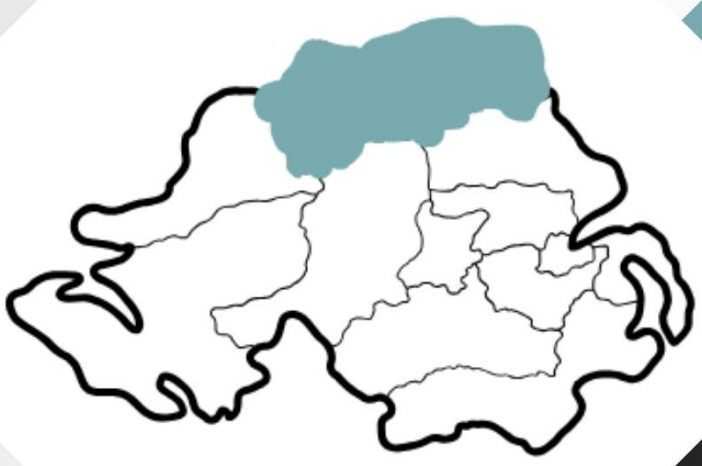
Education Authority

2026 - 2029



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS

LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF NEED

AUTHOR
Deirdre Bradley
Senior Youth Officer

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Introduction

The Education Authority (EA) Youth Service Local Assessment of Need is a key document outlined in the Department of Education's (DE) Youth Work Policy *Priorities for Youth (2013)* as it requires the Education Authority to ensure *'Planning, funding and the delivery of youth work will be based on the EA composite (local and regional) assessment of need.'*

The wider requirements and purpose of undertaking the assessment of need process is outlined in detail within the Regional Assessment of Need 2026-2029. This regional document provides further detail on the EA's statutory duty, other policy requirements and links to Northern Ireland Government strategies. It also sets the context within which these documents are being completed as well as the key purpose and functions to ensure the effective youth provision provides for children and young people. The regional document can be found here.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Regional Assessment of Need. Its key objective is to establish the level of need for Youth Service provision for children and young people aged 4-25 years in Causeway Coast and Glens. It brings together data, evidence and local insight to help identify the needs and barriers children and young people in Causeway Coast and Glens face. Listening to, and understanding, the voices and opinions of children and young people is an important part of this process.

Methodology

Following on from the methodology of the Regional Assessment of Need process, there were six parts to developing the Local Assessment of Need for in Causeway Coast and Glens. The tools used to gather essential information and data for the regional document had the ability to be filtered at a local level and this supplied EA with an excellent resource to listen to and understand the direct voices of children and young people. Details of how this was achieved are laid out in the regional document.

Part One – Children and Young People's Survey

A survey for all children and young people aged 4-25 years was designed and developed by a project team set up within the Education Authority Youth Service based on the eight strategic outcomes of the Children and Young Peoples' Strategy 2020-2030. A total of 5,451 children and young people responded to the survey. From those figures 380 responded from the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

Part Two – Children and Young People's Focus Groups

The Education Authority Youth Service Participation Team, working with young people from the Small Grants panel, designed a resource allowing facilitators to manage and record the focus group sessions. Focus groups with children and young people were facilitated by youth workers. These were based on the policy age group bands and including specific groups of young people, within the Section 75 grouping, or those who may be at greater risk of social exclusion, marginalisation or isolation because they experience a combination of barriers to learning. A total of 138 focus groups, involving 1,630 participants, were facilitated throughout Northern Ireland. Sixteen focus groups, involving 209 participants were completed in Causeway Coast and Glens.

Part Three – The Development of Area Profiles

Area Profiles using all available statistical data and information about the needs of children and young people have been produced using a range of data and information from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. These reports focused on demographic information and reflected wider social, economic and environmental determinants which negatively impacted children and young people. The Area Profile Report for Causeway Coast and Glens can be found here.

Part Four – Embedding Findings from Key Research

The Education Authority Youth Service's Information and Planning Team conducted a significant literature review under the key outcome areas used in the survey and focus group materials. They also had access to all research and stakeholder engagement event reports conducted by the Youth Service as well as other research completed by academics and youth organisations relevant to the assessment of need.

Part Five – Parents and Organisation Survey

A survey for parents and other relevant organisations was designed and developed by a project team set up within the EA Youth Service based on the eight strategic outcomes of the Children and Young Peoples' Strategy 2020-2030. There were 180 responses to this survey.

Part Six – Wider Stakeholder Engagement

The local area staff team conducted surveys and consultations. They carried out 6 young people's surveys with 925 responses, 6 parent and stakeholder surveys with 261 responses, 14 focus groups with 182 participants, and 2 Local Advisory Group focus groups with 41 attendees.

Council in Numbers

Demography:

- **Population:** 141,316 in Causeway Coast and Glens LGD.
- **Children and Young People:** 43,660 aged 0-25 years; 37,423 aged 4-25 years.

