly without success. Working group looking at skills mix to seek way forward.	
NHS Highland	Considering Caithness as priority area for further community engagement as part of redesign. Redesign process has potential to provide useful holistic context to mental health proposal.	
Police Scotland	Running Safe Places initiative with local businesses and working closely with all partners,	
Police Scotland	Report sent to Scottish Government highlighting recognising Caithness as red/amber area for drug addiction and violent crime.	
Political engagement	Inquiry into mental health prompted strong responses and evidenced strain on GP services, gaps in local provision and schools at crisis point.	Carried out by Gail Ross MSP
Political engagement	Representations to NHSH on issues as they relate to Caithness	Rhoda Grant MSP
Political engagement	Ongoing lobbying cross-party, and new funding via Crown Estate provides sizeable pot for investing in related activities to maximise initial investment	Local members
Political engagement	Led the setting up and running of two Workshops into the Mental Health Wellbeing for children and young people in Caithness.	Local members

Note

[Caithness survey shows people are unsure how to access mental health services \(johngroat-journal.co.uk\)](http://johngroat-journal.co.uk)

Further thoughts for consideration:

Some further thoughts were highlighted at the workshop

- Agreement that problem has always existed but worsened through Covid-19 pandemic (isolations, restrictions, lost jobs. Need to ask ourselves historically why this has happened in the first place.
- Issues around employment and opportunities. People wanting to live, work and stay in Caithness. How do we 'grow our own' and develop a 'Skills Academy'.
- Success will be underpinned by children and young people having a sense of trust in services and people.

A written submission was also received from Chairperson of Caithness Mental Health Support Group: who was unable to attend due to a previous commitment.

Caithness Mental Health Support Group offers a drop-in service to anyone over the age of 16 who have identified themselves as suffering mental ill health or any carers. We do not offer any treatments, but our staff offer a listening ear and will signpost to any relevant services and other charities we work closely with statutory services on behalf of our centre users. Our group offer a non-judgemental non stigma service with facilities for showering, washing machines, tumble driers, food, hot and cold drinks, and snacks. We provide the opportunity for craft work, games and in 'normal times' arranged outings. Our management committee consists of representatives from both centres nominated by their peers.

If following your workshop, you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me. We would be happy to work with you to support the development of services to our community. However, our articles of memorandum do not allow us to offer our service to the under 16 years age group. We do allow other groups relating to mental health to use our facilities out with our opening hours.

Ideas

- Easy access to expert Children's Mental Health services
- Access to counselling and talking therapies
- Local Practitioners specialising in Children's Mental Health
- Individuals able to refer themselves into services

Linda Sinclair, Chair Mental Health Support Group

Appendix 2 Workshop Agenda, 30 November 2020

Improving the Mental Well-being of Young People in Caithness

Objectives

- To bring interested stakeholders together in a “safe space” to talk about issues affecting the mental well-being of young people (aged from 5 to 26 years) in Caithness.
- To identify the core elements of a community-based response to address these issues.
- To support the generation of a report that presents developing, multi-agency, proposals about the nature and funding of a pilot project that will refine this proposed response and make it an effective reality.

1.	Welcome, Introduction & Objectives	(10 mins)	N Sutherland
2.	Background	(10 mins)	N Sinclair
3.	Introductory Discussion	(15 mins)	N Sutherland
3.	A Short Video: The Icelandic Model	(10 mins)	
4.	Group Work Session: Developing A Caithness Model? (Includes a 10-minute comfort break)	(80 mins)	Facilitated
5.	Feedback Session & Plenary Discussion	(45 mins)	N Sutherland
6.	What happens next?	(10 mins)	D Manson/ N Grant

Appendix 3 Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project Workshop Participants

