

# Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) for the Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027

**CRWIA title:** Argyll & Bute Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027.

**Publication date:** January 2022

## Summary of policy aims and desired outcomes

### Policy aims:

The overall aim of the housing strategy is everyone in Argyll and Bute has access to a suitable, high-quality home that is affordable and located within a vibrant, sustainable and connected community. The term everyone ensures that this also includes children and young people.

### Desired outcomes:

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) has been designed to protect all citizens of Argyll and Bute, including children and young people, from social harm. Some social harms result from inadequate or insufficient housing supply or living in unsafe housing. Lack of supply of housing results in high house prices and high rents, which can push people into poverty or force them to stay with friends or family rather than establish their new household or result in short, insecure tenancies or homelessness. Substandard or unsafe housing includes a house that is below tolerable standard or overcrowded, living in a household where there is violence or abuse, or living in a cold home where the family has to choose between eating and heating. Living in a cold home have also been linked to several health conditions, and hence having warmer homes will protect the inhabitants from these cold-related illnesses. The LHS will provide the following benefits to children and young people:

- Providing an adequate supply of affordable homes to help prevent homelessness, short, insecure tenancies and provide a choice in the housing market. Having a selection of affordable accommodation will ensure that families can remain within communities even when their tenancy ends. Enabling children to stay within their community directly impacts children's rights as it provides a stable home and allows children to remain in the same school and community. It also protects their education as research suggests that regularly changing schools affect children's attainment.
- Another desired outcome is that children and young people live in communities they feel part of and can be empowered and engaged citizens. We hope that this will embed children and young people within their community and prevent them from migrating out of the area. One of the critical drivers of mental health is feeling that you do

not belong or fit in, so achieving this outcome would protect mental health.

- Young people can find it challenging to remain in their local community when they move out of the family home to establish a new household due to the lack of affordable housing, especially in tourist hot spots. The Strategic Housing and Investment Plan programme and other initiatives outlined in the LHS will provide affordable housing, enabling young people to remain in their local communities. Hence, this will make communities more sustainable. Thus protecting the community and individuals within the community from decline.
- Another desired outcome of the LHS is to protect young people from becoming homeless. The housing options service assist families and individual young people aged 16-18 to identify the type of home they need and can afford, which reduces the number of failed tenancies, thus ensuring more tenants can remain in their homes.
- Supporting where possible housing developments which facilitate the implementation of 20-minute community principles. This principle would ensure that children's daily needs could be met within a 20-minute walk, cycle or wheel from their homes, ensuring they have access to facilities such as libraries and sports centres, clubs and networks which provide educational or exercise opportunities or enrichment. Twenty minute communities also are more likely to have less traffic, as people will opt to walk, wheel or cycle, making the streets safer for children.
- Often, a family's most significant monthly expense is their rent/mortgage; providing more affordable homes will alleviate a critical driver that pushes families into poverty. Hence, one of the LHS's desired outcomes is to protect children and young people from poverty.
- The housing strategy aims to provide children with warm homes. Research shows that children living in homes where the family can only afford to heat one room may find it challenging to have a quiet space that is warm enough to do homework and study; this negatively impacts their life chances.
- One of the causes of fuel poverty will be addressed by improving the fabric of buildings and making homes more energy-efficient. If children and families live in an adequately heated dry home, this can alleviate health

	<p>conditions such as Asthma and other respiratory conditions, thus protecting their health and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy also promotes a net-zero approach which will contribute towards protecting the planet and reducing the risks of adverse weather such as flash floods, drought, and extreme heat, severely impacting children and families. Also, research shows that children and young people feel powerless in the battle against climate change, causing anxiety and other mental health issues in children and young people. The strategy aims to deliver housing and infrastructure in our local communities that reduce carbon emissions and move towards net-zero; this will positively impact children and young people anxious about climate change.</li> <li>• The housing strategy aims to prevent overcrowding and provide families with access to housing that is the right size to meet their needs. Research shows that children who live in overcrowded housing find it difficult to find a place to do homework and study, negatively impacting their life chances. In addition, sharing a room with a different sexed sibling in teenage years can negatively affect a child's wellbeing.</li> <li>• The LHS has a range of advice and information provisions for children and young people to improve their wellbeing.</li> <li>• Prioritising children facing domestic abuse or the fear of domestic abuse for rehoming will provide more children and young people with safe homes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Executive summary</b></p>	<p>Argyll and Bute's Local Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027) sets out the strategic vision and overarching outcomes for housing across the local authority area. This LHS addresses affordable housing and aims to develop a healthy, well-balanced housing system with choice across all tenures and sectors of the market.</p> <p>The LHS must be based on a robust and credible Housing Need &amp; Demand Assessment (HNDA), which sets the direction for housing investment. One focus of the new strategy will be on reversing population decline. However, the strategy will also support the broader priorities and objectives of the Scottish Government regarding climate change, energy efficiency, creating local communities that meet everyday needs and supporting island communities.</p>