Age Bands Population:

- **0-3 years:** 6,241
- **4-8 years:** 8,828 (20.2%, higher than NI average of 20.1%)
- **9-13 years:** 9,082 (20.8%, slightly lower than NI average of 20.9%)
- **14-18 years:** 8,575 (19.6%, equal to the NI average of 19.6%)
- **19-25 years:** 10,938 (25.1%, slightly lower than NI average of 25.4%)

District Electoral Area	Percentage of Total (0-25 years)	Total Number (0-25 years)
Ballymoney	17%	7,710
The Glens	12%	5,299
Coleraine	16%	7,249
Bann	17%	5,496
Causeway	15%	7,081
Limavady	10%	4,781
Benbradagh	13%	6,109

Deprivation and Socioeconomic Disparities:

- **Living in Deprivation:** 8,037 children and young people (18.4%)
- **Rural Community:** 20,828 children and young people (47.7%)
- **Lone Parent Families:** 26% of children and young people aged 0-24 years, NÍ average 25.7%
- **Newcomers:** 599 (2.2%, below NI average of 5%)
- **Irish Traveller Children:** 3
- **Special Educational Needs Pupils:** 4,057 (16.9%, below NI average of 19%)

DEA Free School Meal Entitlement (%) Comparison to NI Average (29.1%)

- Causeway Coast and Glens 26.7%
- Ballymoney 25.4% Lower (1,108)
- Bann 28.1% Lower (1,225)
- Benbradagh 30.2% Higher (1,316)
- Causeway 22.7% Lower (989)
- Coleraine 26.5% Lower) (1,155)
- Limavady 29.3% Higher (1,278)
- The Glens 24.8% Lower (1.082)

Based on the population data, the estimated number of young people entitled to Free School Meals in Causeway Coast and Glens is around 11,650 Benbradagh and Limavady have percentages higher than the Northern Ireland average, indicating higher levels of Free School Meal entitlements in these areas.

Education:

- **GCSE Achievement:** 77.4% of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Math (NI average 76.1%). Lowest performing DEA was Limavady at 61.7% followed by Coleraine at 70.1%, Benbradagh at 70.4% and Ballymoney at 72.1%.
- **2 A-levels Achievement:** 56.2% of school leavers achieving at least 2 A-levels at grades A*-E (NI average the lowest performing DEA was Coleraine at 45.4% followed by Ballymoney at 49.7% Limavady at 51.1% and Bann 54.3%, Causeway at 54.9% and Benbradagh 55.8%. Only The Glens DEA performed above the NI average 59.7%.
- **Unemployment:** 4.8% of school leavers are unemployed and/or unknown (NI average 4.7%).
- **NEET:** 16% of young people aged 16-24 years not in employment, education, or training (NI average 10.3%).

Health:

- **Obesity:** 22.4% of Primary 1 pupils and 28.4% of Year 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight (higher than NI averages of 20.4% and 26% respectively).
- **Domestic Abuse:** 195 domestic abuse crimes where the victim was under 18 in 2023/24 (NI average 275).
- **Child Protection Register:** 502 children (46.8 per 10,000, below NI average of 53.5 per 10,000).
- **Children Looked After:** 815 children (75.9 per 10,000 population under 18 years old, below NI average of 91.6 per 10,000).

Employment:

- **Employment Rate:** 51.1%, the lowest in Northern Ireland.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas:

- **Areas:** Limavady, Coleraine East, Churchland's.
- **Multiple Deprivation:** 3 out of 72 Super Output Areas ranked in the top 100.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children:** 16 out of 72 Super Output Areas ranked in the top 100.
- Causeway Coast and Glens ranks higher than the NI average regarding Education and Health deprivation. (Dimensions of Household Deprivation Census 2021)
- In 2023 /2024, Causeway Coast and Glens experience a significant increase in food parcel distributions. The Trussell Trust reported handing out 9,979 food Parcels in the year end March 2024.

Location:

The Causeway Coast and Glens area consists of five key towns, a strong network of eight smaller towns, and twelve villages that help sustain and service the needs of the rural population, with 47.7% being young people. The five largest settlements, Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Limavady, Coleraine, and Portrush, offer the widest range of services available.

Constituency Data:

Constituency Data for East Londonderry and North Antrim:

East Londonderry: Approximately 26.7% of children are entitled to Free School Meals.

In terms of relative poverty: Almost 7,000 children under 16 are living in poverty.

Northern Ireland Data:

In the last year, almost a fifth of 16-year-olds had experienced online violence (19%).

Psychological violence was experienced by 18% of respondents. Just over 1 in 10 had experienced sexual violence (11%) and 7% had experienced physical violence.

Of those respondents experiencing violent acts or behaviour in the last year, the most common places where they occurred were online (42%), at school (35%) and a public outdoor space (26%).

Key Trends in Causeway Coast and Glens Area Profile:

To effectively assess the needs of children and young people in Causeway Coast and Glens, it is essential to identify key trends and themes that impact the youth population, informed by the underlying demographics. The population of Causeway Coast and Glens stands at 141,316, with 43,660 children and young people aged 0-25 years. Within this demographic, the age bands reveal interesting trends: the 4-8 years group is slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average at 20.2%, while the 14-18 years group matches the NI average at 19.6%. The 19-25 years group is slightly lower than the NI average at 25.1%.

Examining the youth population by District Electoral Area, Ballymoney accounts for 17% of the total 0-25 years, followed by Coleraine at 16%, and Causeway at 15%. Limavady has the lowest proportion at 10%. This distribution highlights the varying needs across different areas, with Ballymoney and Coleraine requiring more focused Youth Services.

Deprivation and socio-economic disparities are significant, with 18.4% of children and young people living in deprived conditions. These challenges can lead to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as exposure to violence, abuse, or neglect. Understanding and mitigating the impact of ACEs is important for enhancing young people's overall well-being and future opportunities.