1 – 4 pm		6 – 9 pm	
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Isobel Mackay	Caithness CAB	Allan Tait Senior Development Officer Caithness Voluntary Group	Caithness Voluntary Group
Ranald MacAuslan	Caithness Drug & Alcohol Forum	Stephanie Remers	Caithness Voluntary Group
Angela Echavarren District Manager	Caithness Family Team	Gill Arrowsmith	CHAT
Chris MacKenzie Group Manager	Caithness Mental Health Support Group	M Thompson	Higher Ground
Kay Nicolson	Caithness Voluntary Group	Norman Sutherland	Higher Ground
Ron Gunn Vice Chair	CHAT	Alan Forbes Parent Council Chair, Thrumster Py	Highland Council
Carole Whittaker	D & C Community Council	Alison Donald Education and Learning Manager	Highland Council
Eann Sinclair Area Manager Caithness & Sutherland	HIE	Anne Nicoll Depute Head Teacher, Thurso High	Highland Council
Keith Moncur Youth Development Officer	High Life Highland	Bernadette Cairns Principal Educational Psychologist	Highland Council
M Thompson	Higher Ground	Christine Gordon Sub-group Facilitator Quality Improvement Officer, North	Highland Council
Norman Sutherland	Higher Ground	Cllr Karl Rosie	Highland Council
Alex MacManus Caithness Ward Manager	Highland Council	Cllr Matthew Reiss	Highland Council
Alison Donald Sub-group Facilitator Education and Learning Manager	Highland Council	Cllr Nicola Sinclair	Highland Council
Christine Gordon Sub-group Facilitator Quality Improvement Officer	Highland Council	Derek Martin Sub-group Facilitator Area Education Manager (Mid)	Highland Council
Cllr Karl Rosie	Highland Council	Donna Manson Chief Executive	Highland Council
Cllr Nicola Sinclair Councillor	Highland Council	Fiona Shearer Sub-group Facilitator Area Education Manager (South)	Highland Council
Cllr Willie Mackay	Highland Council	Gayle Hunter Sub-group Facilitator Additional Support Needs Officer	Highland Council
Derek Martin Sub-group Facilitator Area Education Manager (Mid)	Highland Council	Gordon Killbourn	Highland Council
Donna Manson Chief Executive	Highland Council	Grant Mackenzie Depute Rector Wick High	Highland Council
Fiona Shearer Sub-group Facilitator Area Education Manager (South)	Highland Council	Hannah Flavell Head teacher, Thurso High	Highland Council
Gayle Hunter Sub-group Facilitator Additional Support Needs Officer, North	Highland Council	Jacquie Hutchinson	Highland Council
Kenny Murray Sub-group Facilitator Education Officer	Highland Council	Jenny Fraser-Smith Principal Educational Psychologist	Highland Council
Leo McGrath Practice Lead Care & Protection	Highland Council	Kayleigh MacDougall Parent Council Keiss Primary	Highland Council

1 – 4 pm		6 – 9 pm	
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Nicky Grant Executive Chief Officer for Education	Highland Council	Kenny Murray Sub-group Facilitator Education Officer	Highland Council
Sandra Reynolds Sub-group Facilitator Education Officer	Highland Council	Laura Murray Head Teacher Miller Primary	Highland Council
Tania Mackie Sub-group Facilitator	Highland Council	Nicky Grant Executive Chief Officer for Education	Highland Council
Rosemary Smith Business Coordinator	Home-Start Caithness	Rhona Moodie Head Teacher Castletown and Canisbay Primary	Highland Council
Julie Marker Chair	Julie Marker Caithness Voluntary Group	Sandra Reynolds Sub-group Facilitator Education Officer	Highland Council
Pat Hendry Secretary, Community Council	Latherton Lybster & Clyth	Maree Todd MSP	MSP
Kirsteen Campbell Development Officer & Community Networker Caithness & Sutherland	LGOWIT	Rhoda Grant MSP	MSP
Sodi Kakouris e-Learning Development Officer	LGOWIT	Anne Fraser Mental Health Advanced Practitioner/Lead Caithness/Sutherland	NHS Highland
Gail Ross MSP	MSP	Beverly Horton Caithness Community Mental Health Team Manager (Wick)	NHS Highland
Catriona Naughton Senior Practice Manager Riverbank Medical Practice, Thurso	NHS Highland	Dr Neil McNamara Clinical Director, Mental Health, Learning Disability & DARS Consultant Psychiatrist (Rehab)	NHS Highland
Christian Nicolson District Manager (Caithness)	NHS Highland	Fiona Davies Head of Mental Health Services	NHS Highland
Dr. Amy Macaskill Consultant Psychiatrist, Lochaber	NHS Highland	Steven Szyfelbain	No More Lost Souls
Dr. David Carson Riverbank Medical Practice, Thurso	NHS Highland	Martin Sinclair Chair, Watten Primary	Parent Council
Michelle Johnstone Area Manager (Caithness & Sutherland)	NHS Highland	Prof Iain D Baikie Chair	Parent Council
Karen Valente Mental Health ANP	NHS Highland	Alasdair Goskirk Inspector	Police Scotland
Pat Ramsey	Sinclair Bays Community Council	Carlene Rosie Health Coordinator/Support Worker	Pulteneytown People's Project
Joan Lawrie Development Manager	Thurso Comm Dev Trust	Maysie Calder Chair	Sinclair Bay Community Council
Helen Allan Chairperson	Thurso Youth Club	Holly Forbes Secretary	Tannach & District Comm Council
Jackie Manderson Educational Support Worker	UHI	Pupil	Thurso High
Emily MacLean	Wick Youth Club	S3 pupil	Thurso High
Julie McKinnon Manager	Wick Youth Club	S6 pupil Mental Health Ambassadors	Thurso High
Emma Fraser Team Leader Domestic Abuse Specialist Caithness & Sutherland	Women's Aid	Tom Boyd Sub-group Facilitator Advocacy and Participation Manager, North	Who Cares? Scotland

