

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

**REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN & COMMUNITY
TO LEADERSHIP PANEL
OF 9 FEBRUARY 2010**

SUBJECT: Children and Community Summary Annual Report (2008/09)

1. Purpose.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Leadership Panel with the draft of the first summary annual report for Children and Community relating to financial year 2008/09, and to seek the Panel's approval for publication of this on the Council's website and via other electronic media in such a way as to make it accessible to stakeholders including staff, partners, other local authorities and our service users.

2. Recommendation.

Members are asked to approve the publication of the summary annual report for Children and Community.

3. Background.

Under the terms of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 local authorities are required to identify a set of education improvement objectives and report on their success in meeting these objectives. Most authorities fulfil this requirement by producing an annual standards and quality report for stakeholders to report performance in the preceding academic year. Reports are made available for the public and are generally circulated to other local authorities.

Section 45 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 requires local authorities to produce an annual Chief Social Work Officer's report and the draft summary annual report for Children and Community fulfils South Ayrshire Council's obligations in this regard. Again such a report is normally made available to the public and to other local authorities.

4. Consideration.

A comprehensive report, based on six high level questions used for inspection and self evaluation purposes has been prepared which gives a full and detailed account of the activities of the Directorate during the reporting period 2008/2009. Due to the breadth and depth of the Directorate's responsibilities the full report is lengthy. In the interests of improving communication with our stakeholders and achieving transparency and accountability it was felt that a summary report providing the highlights of our achievements grouped around the services delivered to particular age groups or areas of need in the community would be more digestible and would provide a clearer indication of our performance. The summary report therefore provides information which answers the first high level question "What key outcomes have we achieved?". The Leadership Panel is therefore requested to approve publication of the summary report only. The full report will be available if required and will also be used to inform the Directorate's own improvement planning activity including future self evaluations.

5. Resource Implications.

Publication in hard format will be limited to save costs as well as for environmental reasons and any costs will be met from within existing budgets.

6. Results of Public Consultation.

The Portfolio Holders have been consulted on this report along with a focus group of young people, staff and the Tenants and Residents Forum. Results of these consultations will be used to inform future reports as well as informing, where possible, publication of this summary report.

Background Papers.

Directorate Plan for Children and Community
Draft summary annual report

Person to Contact.

Margo Williamson, Head of Curriculum and Service Improvement

Date.

21st January 2010

Children and Community

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT SUMMARY



2008/09

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the first annual performance report summary for the Children and Community Directorate. This report contains information about key outcomes for the Directorate during 2008/09.

Most authorities produce a Standards and Quality report for education each year. This year I have chosen to incorporate the educational Standards and Quality report and the annual Chief Social Work Officer's report into this one cohesive reporting document. This report satisfies the requirements of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994.

Many of the outcomes we have achieved are as a result of more effective working across those services that now form Children and Community in terms of planning, managing and delivering services.

I recognise that the many achievements which we have secured are directly attributable to the energy and effort of our staff and partners and I am confident that these qualities will ensure that we continue to improve and make the lives of people in South Ayrshire better.

I trust that you will find the report both informative and encouraging and share my confidence that, through delivering services of the highest quality, Children and Community will help to establish South Ayrshire as the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland.

Harry Garland

Executive Director

Introduction

The Children and Community Directorate was established in January 2009 and comprises five service areas:

- Children's Services;
- Community Care and Housing;
- Community Development;

- Curriculum and Service Improvement; and
- Service and School Management.

The Head of Service for **Children's Services** is responsible for Child Protection, Services for Looked After Children, Getting it Right for Every Child, Additional Support for Learning, Psychological Services, Children and Family Social Work Services, Childcare and Early Years Services and Adult Criminal Justice Social Work Services.

The Head of Service for **Community Care and Housing** is responsible for Housing along with Care Services for older people and adults.

The Head of **Community Development** is responsible for Community Learning and Development, Active and Outdoor Learning, Community Planning and Engagement, Culture and the Arts, Leisure, Sports Services and Libraries.

The Head of Service for **Curriculum and Service Improvement** is responsible for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of staff, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), School Improvement and Service Improvement across the Directorate. The Head of Service for Curriculum and Service Improvement is also responsible for aspects of school management in partnership with the Head of Service and School Management.

The Head of **Service and School Management** is responsible for Pupil Services, Quality Assurance, School Management (in partnership with the Head of Curriculum and Service Improvement) and School Planning and the School Estate.