Additionally, 26% of children and young people come from lone parent families, and 20% live in relative poverty, with 4,333 in absolute poverty as of April 2022. These conditions can increase the risk of economic hardship and emotional stress, affecting a young person's overall well-being, access to resources, and opportunities for development.

47% of young people in Causeway Coast and Glens live in rural communities, which is significantly higher than the NI average of 34.5%. This rural setting can limit access to essential services and resources, leading to isolation and impacting personal, social, and professional development. Young people in rural communities have a strong sense of belonging, which positively influences their identity and values. However, they also express concerns about limited public transportation and dependency on family for travel, which restricts access to educational, recreational, and social opportunities. This lack of social interaction can hinder the development of social skills and networks, particularly for those in minority groups or with special educational needs. Young people highlight that the limited access to services and opportunities affects their overall developmental needs, including educational and career aspirations.

The statistics indicate significant educational challenges among young people. The number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) is high at 16%, indicating difficulties in transitioning from education to employment or further training. Educational achievements show that 77.4% of school leavers attain at least 5 GCSEs at grades A-C, including English and Math, slightly above the NI average of 76.1%. However, the NEET rate remains significantly higher at 16%, highlighting challenges in transitioning from education to employment or further training. The lowest performing District Electoral Area for GCSE achievement is Limavady at 61.7%, while The Glens DEA performs above the NI average for A-level achievement at 59.7%. Despite lower percentages of newcomers and

Special Educational Needs pupils compared to NI averages, there is still a need for support for ethnic minorities and children with Special Educational Needs. This support is essential to address the unique challenges these groups face, including resource and service deprivation, and to support their educational and social development.

Whilst employment rates are the lowest in Northern Ireland at 51.1%, the high percentage of young people Not in Employment, Education, or Training needs to remain a focus. Neighbourhood Renewal Areas face multiple deprivation, with several Super Output Areas in Causeway Coast and Glens ranking in the top 100 for income deprivation affecting children.

The data indicates a significant issue related to health and well-being: higher rates of obesity among Primary 1 and Year 8 pupils compared to NI averages. Additionally, safeguarding issues remain significant, despite being below NI averages. In 2023/24, there were 195 domestic abuse crimes involving victims under 18. The Child Protection register includes 502 children, and 815 children are Looked After Children.

Findings From Children and Young People

This section combines the results from the Regional and Local Assessment of Need surveys conducted with children and young people across Causeway Coast and Glens and feedback from focus groups and engagement from wider key stakeholders.

When asked what the most important theme was for children and young people across the Causeway Coast and Glens Area through the Regional Assessment of Need survey, children and young people ranked the importance to them as follows:

1. Economic and Environmental stability = 22%
2. Health and Wellbeing = 19%
3. Access to play and leisure = 17%
4. Living in Safety and Stability = 15%
5. Respect for Young People's Rights = 13%
6. Learning and Achieving = 7%
7. Good Relations and Equality = 6%
8. Making a positive contribution to society = 1%

A survey for young people aged 4-25 years was designed and developed by the local team to gather data on young people's needs and the issues/challenges that affect them – 916 young people responded. When asked what the biggest issues are facing them, young people from CCG ranked the issues and challenges they face through the survey in order of importance to them as follows:

1. Health and wellbeing, Mental health
2. Self-image
3. Peer pressures, school/parental pressure, healthy relationship
4. Bullying, cyber bullying, online safety
5. Lack of safe spaces for young people to meet
6. Poverty, cost of living
7. Inclusion-based on Race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs in areas where you live
8. Transitions
9. Antisocial behaviour, personal safety, negative stereotyping

A survey for parents and other stakeholders was designed and developed by the local team to identify the challenges/issues young people face and what support they require to meet their needs - 259 responded. When asked what the key issues/challenges for young people were, the Parents and Stakeholders ranked through the survey issues in order of importance to them as follows:

1. Health and well being
2. Lack of safe spaces
3. Bullying
4. Drugs and alcohol

5. Self-image

When asked to highlight additional issues/challenges from those listed on the local surveys the young people noted the following:

- Pressure from influencers/ social media
- Transport- travelling places without own transport and travelling independently and safely.
- Making friends / social pressures to fit in
- Stress from school/ too much homework and not enough time to complete it

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Key Facts

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 4,057 pupils (16.9%) who attend school, 2022/23 have a Special Educational Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens, approximately 8,732 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 1,844 children and young people aged 0-24 years have autism.

The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2022/23 is 22.4% (NI average 20.4%).

The proportion of Year 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2022/23 is 28.4% (NI average 26%). This represents 28.9% of girls (NI 26.2%) and 28% of boys (NI 25.8%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 17.9% of children and young people aged 0-24 years have a long-term health condition (NI 19.8%).

50% of mental health problems are established by the age of 14 years.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there were 5.48 births per 1,000 births to young mothers aged under 20 years (NI average 5.83%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there were 0.87 births per 1,000 births to young mothers aged under 17 years (NI average 0.75%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens, according to the most recent census, 517 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

One in 8 young people in NI have a mental health condition and 1 in 5 adults.