Appendix 4 Caithness Do we have a Problem? Community Voices

Grant Mackenzie, Depute Rector, Wick High School

“In my 20 years in teaching, the mental health of our pupils has never been worse and the mental health of the adults in their lives is similarly bleak.

“From this source come myriad social issues which bring young people to harm; drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, crime, damaged peer or family relationships...

“Services for young people are painfully under resourced in Caithness and, as a result, glacially slow in making progress. In short, the demand for help has far outstripped the supply.”

Dr Alison Brooks, Riverbank Medical Practice, Thurso

“Getting an emergency assessment for a patient who is acutely distressed, often suicidal, is nigh impossible. We have not had a permanent psychiatrist for two years. GPs are not experts in mental health but time and time again patients are redirected back to us... The unfortunate patients are the victims in all of this.”

Leo McGrath, Practice Lead, Care & Protection

Caithness is the second highest area in Highland for Child Protection Register, accommodated children and CFF referrals.

We currently have **160** active cases in the care and protection team.

- Since June 2020, four people aged 16, 17, 26 and 31 have died unexpectedly. All had significant mental health issues and significant multi agency intervention.
- From Nov 19-Nov 20 we averaged 3 Child Concern Forms per month where mental health issues are significant. All relate to children under 16.
- From Nov 19 - Nov 20 we averaged 2 Child Concern Forms per month concerning people aged 11-25 where mental health issues are significant.

Alasdair Goskirk, Area Inspector, Police Scotland

Caithness is a priority for Police Scotland.

In the past 12 months we have observed:

- Murder
- Attempted murders
- Increase in serious assaults & significant disorder
- Increased use of weapons
- Increase in suicide
- Rise in number of drug related deaths
- Increase in calls to Police where public are suffering mental distress

Selection of comments from families supported by Home-Start Caithness

“I didn’t do well in school and find it hard to go along to the nursery - scared of being judged.”

“Thank you for the suggestions, that helps, because at the moment I can’t process anything. When I start to think my head goes blank.”

“Making a phone call or going to the doctors are extremely difficult when I am overwhelmed by my emotions.”

Carlene Rosie, Health Co-Ordinator, Support Worker, PPP

"I started drinking/using at 13 years old. I had no self-worth, full of anger and resentments. Absolutely no boundaries. No confidence. Searching for someone or something to 'fix' me.

"Today in Caithness, there aren't any support groups for young people in the mist of addiction. The younger generation do not want to go to teachers, social workers or someone reading from a book. People with lived experiences are the target.

"After hours support. More activities. No judgement."

Julie Marker, Caithness Voluntary Group and Listening Ear

"She is pulling out her own toenails, such is her distress. How many nails does she have to remove before help is available? Once they are all gone, what will she remove next?"

Steven Szyfelbain, No More Lost Souls

"Suicide has taken more lives in Caithness during COVID-19 than COVID itself has."