About this summary

This document provides a summary of the achievements of the Children and Community Directorate for 2008/09. This information has been extracted from our annual report which contains more detailed information about our activities and service performance.

Services for Young Children

- The Childcare Service increased provision for children with additional support needs during school holidays, from 46 supported places in 2007/08 to 49 supported places in 2008/09. The Service introduced a travel scheme which provided free travel passes for clubs during summer holidays allowing greater access to facilities and activities outwith their local areas.

Services for Children in Schools

- All school staff were made aware of key policies and guidance issued through a Curriculum for Excellence Manual and identified areas of their practice which had changed as a result of CfE. All school staff familiarised themselves with the outcomes and experiences of CfE and adjusted learning programmes appropriately.
- 5 new schools have been built at Belmont and Prestwick Academies, Alloway, Barassie and Monkton Primary schools and a new annexe at Kyle Academy.
- 7 nursery schools or classes were inspected by HMIE and all received positive reports.
- 8 primary schools were inspected by HMIE and all received positive reports.
- 3 secondary schools were inspected by HMIE and 2 of these received positive reports.
- Almost 25% of children in Primary 1- 3 classes were taught in classes of 18 or fewer.
- 2059 applications for free school meals were processed, an increase of 56 from the previous year.
- Of the 1,811 pupils who remained at school after 4th year, 522 received an educational maintenance allowance of between £10 and £30 per week.
- 361 placing requests for primary schools were received. Of these 324 were granted, 9 were refused and 28 were withdrawn prior to consideration. 282 placing requests for secondary schools were received. Of these 232 were granted, 50 were refused and 20 were withdrawn prior to consideration.
- 42 Co-ordinated Support Plans were developed for children with additional support needs.
- The number of children educated in outwith authority day placements decreased from 34 to 12 and the number of children educated in outwith authority residential placements decreased from 39 to 21.
- Additional support staff worked in close partnership with teachers, colleagues from other support services and partner agencies and parents/carers to provide support for 2130 pupils with additional support needs. 313 children received support from specialist teachers.
- The flexible curriculum programme (Alpha Plus Initiative) was extended allowing pupils to access customised educational and support programmes within their own communities. In conjunction with this development, intensive pupil support arrangements were established for pupils where school placements were in danger of breaking down.

- The Directorate invested significantly in the roll-out of the Solution Oriented Schools Programme to help staff **develop solution oriented problem solving skills across schools with** representatives from each school trained over two days alongside staff from partner agencies.
- 88% of pupils in primary schools attained reading levels appropriate for their age, the highest level for 5 years, 84% of pupils in primary schools attained writing levels appropriate for their age, the highest level for 5 years and 89% of pupils in primary schools attained mathematics levels appropriate for their age, the highest level for 5 years.
- 92% of pupils in secondary schools achieved 3 or more awards at level 3 or above (Foundation Standard Grade/Access 3) by the end of S4 and 77% of pupils achieved awards at level 4 or better (General Standard Grade/Intermediate 1) by the end of S4.
- 27% of pupils achieved 5 or more awards at level 6 (Higher) by the end of S5, the highest level for 5 years and 17% of pupils achieved one or more award at level 7 (Advanced Higher) by the end of S6, the highest level for 5 years.
- The attendance level in primary schools was 95.3%, a slight increase from 2007/08 and the attendance level in secondary schools was 90%, a slight decrease from 2007/08.
- Exclusions in primary schools have decreased slightly over the last three years to 9 exclusions per 1,000 pupils and exclusions in secondary schools have decreased significantly over the last five years and in 2008/09 were the lowest for five years with 87 exclusions per 1,000 pupils.
- The Dolphin House provided a venue for a range of outwith school activities for children and young people in South Ayrshire (and beyond) with 932 South Ayrshire pupils benefiting from a residential stay and 240 secondary pupils using the facilities for field work.
- 102 pupils achieved Sports Leaders Awards and 34 pupils gained coaching qualifications through the Active Schools Coach Education Academy. 14 pupils achieved the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification.
- Almost 300 pupils participated in South Ayrshire Orchestras. 17 pupils were selected as members of the West of Scotland Schools' Orchestra and Concert Band and the Percussion Ensemble travelled to London where they were involved in master classes with professional percussionists.
- The Inclusion Squad Network was developed to include thirteen schools.
- The Directorate's anti-bullying policy was reviewed, in partnership with *Respectme*- Scotland's Anti Bullying Service, and anti-bullying strategies were developed in every school.
- A pupil survey revealed that most primary pupils agreed that their school was helping them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Most secondary pupils agreed that their schools were helping them to become successful learners and responsible citizens and the majority agreed that the schools was helping them to become more confident and a more effective contributor.
- Holistic Health Clinics were established in 7 secondary schools and in the extended support for learning facility at Queen Margaret Academy, although the proposal to provide a clinic at Queen Margaret Academy itself did not gain the approval of the school community.
- All schools achieved commitment level status within the Accreditation Programme for Health Promotion. 24 schools also achieved commended level status before the programme was embedded within the implementation of CfE Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes.
- Participation in the Active Schools Programme was high with 4,547 pupils taking part in regular activities or clubs on a weekly basis throughout the year.
- Rugby League was introduced to schools in North Ayr with 30 pupils involved, supported by two local business and 4 pupils were selected to attend a training camp in Malta.
- All schools in South Ayrshire were registered as Eco Schools. By October 2009, 45 schools had achieved a bronze Eco-school award, 36 schools a silver award and 13 schools a first