Young people in Northern Ireland experience ill mental health at 25% higher prevalence than the rest of UK.
The percentage of suicides in 2023 within Northern Ireland's most deprived areas (28.5 per cent) was over twice that of the least deprived areas (13.1 per cent).
The Northern Trust had the highest number of suicides in 2023 (56), followed by Belfast Trust (50). The Western Trust had the lowest number of suicides in 2023 (36). NISRA 2025

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 4,057 pupils (16.9%) attending school in 2022/23 have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), slightly below the Northern Ireland average of 19%. Additionally, approximately 8,732 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need, and 1,844 children and young people aged 0-24 years have autism. Young people need the right support and resources to succeed and reach their full potential.

The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2022/23 is 22.4%, higher than the NI average of 20.4%. Similarly, the proportion of Year 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight is 28.4%, compared to the NI average of 26%. This includes 28.9% of girls and 28% of boys, indicating a need for support with health and lifestyle issues.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 17.9% of children and young people aged 0-24 years have a long-term health condition, compared to the NI average of 19.8%. Mental health problems are established early, with 50% of issues arising by the age of 14. One in 8 young people in Northern Ireland have a mental health condition, and young people in NI experience poor mental health at a 25% higher prevalence than the rest of the UK. These numbers show that young people need help with their emotional health and well-being, as well as support to build resilience and coping skills.

Birth rates among young mothers in Causeway Coast and Glens are slightly lower than the NI average, with 5.48 births per 1,000 to mothers under 20 years and 0.87 births per 1,000 to mothers under 17 years. Additionally, 517 young people aged 16-24 years identify as LGBTQI+, highlighting the need for inclusive support services that cater to diverse identities.

Stakeholder feedback highlights that health and wellbeing are key concerns for young people, with 19% identifying it as the most important theme in the Regional Assessment of Need. Only 22% of respondents from the survey reported that their daily lives are filled with interesting activities, and just 53% said they wake up feeling fresh and rested. Furthermore, 24% felt active and energised, 29% felt cheerful and in good spirits, and 19% felt calm and relaxed. These responses indicate a need for more engaging and supportive environments to enhance the overall wellbeing of young people.

In the same survey a quarter of young people reported a lack of opportunities to participate in physical activities for their health and wellbeing, and almost a third said there is nowhere to go, or they do not know where to get help with their emotional wellbeing. Factors such as vaping, energy drinks, alcohol, drugs, school pressures, social media, bullying, and friendships were highlighted as significant influences on their wellbeing. These are key needs that young people have stated for their mental and physical well-being.

Another key concern highlighted by young people through the Regional Assessment of Need survey is the limited access to physical activities, with 25% of young people reporting a lack of opportunities to engage in health-promoting activities. Although some local leisure centres and sports clubs offer support through concessionary rates, young people felt that costs were still prohibitive. They emphasised the need to have access to more free, accessible recreational spaces.

Emotional and mental health also emerged as a key issue, with 8,732 young people reported to have a mental health need in Causeway Coast and Glens. Through the focus groups school pressures, relationships, and social media were identified as contributing factors to anxiety, depression, and self-harm. Long waiting times for mental health services, particularly CAMHS (up to 12 months), were noted as a significant barrier. Some young people in the Regional Assessment of Need focus groups expressed the need for inclusive mental health services that are easy for everyone to understand.

Obesity remains a growing concern, with 28.4% of Year 8 pupils affected. Stakeholders highlighted the need for education on healthy eating and physical activity. Young people stated they need to learn about healthy eating and physical activity to support their health and well-being.

Access to Play and Leisure

Key Facts

There are 6 Council-Managed Leisure and Sports Centres in Causeway Coast and Glens.
The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area is served by numerous sporting (23) and (13) GAA organisations.

There are 108 council-maintained play parks in Causeway Coast and Glens. A district play area is being developed in Ballycastle, along with upgrades to leisure facilities.

There are 104 local play areas. Local play areas are small, fixed parks aimed at toddlers and younger children. They cater to a specific, defined residential catchment area of no more than 600m and consist of a small number of pieces of fixed play equipment.

There are 4 neighbourhood play areas: Flower Fields, Megaw Park, Ranmore Head, and Limavady. Neighbourhood play areas are fixed play areas located within larger-scale residential locations and housing estates. They typically provide fixed play areas for a wider range of children and have a larger catchment area of around 1,000m.

A district play area is being developed in Ballycastle, along with upgrades to leisure facilities. District play areas are the largest type of fixed play installation and cater to young people up to and including teenagers. They typically have a catchment area of around 5,000m and include a variety of play and leisure options, including natural play opportunities.

Regional Data
97% of teachers agree that outdoor play is critical for a child to reach his/her potential.
88% of teachers agree that children are happier after playing outdoors. (Muddy hands report)
86% of teachers agree that playing outdoors gives children a better understanding of the environment. (Muddy hands report)

Research conducted by Queen's University Belfast highlights that a significant majority of teachers in Northern Ireland believe outdoor play is essential for children's overall development. Additionally, many teachers report that children exhibit increased happiness and improved mental health after engaging in outdoor play and agree that outdoor play enhances children's understanding of their environment.

There were 22,715 pre-school placements in Northern Ireland in 2022/2023.

36,556 children aged 0-3 were registered with Sure Start projects in 2023-2024.