Joan Lawrie, Thurso Community Development Trust

"We've conducted extensive consultation with young men aged 18-25 in Thurso. These are the forgotten about young men, the ones who sleep on couches, who are from backgrounds of generational inequalities, the young men who are currently losing their lives and all express difficulties with their mental health.

"Of the young men we have consulted all of them have experienced at least 5 deaths of young people who were close to them, others have experienced 10 or more.

"Our young people are numb and without hope that life will get better for them."

Nelson Mandela, 8 May 1995 (Selected by Karl Rosie)

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

Appendix 5 Example of the output from one of the facilitated subgroups

Opportunities

- For families/adults, alongside young folk – e.g. different activities in the same spaces, or join activities for example with parents and younger children
- Times that matter – evenings, weekends
- Theme of empowering and upskilling parents, bringing connection and confidence
- Within schools, both during and beyond school day
- Links to HLH, sports, artistic opportunity
- Outdoor opportunity
- Access – think about transport, supporting transport, lifts, public transport, large families, etc
- Based within community
- Beyond school as well as within school (e.g. access for ‘non attending’ yp)
- Forest school/outdoor-based schooling
- Gaming addiction a concern – challenge for any ‘curfew’ approach. Need positive opportunity but out of the house
- Spaces matter
- Theme of inclusion

The Community of School

- Learning from developing projects elsewhere, brining coherence to different strands of support for YP within and beyond their school communities
- Crucial to have expert professional support to meet needs, e.g. trauma, bereavement, voice
- Robust support
- Training and support for professional staff within schools
- Recognise and develop broad caring/nurturing role for school communities, both in primary and secondary
- Support and opportunity for families alongside YP
- School at heart of community
- Inclusion

The Promise

- Focus on key supports for those in most critical circumstances, child protection, Care Experienced, Edges of Care
- Foundations helpful – voice, family, relationships
- Brings coherence, aspiration, and hope to developing coherent plans
- Very significant immediate needs for current care experienced population
- Need for focus on ongoing support from earliest years into adulthood, and throughout 20s
- Sustained relationships
- Theme of ‘responsible adults’ taking ‘ownership’ for what their YP is accessing, exploring, and any risks developing – both for those in parental family circumstances, and YP who are not living with their parents in some care setting

Empowering and Enabling YP and Community

- Need work across board to be alongside YP and communities
- Shaped by them, with support
- Co-production
- Shaping use of additional resource in that way (Participatory Budgeting, linked to specific workstreams)

Transitions

- Crucial
- Need to look at whole journey, from pregnancy and early years through to late 20s
- Shouldn't be any 'cliff edges'
- Ongoing relationships key

Need for overarching 'umbrella' for programme/approach as a whole

- Need for coherent way in which activity/workstreams can be brought together
- Need for aspiration, and mix of immediate and longer-term action
- Need for theme of hope and action
- For YP, families and all professionals and carers – lot of worn folk, significant challenges, some hopelessness
- Possible role for The Promise and the Community of School approach in creating that coherent vision

Higher Ground Health and Care Planning Ltd

December 2020

Caithness Mental Wellbeing Pathfinder Project Action Plan.

Whole system approach ~ Empowered communities ~ Young people at its heart ~ Data and measurement ~ Hope and resilience

1. Prevention

2. Early Intervention

3. Crisis Management

Priority	Workstream	Task	Principles
	Stakeholder Engagement	Stakeholder workshop	Completed 30/11/20 Develop a pathfinder project based on crisis support and round-the-clock services, with clear 'whole community' approach
		Report to Caithness Committee – 11 th December	To agree formalities, objectives, how to measure and assess progress, local steering group, timescales etc Consider the level of public engagement and consultation required
	Activities and skills	Engagement with Young People in communities	Expertise required to reach those who do not normally engage
		Developing a range of activities for young people that are inclusive, age-appropriate, accessible, and relevant To deliver a diverse range of activities that are not imposed, are age-specific To provide positive experiences that build resilience and complement the creation of 'safe spaces' and 'safe people'	Not all activities should be led by schools and format settings like youth clubs Youth workers could help deliver and shape – ideally young people should act as ambassadors for their peers Consider funding – access to activities may require grant direct to young people as per Icelandic model or wraparound support e.g. transport for those in rural areas Skills development opportunities – do not just focus on sports but also enable young people to develop life skills, community skills, skills that benefit their CV and skills that will enable them to become ambassadors for their peers