Green Flag award. One primary school, Braehead Primary, had also achieved a second Green Flag award.

- More than 80 pupils took part in the South Ayrshire MiniTrials which were held in the Sheriff Court, the fifth year that senior pupils from secondary schools have participated in this innovative programme supported by Scottish Lawyers, the Faculty of Advocates, the Law Society of Scotland and the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet.
- Partnerships with parents were strengthened by establishing new Parent Councils in almost all schools.
- Very good progress was made in rolling out Glow throughout South Ayrshire schools. There were exciting examples of collaboration between schools, both within South Ayrshire and nationally.

The Curriculum for Excellence festival was the first of its kind in South Ayrshire. Staff across the authority were invited to volunteer to showcase work going on in their schools and nurseries around Curriculum for Excellence. The response was astounding with staff across all sectors willing to buy into the vision of learning better from colleagues. Around 1,400 participants elected to attend 2 seminars from a choice of 39. Participants also viewed an introductory DVD including messages from our Chief Executive, the Portfolio Carrier for Lifelong Learning and the Executive Director at the beginning of their first seminar. Teaching staff were each given a folder containing strategy papers relating to Curriculum for Excellence. This gave the opportunity to share the Directorate's vision and expectations for Curriculum for Excellence with all staff. The resounding success of the event demonstrated the strength behind collaborative working. Our achievements in relation to the festival were celebrated at a national level with the First Minister commending us for our achievements.

Services for Children

- The inter-agency training programme for staff working with vulnerable children was recognised as an area of good practice by COSLA, winning a silver award.
- 84 supervision requirements were terminated by Children's Hearings on the basis that compulsory measures were no longer required.
- 57 children were removed from the Child Protection Register.
- The number of looked after children in 3 or more placements reduced from 18% to 15% between 2005 and 2007.
- 51% of care leavers achieved English and mathematics at SCQF level 3 or above, compared with 66% in 2007/08.

Day Care Link is an innovative, community-based service for children and families affected by disability in South Ayrshire, committed to promoting inclusion through providing a "short break" service to around 80 children each year. The service, which is an excellent example of effective multi-agency working, provides short breaks and social opportunities for children with or affected by disability. Resource workers establish links with local childcare providers, provide training and support, and in partnership with parents identify provision which meets the needs of the individual child. Day Care Link was highlighted as an example of good practice by the Social Work Inspection Agency in our last inspection report which stated. *"The Day Care Link project was an imaginative community respite scheme....there was a strong focus on the needs and preferences of individual children , a good commitment to parent choice and a successful approach to multi-agency working."*

Services for Young People

- Increasing numbers of young people received accreditation such as Youth Achievement, Dynamic Youth, Millennium Volunteer, Junior Achievement and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. In addition, a number of young people achieved Strathclyde Youth Awards of merit and one was a finalist in Young Scot Democracy/Citizenship Award.
- 33% of pupils went on to higher education compared with 31% nationally.
- The Youth Strategy was launched and a Youth Strategy Officer and a Political Youth Champion were appointed.
- 944 young people who were involved in a range of community based activities received awards for their personal achievements.
- 1214 Young Scot cards were issued compared with 1028 cards issued in 2007/08. The Young Scot web site continued to be in the top three local authority websites receiving the highest number of hits.
- 129 National Entitlement discount travel cards were issued to 16-18 year olds compared with 232 cards in 2007/08.
- 1542 young people took part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award at either Bronze, Silver or Gold level, through their secondary schools or youth groups. Of these, 191 successfully completed the necessary activities to achieve an Award.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award was developed further by running a national pilot programme to trial ocean going yacht sailing as a Gold expedition activity. Senior pupils from four secondary

schools participated in the practice sailing expedition in June and then completed their qualifying expedition at the end of August.