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

Access to play and leisure is a fundamental right for children and young people, as highlighted by Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This right underscore the importance of ensuring that all children have opportunities to engage in play and leisure activities, which are crucial for their physical, mental, and social development.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, the Borough Council's strategic theme 'Healthy and Engaged Communities' emphasises the importance of access to leisure, recreational, green, and play environments. This focus aims to support better physical and mental health and wellbeing for the youth population. The area has 6 Council-Managed Leisure and Sports Centres and 108 Council-Maintained play parks, with 4 classified as Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play. Additionally, a district play area is being developed in Ballycastle, along with upgrades to leisure facilities.

Stakeholder feedback from the Regional Assessment of Need reveals that almost a third of young people in Causeway Coast and Glens report a lack of safe places to hang out, and 57% feel there are not enough fun activities in their local area. This feedback highlights the need for more diverse and accessible play and leisure options. Young people expressed a need for a variety of activities, including sports, creative arts, social and leisure activities, and special interests like water sports. Spaces for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also needed to support their personal and social development.

Stakeholders and young people recognise the significant benefits of outdoor play, such as running, climbing, cycling, and playing football. These activities enhance physical health, boost language and problem-solving skills, and foster social connections. Feedback from stakeholders and young people highlights the evident need for engaging outdoor environments to support the overall wellbeing of young people. In Northern Ireland, 97% of teachers agree that outdoor play is critical for a child's potential, 88% say children are happier after playing outdoors, and 86% believe it enhances environmental understanding.

There were 22,715 pre-school placements in 2022/2023, and 36,556 children aged 0-3 were registered with Sure Start Projects in 2023/2024, highlighting the need for early childhood support. There is a clear need for engaging and supportive environments. These figures emphasise the need to provide opportunities for outdoor play and leisure to enhance the physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of young children.

Learning and Achieving

Key Facts

In Causeway Coast and Glens, the percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (incl. equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 77.4% compared to the NI average of 76.1%. Lowest performing DEA was Limavady at 61.7% followed by Coleraine at 70.1%, Benbradagh at 70.4% and Ballymoney at 72.1%.

In Causeway Coast and Glens 56.2% of school leavers achieving at least 2 A-levels at grades A*-C (NI average) the lowest performing DEA was Coleraine at 45.4% followed by Ballymoney at 49.7% Limavady at 51.1% and Bann 54.3%, Causeway at 54.9% and Benbradagh 55.8%. Only the Glens DEA performed above the NI average 59.7%.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or unknown in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2022/23 is 4.8% (NI average 4.7%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 4.9% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

The NI average for young people aged 16-24 with no qualifications is 13.9%. Limavady (16.9%) and Coleraine (16%), Ballymoney (14.7%), Bann (14.2%), Benbradagh (14.1%) DEA are all higher. Coleraine ranks in the top 20% for NI.

599 Newcomers attend schools in Causeway Coast and Glens (2.2%) – NI Average 5%.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there are 3 Irish Traveller children and young people.

6,186 (37.4%) of all pupils in Causeway Coast and Glens are eligible for Free School Meals 2023/24 which is higher than the (NI average 28%).

4,057 pupils (16.9%) who attend school in Causeway Coast and Glens 2022/23 have a Special Educational Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

The NI average for pupil suspensions is 65. Coleraine DEA had 119 and Ballymoney 77 both are higher than the NI average.

The NI average for unauthorised absence rates for post primary is 4%. Limavady is higher at 5.7% as is The Glens 5.2%, Causeway at 5% and Coleraine at 4 %.

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

In Causeway Coast and Glens, the percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and Math, in 2022/23 is 77.4%, slightly above the NI average of 76.1%. However, there are disparities within the District Electoral Areas (DEAs), with Limavady performing the lowest at 61.7%, followed by Coleraine at 70.1%, Benbradagh at 70.4%, and Ballymoney at 72.1%. Young people need additional, targeted educational support in these areas to achieve their academic goals. Addressing these barriers is crucial to providing the necessary support.

The achievement rate for 2 A-levels is 56.2%, below the NI average, with Coleraine performing the lowest at 45.4%, followed by Ballymoney at 49.7%, Limavady at 51.1%, and Bann at 54.3%. Only The Glens DEA performed above the NI average at 59.7%. This suggests that many young people in Causeway Coast and Glens face challenges in achieving higher educational qualifications.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or unknown in Causeway Coast and Glens is 4.8%, slightly above the NI average of 4.7%. Additionally, 4.9% of young people aged 20-24 are not in employment and do not have a qualification, matching the NI average. The NI average for young people aged 16-24 with no qualifications is 13.9%, but Limavady (16.95%), Coleraine (16%), Ballymoney (14.7%), Bann (14.2%), and Benbradagh (14.1%) are all higher, with Coleraine ranking in the top 20% for NI. This highlights the need for interventions to improve educational outcomes and employment opportunities for young people.

Demographically, 599 newcomers attend schools in Causeway Coast and Glens, representing 2.2% of the school population, which is below the Northern Ireland average of 5%. There are 3 Irish Traveller children and young people in the area. Additionally, 6,186 pupils (37.4%) are eligible for Free School Meals, significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 28%. This indicates a high level of socioeconomic deprivation among the youth population. Stakeholders and young people stated that poverty can have a negative impact on educational achievement by limiting access to resources, increasing stress, and reducing opportunities for enhanced educational outcomes.