Argyll and Bute's LHS addresses four key areas:

1. Improve housing supply and endeavour to have vibrant communities where people want to live and can continue to live. Some examples of how we will achieve this are by:

- Maximising investment and ensuring sufficient and viable land is available to facilitate the building of new homes.
- Addressing infrastructure needs to encourage developers to build new homes.
- Encouraging the delivery of affordable, mixed tenure housing, thus ensuring a choice of housing options for people.
- Ensuring housing encourages repopulation and sustains fragile communities in rural, island and coastal settings. To make sure that communities not only survive but also thrive.
- Ensuring that there is an adequate supply and choice of housing to enable local businesses to attract and retain staff.
- Promoting the PLACE Standard tool for new build and housing redevelopments. The Place Standard tool looks at key aspects which make a place a good place, including:
  - Feeling safe
  - Identifying and belonging
  - Having facilities and amenities
  - Having play and recreation facilities
  - Having natural spaces
  - Being accessible with good public transport
  - A place where you have influence and a sense of control

2. Property condition, energy efficiency, climate change, and fuel poverty. In this section, some examples of what the LHS aims to do are:

- Improve property condition, ensuring high-quality housing is provided within Argyll and Bute.
- Improve energy efficiency across all tenures to create warm homes. Energy efficiency measures also ensure that homes are kept warm with minimal energy usage, thus reducing fuel poverty. Reducing fuel poverty and providing affordable homes will address some of the key drivers for child poverty.
- A net-zero carbon approach to housing is developed and implemented. Hence, addressing some key aspects of the drivers of climate change.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports regeneration and sustainability of town centres and rural and island settlement, ensuring that these areas provide high-quality, affordable homes. Thus ensuring these areas not only survive but thrive.</li> </ul> <p>3. Specialist provision and supporting independent living. In this section, some examples of what the LHS aims to do are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve joint working across Housing, Health &amp; Social Care sectors to ensure that people with particular needs have these needs addressed;</li> <li>• Provide a range of Housing Options that contribute to the health, wellbeing and independence of those with particular needs;</li> <li>• Achieve the wheelchair accommodation target for new build social rented housing;</li> <li>• Work with others to facilitate adaptations to housing in all tenures to ensure particular needs are met;</li> <li>• Maximise the use of appropriate assistive technology /technology-enabled care to support more households living independently;</li> <li>• Work with others to ensure that effective Support Services such as Care &amp; Repair are in place.</li> </ul> <p>4. Housing options, information, advice and support. Some examples of what the housing strategy will address are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have housing protocols for persons leaving institutional settings, e.g. young people leaving care or military personnel leaving the service.</li> <li>• Work with others to tackle homelessness</li> <li>• Identify, address and monitor rough sleeping</li> <li>• Have an effective response for housing those who suffer from domestic abuse.</li> <li>• Have housing protocols in place for those people leaving prison</li> <li>• Provide accessible, proactive housing information &amp; advice services and homeless prevention services</li> </ul> <p>Finally, the LHS has an Action Plan that outlines the Council and its partners' specific actions to tackle all aspects outlined in the LHS and not only the examples outlined above.</p>
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and subsequent legislation and guidance place a statutory duty on local authorities to develop a LHS every five years. This strategy will cover 2022-2027 and builds on previous local housing strategies (2012-16 and 2016-2021). The LHS reflects national and local housing priorities and sets out a housing supply targets for</p>

new build housing. It also identifies housing improvement initiatives. The LHS is not a 'stand-alone document and aligns with many other plans, programmes, and strategies.

Extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement processes have underpinned the HNDA and the LHS, including:

- Helensburgh & Lomond Housing Market Study 2018
- HNDA Household Survey 2019
- LHS Early Engagement Survey 2020
- Private Landlord / Letting Agents Survey 2020
- Housing & Business Sector Conferences 2018/19
- LHS Stakeholder Conference 2020
- Housing Services LHS Review Day 2020
- LHS Options Appraisal workshops 2020/21
- Community Housing Surveys for North Lorn; Mull & Iona; Islay; Tarbert & Skipness et al
- Community Planning Place Standard Tool community workshops Wheelchair User, Support Services & Representatives Surveys 2020/21
- Gypsy/Travellers Consultation (workshops/surveys/meetings) 2020/21
- Armed Forces Personnel & Veterans consultation, 2020/21 Housing & HSCP engagement, including surveys, workshops, options appraisals, short-term working groups
- Ongoing engagement with service providers & representatives for Homeless, Learning Disabled & persons with Autism, Older People; those who are suffering domestic abuse.

While none of the above consultations directly consulted with children, their needs are intrinsically linked to the needs of their parents and carers. By consulting with parents and carers, we have captured some of the children and young people's needs.

It was anticipated that we would also consult with children and young people through the school network; however, the pandemic prevented this consultation from being undertaken. Although during the pandemic, we did launch a range of virtual engagement opportunities with key stakeholders, many of whom represented children and young people.

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament were also consulted on the strategy.

**Scope of the CRWIA, identifying the children and young people affected by the policy, and summarising the evidence base**

The Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) process entailed assessing all of the LHS policies against children's rights and wellbeing criteria. The assessment concluded that the LHS's tailored housing support would particularly advantage children and young people in the following situations:

- Children and young people who are anxious about climate change and are concerned about the lack of action taken to address global warming.
- Children and young people who wish to remain in their local communities but are unable to do so due to lack of housing or lack of services in short children living in unsustainable communities
- Children and young people who are crofters and wish to continue in that way of life
- Children and young people who live in communities that are not well connected due to a lack of transport infrastructure or digital infrastructure
- Young people aged 16-18 years wishing to establish a new household
- Children and young people who live in overcrowded homes
- Children and young people living in poverty
- Children and young people who live in cold or damp homes due to fuel poverty.
- Children and young people who live in houses which are not of high-quality
- Children and young people from the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- Mentally or physically disabled children such as children and young adults with autism, wheelchair users or children who are carers or live in a family with a disabled person.
- Homelessness and rehousing policies ensure that children, either young people who are homeless or children who are part of a homeless family, are not housed in unsuitable accommodation.
- Children and young people who have left their homes and need to be rehoused due to domestic abuse or other anti-social behaviour.
- Children and young people who live in temporary or other insecure housing situations.
- Young people who are care leavers.
- Young people who are leaving custody. Or children who have a family member leaving custody.
- Children live in families where a parent or carer is in the armed forces. Or young people who have been in the armed forces and are leaving the service.

	<p>Hence, the vast majority of children and young people will be positively impacted by the LHS, and it was not thought that any would be negatively affected.</p>
<p><b>Children and young people's views and experiences</b></p>	<p>Due to the Covid19 restrictions, it has not been possible to complete an engagement process with children and young people through established youth engagement processes or clubs and school networks. However, as specified above, we undertook a virtual consultation and engagement exercise where we consulted with representatives of children and young people.</p> <p>As we advance, we aim to engage children and young people directly. We plan to do this by developing a child-friendly resource that will outline the fundamental principles in the LHS. As well as outlining the fundamental role housing plays in enabling us to reach net zero. It will also look at the links between housing and health &amp; wellbeing. This resource will have a range of interactive child-friendly tools to engage children and young people, gather their views about housing, and help us ascertain their housing needs. The resource will be shared with schools across Argyll and Bute. Children and young people's views will then be incorporated into the LHS update in 2023.</p>
<p><b>Key Findings, including an assessment of the impact on children's rights and how the measure will contribute to children's wellbeing</b></p>	<p>The Housing Strategy relates to various United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The most relevant UNCRC articles in relation to the LHS are:</p> <p><b>Article 27 (1-3) Adequate standard of living.</b> That is, <i>'the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development'</i>.</p> <p>The LHS plans to provide children or young people with an adequate standard of living by providing access to suitable, high-quality, affordable homes that meet their needs. These homes are located in vibrant and well-connected communities. The LHS will have a positive impact on children and young people's right to an adequate standard of living by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The LHS identifies a shortage of affordable housing and that this impacts more severely on young people looking to establish their first home. It often results in families living in overcrowded or unsuitable homes. The LHS has been designed to increase the supply of affordable and suitable accommodation, contributing to children and young people having an adequate standard of living.</li> <li>○ By tackling housing that is in poor condition will contribute to improving children and young people's standard of living. Research suggests a relationship between poor housing and lower educational attainment, and if this is so,</li> </ul>