- 470 pupils were presented with certificates for their participation in the Junior Achievement Award (JAA).
- 775 pupils successfully completed the John Muir Award in South Ayrshire, mainly through primary schools participation in the Dolphin House residential programme.
- 447 young people were involved in youth development programmes, funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund and a further 526 young people participated in a range of curricular activities during extended school breaks.
- 110 youth groups made use of the facilities at the Dolphin House at Culzean.
- Recreation Access Pass (RAP) cards were available to all young people in South Ayrshire with 11,130 cards distributed to pupils in primary schools and 7,150 cards distributed to pupils in secondary schools prior to the summer holiday period, providing free access to South Ayrshire swimming pools as well as discounted access to some leisure facilities.

Services for Adults

- 35% of adults with a Learning Disability in South Ayrshire lived with a family carer, higher than the national average of 31%.
- 35% of adults with a Learning Disability used Local Area Co-ordination, compared with 16% nationally.
- 185 adults with a Learning Disability in South Ayrshire had a Personal Life Plan in place, 37% of the eligible population compared to 24% nationally.
- 11% of adults with a Learning Disability were in some form of employment, above the national average of 8%. 87% of adults attending day centres had access to alternative opportunities, above the national average of 66%.
- 3 inspections of respite services for people with Learning Disabilities were carried out by the Care Commission with all indicators of quality assessed as either good or very good.
- 320 adults were given support to develop their skills in computing, parenting and healthy living. Certificates were awarded to all adult learners at the annual celebration in June 2009.
- 503 adults were supported to improve their skills in reading, writing and numeracy compared with 737 adults during 2007/08.
- 155 adults for whom English was a second language were supported to improve their English language skills.
- Mothers who completed the Mellow Parenting course reported positively on its impact on their families and several progressed and successfully achieved the SQA Intermediate 1 Module in "Children's Learning and Development".
- During 2008/09 all adults who successfully completed the pilot SQA Module "Children's Learning and Development" progressed onto further education, employment or volunteering.
- 112 people were supported into employment and a further 281 new people registered for access to work programmes, 106 of whom were under 24 years of age.
- 29 people gained Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) and a further 53 gained job-related qualifications. 111 people enrolled on further education courses and 61 parents gained access to childcare support, making themselves available for work.
- A total 3,973 visits were made to the Flexible Learning Centre in North Ayr by people who wished to develop their ICT skills.
- 179 adults (and 342 school children) were encouraged to take up sports activities outwith school.

- Advice was provided to families on their eligibility for benefits and as a result 1,560 individuals were helped to access benefits, generating £297,000 for deprived families.
- Partnership activity included working with ASDA to prepare for a new store opening in Girvan and developing employability sessions to support people embarking on new employment.
- Projects, such as Best Fed Babies and Girvan FM Community Radio for Health built the capacity of local groups to sustain these. Community groups were supported to access external funding. An example of this was Glendoune Community Association being awarded £90,000 for a multi use games area.

The Ayr Hospital Social Work Team has been working in conjunction with the Department of Work and Pensions for approximately 5 years. During this time one of the team's main priorities has been dealing with Poverty in Illness. All the Social Workers within the team have over a number of years worked endlessly to maximise benefits paid to patients. However, with the expertise and joint working practices developed over the financial year of April 2008 to March 2009 we have been able to reach a target well in excess of £1,000,000 of reclaimed benefits, resulting in patients being able to live above the poverty level.