Priority	Workstream	Task	Principles
		Creating 'safe spaces' for young people to gather, such as spaces that are warm, connected, 'cool' and provide access to 'safe people' including peer-to-peer support	<p>To create a sense of place where people want to live, work, and stay in Caithness</p> <p>Safe spaces – When people are in crisis, we need a safe space where they can sleep, recover, wash, rest, talk and access specialist support as required. This could be a fixed building or a mobile unit, but it must be available 24/7 and provide wraparound support</p> <p>Safe people – This ranges from young people acting as ambassadors for the project, to trusted adults delivering outreach activities and mental health support to specialists such as social workers and mental health professionals¹.</p>
		Improve our local environment (gardens, parks, buildings and removing rubbish and litter	To improve self-esteem and sense of belonging for young people
		Work in partnership with employers to help reduce stigma associated with mental health	To provide role models for those in difficulty as safe people to turn to
		Support families at an early stage with practical help and interventions, to prevent escalating issues reaching crisis point and break the cycle	
		Building understanding of mental health and wellbeing through education programmes, both formal curriculum and community/family based to improve knowledge and understanding and tackle stigma	

Priority	Workstream	Task	Principles
		Developing appropriate support for people in crisis on a 24/7/365 basis through a mix of community based 'listening ear' support, recovery, and professional mental health support, on-line and self-support strategies as required	
	Support for families and family buy-in	Early intervention and support for families, parents, and carers to provide practical help and build resilience and self-esteem	Recognition of the cyclical nature of some of these issues – generations being 'lost' and 'voiceless'
		Consider scale-up and make sustainable existing groups such as Home Start	Continue to deliver early intervention before social work becomes involved
		Consider how social work services are resourced locally and what they need to reach more families	
	Education	Role of education and school curriculum in addressing mental health issues including addressing stigma	
		Consistently roll out mental health support across schools to enable young people to access the level of support they need, in a timely manner	Access to professional support Access to counselling and talking therapies Easy access to expert Children's Mental Health services
		Set up health and wellbeing groups in all schools, run by pupil ambassadors	Peer support
	Support for people in Crisis	Challenges around recruitment for mental health specialities reflecting national shortages. Therefore, will need to think more laterally some pathways Consider access to existing services e.g. and to inpatient treatment such as rehabilitation and.	Requires further engagement, consultation and discussion Can partners find a new approach to help progress these longstanding issues

Priority	Workstream	Task	Principles
		Improve awareness of the range of support and service available	Access and awareness of 24/7 online resources with anonymity guarantee
		Build flexibility to services especially out of hours	<i>"It's not due to a lack of money it's a lack of people due to local, national and global shortage."</i>
		Provide continuity and consistency of care by bringing everything together	<p>Enhance 24/7 support from professionals</p> <p>Enhance access to existing local services such as CAHMS, rehabilitation, 'detox' and psychiatric services</p> <p>Funding for mental health professionals for children and young people (was identified by one group as their number one priority)</p> <p>Individuals able to refer themselves into services</p> <p>Local Practitioners specialising in Children's Mental Health</p>
	Using evidence (science, data, information, and practical examples)	Use the science / evidence to develop options and target resources	<p>Appoint someone to carry out a review of the evidence and interventions from other communities facing similar challenges that were transformational</p> <p>Commission expertise to support with co-production to support developing vision and ongoing engagement with young people</p> <p>Develop an evidence base to support setting up and managing Ambassadors</p>
		Identify alternative approaches from statutory providers to overcome recruitment challenges	
		Identify targeted interventions for most vulnerable led by the community	
		Understand what work has already taken place and assessment of our local situation to allow benchmarking.	
		Carry out a Needs Assessment and ongoing sense check with young people	

Priority	Workstream	Task	Principles
	Training and support	<p>Build and expand on the local work being developed in schools by young people</p> <p>Identify and address the support required for professionals</p> <p>Invest in a programme of resilience, coping strategies and self-management</p> <p>Promote and support participation in SQA Wellbeing Award</p> <p>Promotion or creation of 24/7 online (anonymous) resources</p> <p>Roll out Mental First Aid Programme</p> <p>Spend money on local people with lived experience employing and training them to become influential Ambassadors</p>	