then the life chances of children and young people are affected. Hence, not just affecting the standard of living for children and young people at this time but also reducing their standard of living as adults and or parents.

- Increasing the supply of affordable energy-efficient homes with reduced running costs to address some of the drivers of fuel poverty. Experts have stated that there has been a rise in child hunger due to removing the £20 Universal Credit uplift, which has exacerbated the inflationary pressures causing the price of food to rise. The aforementioned coupled with high fuel costs will increase the number of children and young people living in cold homes. Hence ensuring more homes are well-insulated and energy-efficient will be a vital component in reducing fuel poverty.
- Young people who are care leavers may require a supported accommodation model. Local authorities have Corporate Parenting responsibilities for care leavers (as outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This legislation requires councils to provide care leavers with appropriate and sustainable housing in line with the Scottish Government's Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers. Increased security of tenure for care leavers will ensure that they have an adequate standard of living.
- The implementation of the LHS will improve housing options and, the housing support advocated within the strategy will improve tenure security for vulnerable young people. This group of young people's living standards are hugely compromised as they are over-represented in homelessness figures.
- Area deprivation will also be reduced through the wide range of strategic interventions that promote the regeneration of town centres and the sustainability of rural and island settlements helping to address the decline of communities and create vibrant, thriving communities that will provide better opportunities for their citizens.

**Article 23 (1) The rights of a disabled child.** That is, *'a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.*

The LHS also sets out a specific commitment to increase the provision of affordable housing built to Housing for Varying Needs Standards, wheelchair habitable housing, supported accommodation, adapted and accessible housing, and other models of specialist provision for those with particular needs.

This provision will promote and enable independence and provide the basis for improving and sustaining other aspects of a healthy, fulfilling life.

The LHS promotes technology-enabled care, which potentially enables young people to live independently in their own homes once they reach 16 years of age.

However, not all children and young people who require specialist housing will have the same requirements for example:

- Young people with autism may benefit from a core and cluster model where they live independently from their family with support and supervision from staff in a supported housing complex.
- In contrast, children who are wheelchair users may only require a family home like any other child; it just needs to be suitable for a wheelchair user.
- However, wheelchair users are not a homogenous group, with some users only requiring a wheelchair home while others have a wide range of complex needs and providing a wheelchair home on its own would not meet their needs. A full-time Housing Occupational Therapist (OT) has been employed to work within the housing service to ensure needs are met through the design of new-build housing or by adapting existing public and private sector homes. Children and young people with particular needs will benefit from the bespoke person-centred approach provided by the Housing OT.



**Article 30 Culture and community.** That is, *'shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture.'*

The LHS has devised policies and actions to protect thecrofting way of life and fulfil the accommodation needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

**Article 31 (2) Leisure and play.**

The LHS advocates that new developments use the PLACE standard, thus ensuring that communities have access to leisure and play facilities close to their homes.

**Article 12** provides children with the right to express a view and have that view taken into account, especially when policies affect them. Developing a child-friendly resource as outlined above will enable children and young people to express their views. The LHS will also consider their opinions and incorporate them into the update.

<b>Monitoring and review</b>	The strategy will be updated annually.	
<b>CRWIA Declaration</b>		
<b>Authorisation</b>		
<b>Policy lead</b>    Douglas Whyte	<b>Date</b> 07/01/2022	
<b>Deputy Director or equivalent</b> Fergus Murray  	<b>Date</b> 07/01/2022	