Housing Services

- During 2008/09 a total of £10,623 million was invested into the Council's housing stock to raise the quality and meet, or exceed, the Scottish Housing Quality Standard targets. 49% of the Council's housing stock meets the standard set by the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), an increase of 2% from last year, compared with 36% for comparator authorities.
- The rent lost due to voids has decreased over the last three years, from 1.7% of the total rental income lost in 2006/07 to 1.3% lost in 2008/09.
- The average length of time properties remained empty was 45 days compared with 47 days in 2007/08 and 63 days in 2006/07.
- 4.4% of the total rental income was lost due to arrears, compared with 6.1% in comparator authorities.
- 93.6% of all repairs required were completed on time in 2008/09.
- The average length of time taken to complete a repair or carry out an adaptation was 40 days compared with 30 days in comparator authorities.
- 100% of all appointments to deal with repairs were kept, compared with 96% in comparator authorities.
- 97.2% of all gas repairs were completed on time in 2008/09 and 97% of gas safety certificates were obtained before the previous certificate expired compared with just over 80% in comparator authorities.
- Over the last five years the number of people presenting as homeless has decreased and in 2008/09, 905 people presented as homeless in South Ayrshire with 468 of these assessed as homeless and in priority need. Housing Services developed its Housing Options approach by improving the standard of advice and information. This contributed to the prevention of homelessness in 75 households.
- The average length of time spent in temporary furnished accommodation, prior to being housed in permanent accommodation, has decreased over the last three years from 235 days in 2006/07 to 151 days in 2008/09.
- 87% of people provided with permanent accommodation during 2007/08 maintained their tenancies for at least 12 months.
- 2 Housing services were inspected during 2008/09 with one receiving an overall evaluation of very good and the other an overall evaluation of good.

- 8 Tenants and Residents Forum meetings were held during 2008/9, attended by tenants, residents and elected members, providing information on services available to people in South Ayrshire. An Information Partnership was also set up as part of the process for developing the Local Housing Strategy. The South Ayrshire Registered Social Landlords' (RSL) Forum was established and two meetings took place in 2008/09.
- The Homelessness Forum brought together organisations providing services to homeless people in order to raise awareness of homelessness, influence policy and to work together to improve services to people affected by homelessness.
- The Housing Market Partnership was established to inform and shape the assessment of housing need across the local housing market area. The partnership involved key officers, RSLs, private developers and private landlords and had responsibility to share information, assist with the development of a project plan for undertaking the housing need and demand assessment and support the analysis, interpretation and use of housing market intelligence.

Criminal Justice Services

- Multi-agency public protection arrangements were put in place across Ayrshire with the introduction of a Strategic Oversight Group.
- Shortened Social Enquiry Reports were introduced at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court on a pilot basis - a move which was welcomed by Sheriffs.
- A campaign to increase local awareness of Community Justice was rolled out.
- The residential element of the Turnaround Service which tackles the offending needs of young male prolific offenders with addiction issues became operational.
- An Arrest Referral Scheme was introduced across Ayrshire.
- A new service "Women in Focus" was developed to support women on community services or returning to this area from prison.
- The Routes Out of Prison initiative was implemented in HMP Kilmarnock.
- A website (www.swscja.org.uk) was launched with e-bulletins and voting functions. In the first two months following its launch there were 432 visits to the website by 275 different individuals.
- Draft minimum standards for services for families of offenders in custody were developed.

Services for Older People

- In 2008/09 654 people aged 65 or older received 10 hours or more home care, compared with 646 in 2007/08. This achievement significantly supported people to stay at home and avoided admission to care homes. 22% of people in South Ayrshire aged over 75 years receive either a home care or a care home service delivered or arranged through the Council.
- Almost 90% of older people (and other adults) who required assessments for Social Work services were assessed within four weeks of being referred. Of those who required services 80% were provided with services within 12 days of being assessed.
- Services were commissioned to support people with dementia to allow them to continue to live at home. These included Specialist Dementia Day Care which was provided by South Ayrshire Dementia Support Association (SADSA) Dementia Day Care (147 places per week) and Dundonald Dementia Day Care (23 places per week). Specific accommodation services for older people with dementia were provided through 12 "dementia friendly" houses in Gemmill Crescent, Ayr.
- 518 people received a hot meal at home from Apetito with the majority receiving between 5 and 7 meals per week. The overall number of meals delivered to service users on a monthly basis rose from 9,109 in March 2007 to 11,803 in October 2009, an increase of 23%. Almost all people who received a meal at home reported that they were happy with the meals and the

majority of service users who received a meal at day centres run by the local authority for older people reported that they were happy with the meals.