The number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are slightly below the NI average of 19% in Causeway Coast and Glens. There are currently 4,057 Special Educational Needs pupils (16.9%) attending school in Causeway Coast and Glens. Other notable figures re pupil profiles across DEAs in Causeway Coast and Glens area - pupil suspensions are notably higher in Coleraine (119) and Ballymoney (77) compared to the NI average of 65. Unauthorised absence rates for post-primary schools are also higher in Limavady (5.7%), The Glens (5.2%), Causeway (5%), and Coleraine (4%) compared to the NI average of 4%. Young people need to feel safe and secure, with some requiring additional support to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

The higher rate of suspensions indicates that young people need support to address behavioural challenges and help them stay in school. Additionally, the elevated rates of unauthorised absences in Limavady DEA, The Glens DEA, Causeway DEA, and Coleraine DEA, along with stakeholder feedback, indicate that young people need more support to remain engaged and motivated to attend school regularly. Young people need support with mental health issues, academic pressure, peer pressure,

economic challenges, and the negative influence of social media to enable them to thrive in school and communities.

The Regional Assessment of Need shows that most young people in Causeway Coast and Glens benefit from youth work programmes, with 80% gaining qualifications. However, 22% face barriers to educational success, and over a third feel unsupported during transitions like moving to secondary school. Young people and stakeholders highlight the lack of family support as a significant pressure and express the need for more opportunities to gain qualifications.

Focus groups with young people aged 14-18 highlighted key issues such as the lack of subject variety in schools and a desire for more educational options. They mentioned the need for career guidance that reflects their backgrounds, mentorship programmes connecting them with professionals, and support for youth-led initiatives with facilitators who understand their experiences.

Living in Safety and Stability

Key Facts

In Causeway Coast and Glens 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years (18.4%) live in deprivation.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 20,828 children and young people (47.7%) live in a rural community.

According to the most recent census, 517 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.
26% of children and young people aged 0-24 years old in Causeway Coast and Glens come from a lone parent family.

There were 56 incidents with a sectarian motivation in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2023/24.

There were 47 incidents with a racist motivation in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2023/24. This is a 2% decrease from the previous year of 48 racial motivated incidents.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there has been a 10.8% (1,353) rise in incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24 to year 2022/23 (1,221) in Northern Ireland.

There was a total of 1,248 domestic abuse crimes in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2023/24. This is a 15% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for domestic abuse crimes in Causeway Coast and Glens DEAs is 179. (NI average 250).

There was a total of 2,973 anti-social behaviour incidents in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2023/24. This is a 1.5% decrease from the previous year. The average for anti-social behaviour incidents in Causeway Coast and Glens DEAs is 425. (NI average 567).

Suicide rates in Causeway Coast and Glens recorded 12 suicides in 2023. This is a 25% increase from 9 suicides in 2019. The suicide rate has continued to fall this past 2 years in Causeway Coast and Glens.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, in the last year, almost a fifth of 16-year-olds had experienced online violence (19%). Psychological violence was experienced by 18% of respondents. Just over 1 in 10 had experienced sexual violence (11%) and 7% had experienced physical violence.

Over half of respondents (51%) thought that, compared with 2 years ago, it was more likely that women and girls in Northern Ireland will become victims of gender-based violence online. The most common place where female respondents felt unsafe was using public transport on their own, with almost half (49%) feeling this way. More than half of respondents (56%) agreed they are taught about developing and maintaining positive relationships with other people (experiences and attitudes of 16year old in Nisra, TEO).

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

Young people in the Causeway Coast and Glens area face a mix of challenges and opportunities. 18.4% of children and young people aged 0-25 live in deprivation, which can make everyday life tougher and highlight inequalities. Additionally, almost half (47.7%) live in rural areas, often meaning fewer services and activities nearby. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can significantly affect children and young people. These experiences are influenced by various factors, including socio-economic conditions, demographic characteristics, environmental settings, and cultural contexts.

Children and young people have a right to live their lives without fear of abuse, discrimination, or violence, as stated in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This article emphasises the importance of protecting children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, or abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation. Ensuring these rights is crucial for their safe and secure development.

Safety is a significant concern for young people. Just over a quarter of respondents in the Regional Assessment of Need survey stated they do not feel safe in their local area, and almost two-fifths expressed concern about crime in their vicinity. Notably, 70% of all respondents reported worrying about the safety of women and girls in their local community, with this concern being particularly high among girls (three-quarters) and boys (almost two-thirds). Social media emerged as a double-edged sword in the lives of young people. Over a third of respondents (37%) agreed that social media negatively impacts their lives, and 36% of young people feel pressured to take part in activities that might be harmful or dangerous.

Young people aged 12-13 through the regional focus groups identified various risks in their environment, including bullying, social media dangers, and antisocial behaviour. The 14-18 age group highlighted concerns about transportation and public safety, with some young people stating they need bilingual signage and communication systems to ensure they feel represented and safe.

There were 56 incidents with a sectarian motivation and 47 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24, showing a slight decrease from the previous year. However, there has been a 10.8% rise in incidents with a racist motivation across Northern Ireland. The presence of sectarian and racist incidents highlights the need for a safe and inclusive environment. The rise in incidents with a racist motivation across Northern Ireland indicates ongoing challenges in ensuring safety and equality for all young people, which can impact their sense of security and belonging. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a supportive and stable environment for young people to thrive.