- The number of meals delivered to day centres decreased slightly from 2461 in March 2007 to 2005 in October 2009, a decrease of 18%.
- 811 older people were cared for in care homes, no change from 2007/08, despite an increase in the number of older people in South Ayrshire. This was achieved by increasing the number of older people receiving intensive care at home and providing increased respite to support family carers.
- 10,032 respite nights were provided to people aged 65 or older, an increase of 2.6% from 2007/08. 16,640 hours of daytime respite were provided, an increase of 2.1% from 2007/08.
- 1646 people aged 65 or older received home care, an increase of 4.3% from 2007/08.
- 1623 people received Personal Care, an increase of 6.1% from 2007/08.
- The Care Commission inspected 3 day care centres in South Ayrshire with almost all indicators judged to be either good or very good.
- The Care Commission inspected the two Local Authority run care homes, Hillcrest Residential Unit in Girvan and South Lodge in Ayr, with all indicators judged to be either good or very good.
- The number of people supported by the Integrated Care Team increased by 10%.
- Over the past year the number of people supported by the Rapid Response Team increased by 7% from 555 in 2007/08 to 594 in 2008/09. The team worked to prevent hospital admissions and facilitated early discharges with no delayed discharges in 2008/09.
- The Community Alarm Service, provided to 1850 people, was delivered through 16 mobile attendants who operated across the whole of South Ayrshire. In addition Telecare/Telehealth services were provided to 480 service users. 92% of people said they feel safer because of their equipment, 76% said they felt more independent, 79% said they felt less anxious and stressed and 89% said that their family was less worried about them. The Council installed 70 fire alarms which connected with the Telecare system to begin the process of ensuring that the most vulnerable users had additional basic peripherals to their community alarms.
- In South Ayrshire the Sensory Impairment Team worked with 960 people whose lives were affected by sensory impairment. Approximately 80% of these people were aged 65 and over.

Services for Communities

- There were 3 exhibitions at Rozelle House attracting 13,873 visitors, 15 exhibitions at the Maclaurin Galleries with 23,515 visitors and 9 exhibitions at the McKechnie Institute with 6,771 visitors.
- A Homecoming exhibition *Whole in One* was organised in partnership with Ayrshire Archives.
- A lift, providing access to all public areas, and disabled toilets were installed in Rozelle House and the Maclaurin courtyard was re-laid to provide improved access.
- A Maidens Community Exhibition was staged.
- South Ayrshire museums achieved recognition as a Collection of National Significance for their joint Robert Burns related collections.
- A number of improvements were made to sport and leisure facilities including a total locker replacement and installation of air conditioning within the Genesis Gym at the Citadel Leisure Centre, replacement of changing cubicles and upgrades at Prestwick and Troon pools in order to comply with Disability legislation.
- The number of people attending swimming pools decreased slightly to 334,870, due mainly to the closure of the Citadel Leisure Centre for refurbishment in December 2008 and the closure of the Girvan Swimming Pool in January 2009. The number of people attending other indoor

sport facilities also decreased slightly to 482,126 again due to the closure of the Citadel Leisure Centre.

- There were 808,097 visits to libraries in South Ayrshire, which was well above the national average.
- The number of people making use of public libraries to access computers decreased slightly from 7.9 per 1000 population in 2007/08 to 7.1 per 1000 population due to a period of planned closures for refurbishment. Similarly the number of occasions that terminals were accessed also decreased slightly to 1021 per 1000 population from 1161 in 2007/08 although this was still above the national average.
- Library services within South Ayrshire were significantly enhanced with a new build library at Alloway and a refurbishment of both Prestwick and Carnegie libraries. In addition, all libraries were improved to comply with disability legislation. New technology was introduced to the libraries to improve the services provided and issue points in all libraries were upgraded.
- A new initiative, BookStart Rhyme, was introduced in libraries and staff were trained to work with very young children and their parents.

Improving Services

Innovation, Change and Improvement

A strategic framework for Service Improvement within Children and Community was established and each Head of Service identified a Nominated Performance Officer with responsibility to drive forward the improvement agenda within their service area. These officers linked to the Service Improvement Team and the Scrutiny and Performance Management Unit which were created in 2008/09.

The Service Improvement Team has responsibility to ensure that processes are in place for self-evaluation, planning and performance reporting within the Directorate. The team also ensures that systematic performance monitoring informs service delivery and improvement and that management information systems support this. A key role for the Service Improvement Team is to ensure that views of stakeholders are gathered and used as part of the ongoing performance management arrangements across the Directorate. The team remit also includes the management of key documentation to ensure that it is fit for purpose and accessible to appropriate stakeholders.