Domestic abuse remains a concern in Causeway Coast and Glens, with 1,248 domestic abuse crimes reported in 2023/24, although this is a 15% decrease from the previous year. Even though there has been a 15% decrease, the presence of 1,248 domestic abuse crimes it still highlights ongoing safety concerns within homes, which can lead to trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Young people exposed to domestic abuse may face emotional and psychological challenges that affect their development and stability. Anti-social behaviour incidents in Causeway Coast and Glens totalled

2,973, a slight decrease from the previous year. Anti-social behaviour can create an unsafe and unstable environment for young people and can lead to feelings of insecurity and fear, impacting their ability to engage in community activities and develop social skills.

In Northern Ireland, suicide rates have been rising, with the highest rates observed among young adults. In 2021, one in every three suicide deaths were someone under the age of 30. The Western Trust had a higher overall suicide rate at 16.0 deaths per 100,000, while the Northern Trust had the lowest rate at 10.4 deaths per 100,000, highlights the severe mental health challenges faced by young people. This statistic underscores the need for emotional health and wellbeing support and interventions to ensure young people feel safe and supported.

In Northern Ireland, almost a fifth of 16-year-olds experienced online violence, with psychological violence affecting 18%, sexual violence 11%, and physical violence 7%. Over half of respondents in the Young Life and Times survey thought it was more likely that women and girls would become victims of gender-based violence online compared to two years ago. The most common place where female respondents felt unsafe was using public transport alone, with almost half feeling this way.

These findings highlight the key needs for young people in Causeway Coast and Glens in terms of living in safety and stability. Addressing these needs is crucial for ensuring their well-being and development.

Economic and Environmental Stability

Key Facts

In Causeway Coast and Glens 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years (18.4%) live in deprivation.

20,828 children and young people (47.7%) live in a rural community in Causeway Coast and Glens.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or unknown in Causeway Coast and Glens in 2022/23 is 4.8%. (NI average 4.7%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 4.9% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

6,186 (37.4%) of all pupils in Causeway Coast and Glens are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24.higher than the (NI average 28%)

There is an employment rate of 51.1% in the council area, which is the lowest in Northern Ireland.

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

The analysis of young people and their needs have identified a range of economic and environmental issues in Causeway Coast and Glens. The economic landscape must be considered as a significant portion of the population, 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years, live in deprivation. Rurality can also be an indicator of deprivation in terms of access to services. In Causeway Coast and Glens. 20,828 children and young people reside in rural communities. Additionally, a substantial number of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, and the area has the lowest employment rate in Northern Ireland.

The unemployment rate among school leavers (4.8%) is slightly above the Northern Ireland average, and the rate of young people aged 20-24 are not in employment and lack qualifications is the same as the NI average of 4.9%.

Young people in the Regional Assessment of Need survey indicated that they are concerned about their future, with over a third in the regional youth survey believing there will not be job opportunities for them. Many young people in the survey reported feeling unprepared for employment and that financial struggles are prevalent, with families finding it difficult to afford activities and basic needs, and poverty significantly affecting their lives. Young people aged 12-13 stated in the focus groups that they feel hopeful due to community opportunities but lack confidence in living independently. The focus groups for young people aged 9-11 highlighted that young people are worried about climate change and feel insufficient measures are being taken to address it. Young people aged 14-18 see technological advancements as offering new career paths but face challenges in making educational decisions and living independently due to high costs.

Poverty has increased since Covid, with more families relying on food banks and vouchers for heating and electricity. Young people stated in the focus groups that feel pressure to buy luxury items to fit in and face barriers such as traditional exams, lack of career support in schools, and limited career opportunities in Northern Ireland. They emphasise the importance of empowerment, having a voice, and building their future through direct action. In rural areas, young people stated in the focus groups they feel hopeful but face issues like poor housing, lack of services, and impact of rural isolation.

Despite these challenges, some young people feel hopeful about their future due to the opportunities available in their community, such as jobs, money, and education. However, they do not feel confident about living independently at their current age, as they rely on their parents and other family members for support. This underscores the need for support in developing independent living skills.

Young people also highlighted the importance of Youth Services in their lives. They believe these services can help develop social and personal skills, prepare them for work, and reduce the impact of poverty by providing food, snacks, and safe spaces. This highlights the need for Youth Services that support employability and personal development.

Climate change is another major concern, especially for younger children. They stated in the focus groups that they worry about the dangers it poses, such as melting ice caps, wildlife population

reduction, and pollution. They feel that not enough is being done to prevent climate change due to excessive costs and insufficient government funding. This reflects a strong need for proactive measures to address climate change.

Young people need better career guidance, training, and opportunities to feel secure about their future. They need financial support to participate in activities and meet basic needs. They need proactive measures and education to understand and combat climate change and the need to gain and develop skills and confidence for independent living.

Rural young people need targeted assistance to access the same opportunities as their urban counterparts.

Making a Positive Contribution

Key Facts

In Causeway Coast and Glens, the attendance rate for post-primary schools was 93.6%. (NI average 96%).

599 Newcomers attend schools in Causeway Coast and Glens (2.2%) – NI Average 5%.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there is 3 Irish Traveller children and young people.

343 children and young people were suspended from school in Causeway Coast and Glens.

In Causeway Coast and Glens 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years (18.4%) live in deprivation.