The Scrutiny and Performance Management Unit is responsible for the scrutiny and quality assurance of all Directorate business processes ensuring compliance with corporate, Council and statutory requirements and linking to corporate planning and performance frameworks. This includes Risk Management, Business Continuity, Health and Safety and both Internal Audit and external scrutiny arrangements particularly in relation to HMIe and SWIA service wide inspections. The Unit are also responsible for ensuring improvement actions are detailed and implemented and for the creation and implementation of the Directorate Communication Strategy.

Gathering the Views of Stakeholders

In 2008/09 a number of surveys were carried out electronically to gather the views of key stakeholder groups about the provision of services within Children and Community. These included surveys of parents and pupils about school education and a survey of Head Teachers about leadership and management. The results of these were used to inform service improvement. Schools also have opportunities to provide feedback on the quality of school catering, cleaning and janitation.

Within Housing Services there are a number of regular customer surveys carried out including an exit survey of people leaving hostel accommodation, a survey of service users who have had

repairs carried out, a six monthly survey of registered tenants' organisations about repairs and maintenance and surveys on policy issues. A Repairs Stakeholder Group met regularly to discuss repairs performance and to agree procedures for key service areas.

Internal stakeholder surveys within Community Care occurred frequently and this information was used by individual teams for internal qualitative analysis and service improvement.

Within Community Development a range of systematic customer surveys are undertaken including surveys of library users, users of the Citadel Leisure Centre and golf courses. The Active Schools Co-ordinators gather feedback regularly from pupils who have been involved in the Active Schools Programme as well as from Head Teachers.

Libraries staff and staff from Museums' Services carried out surveys with service users to inform service delivery and improvement.

Continuing Professional Development of Staff

Scottish Vocational Qualifications courses were provided for Childcare and Early Years staff with 6 staff achieving Level 3 Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD) 2 staff achieving level 4 CCLD. In addition Active Play training was developed in partnership with Stepping Stones for Families and rolled out to staff working with young children in South Ayrshire.

A wide range of staff development opportunities were offered to school staff including educational psychologists and Community Learning and Development staff through Gateway, with a total of 147 events offered and 3181 members of staff participating in these. Course evaluations were very positive: 81% of participants evaluated the content in relation to stated aims as either good or very good; 81% of participants evaluated the content with relevance to learning and teaching as either good or very good; 82% of participants evaluated relevance to professional development as good or very good and 82% found presentations to be either good or very good.

Inter Agency Continuing Professional Development programmes have successfully supported the implementation of new strategies this year, including Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Ambition in Early Years and Childcare, and Parenting and Family Support. The Inter Agency CPD programme also achieved a COSLA Silver Award in 2009 and continued to receive positive comments during HMIE Inspections. Ongoing focus included the Assessment of Risks and Needs of Children and Young People, Early Intervention, and Working Together to deliver improved services. New programmes included the safety of employees in difficult situations, parenting and play, and train the trainers, further enhancing CPD provision by improving staff confidence, providing underpinning knowledge and skills prior to implementation of new initiatives and reducing costs by 50% from 2007/8.

Community Care and Children's Services continue to support the placement of student social workers, 23 students were placed with staff for 65 – 100 days placement over the past 18months.

Within Housing Services there were two training events for private rented sector landlord focussing on the introduction of Energy Performance Certificates and how to manage the new Local Housing Allowance. The second event provided information on the legal requirements and process of starting and ending a tenancy.

Management Information Systems

Management information systems within Children and Community were further developed in 2008/09 to provide access to information to inform improvement and to target support and resources more effectively. A new system was introduced to merge school and public library information systems and people counting technology was installed at Carnegie Library.

Community Learning and Development implemented a new management information system, Cogni Soft to record both qualitative and quantitative data.

New modules were added to the corporate property management system Tech Forge which replaced existing systems for the management of school accommodation and determining its suitability.

CONCLUSION

This report highlights some of the key developments and achievements of Children and Community for 2008/09. In providing this summary report it has not been possible to include all of the many initiatives which have been undertaken within the Directorate. It should, however, illustrate the range and variety of our activities.

We hope that you have found the report informative and reflective of our commitment to continuous improvement in providing services of the highest quality.