20,828 children and young people (47.7%) live in a rural community in Causeway Coast and Glens.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, according to the most recent census, 517 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

In Causeway Coast and Glens, the attendance rate for post-primary schools was 93.6%, which is below the Northern Ireland average of 96%. This lower attendance rate indicates a need for regular school attendance and engagement, which are crucial for academic success and personal development. There are 599 newcomers attending schools in the area, making up 2.2% of the student population, compared to the NI average of 5%. They need to feel accepted and part of their new community. Without integration, they might feel isolated or excluded, which can negatively impact their mental health and overall well-being. Across Causeway Coast and Glens, 343 young people were suspended from school. Young people need to belong, feel included, and make a positive contribution.

With 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years living in deprivation (18.4%) and 20,828 living in rural communities (47.7%), young people need support to overcome challenges associated with poverty and rural isolation. This support is crucial for accessing opportunities and resources, ensuring their development and well-being. These conditions can hinder their ability to participate fully and contribute positively to their communities. Additionally, the identification of 517 young people aged 16-24 years as LGBTQI+ highlights the need for inclusive and supportive environments that respect and value diversity. Young people need to feel valued and respected to make positive contributions.

In the Regional Assessment of Need survey, young people reported that over a third of them, 37%, feel they do not have the opportunity to have influence in school or their local community, while two-thirds, 66%, feel they can make a difference by expressing their views. Almost half, 44%, feel they are not taken seriously when trying to make a positive contribution, but a significant majority, 81%, believe that young people can make things better if involved.

In the focus groups, young people aged 12-13 stated they have influence by being school council reps, part of form classes, sports teams, listening to others' ideas, and giving ideas. They feel making a positive contribution is important for gaining respect and feeling good about themselves. Some young people feel listened to and valued, while others feel it depends on behaviour and who is listening. They believe young people should have the power to change things through school councils, sports, club memberships, and giving ideas.

In the focus groups, young people aged 14-18 expressed concerns about the lack of recognition of their rights, especially for those who speak minority languages. They highlighted their roles as young leaders through the Leadership programme, completing social action projects like good relations fun days and fundraising activities. They feel citizenship and making a positive contribution are important for shaping the narrative that not all young people are bad or causing trouble. They feel listened to and valued, especially as they get older, and within their young leader's group, they feel empowered to make positive changes. They believe young people have the power to change things through leadership programmes, which provide them with confidence, skills, and increased resilience.

Stakeholders agreed that there is a need for young people to have access to opportunities that enable and empower them to make positive contributions through youth leadership programmes, which equip them with skills, resources, and confidence. They also noted the need to provide opportunities where

young people's voices are heard at unit, local, and regional levels, and ensuring that the needs of rural young people are factored into resource allocations and access to area-wide opportunities.

Young people in Causeway Coast and Glens need to believe that their contributions are listened to, valued, and respected at home, school, and in the community. They need to have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Participation is the process whereby children and young people can have influence, and it enhances their personal and social development. Engaging in active citizenship helps young people develop socially and emotionally, building confidence, resilience, and essential skills.

Overall, the key facts and stakeholder feedback reveal the need for comprehensive support systems that address and support young people's attendance, integration, inclusivity, poverty, rural isolation, and diversity to enable young people in Causeway Coast and Glens to make positive contributions to their communities.

Respect for Young People's Rights

Key Facts

In Causeway Coast and Glens, according to the most recent census, 517 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Approximately 8,732 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need.

In Causeway Coast and Glens 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years (18.4%) live in deprivation.

20,828 children and young people (47.7%) live in a rural community in Causeway Coast and Glens.

599 Newcomers attend schools in Causeway Coast and Glens (2.2%) – NI Average 5%.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there is 3 Irish Traveller children and young people.

6,186 (37.4%) of all pupils in Causeway Coast and Glens are eligible for Free School Meals 2023/24. (NI average 28%).

4,057 pupils (16.9%) who attend school in Causeway Coast and Glens 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

All children and young people have rights, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), regardless of their religion, race, sexual or gender identity, or disability. These rights must be valued and respected. It is essential that children and young people are made aware of their rights and have the knowledge and confidence to defend them.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, approximately 517 young people aged 16-24 identify as LGBTQI+. Young people need inclusive and supportive environments where their rights to safety, equality, and non-discrimination are respected. Approximately 8,732 children and young people aged 0-25 have a mental health need. Young people need support for their emotional health and wellbeing and access to services. Additionally, 8,037 children and young people (18.4%) live in deprivation, and 20,828 (47.7%) live in rural communities. Young people need support to address issues relating to poverty and to uphold their rights to a standard of living, education, and development. Those living in rural areas face unique challenges such as limited access to services and opportunities. Young people need their rights to equal opportunities and participation to be respected.

There are 599 newcomers attending schools in the area (2.2%), that need to feel included and have their cultural rights and identifies protected. Additionally, 6,186 pupils (37.4%) are eligible for Free School Meals. This high percentage highlights the need to address food insecurity and ensure that all children have access to nutritious meals, which is essential for their health and ability to learn. Furthermore, 4,057 pupils (16.9%) have a Special Education Need or Disability (SEND). It is important to provide appropriate educational support and resources to ensure their right to education and development is met.

In the Regional Assessment of Need survey, over half of young people (55%) reported that their views are not listened to regarding decisions affecting them, although 69% know their rights. A significant majority (81%) feel their youth work programmes respect their rights and give them a voice, and 74% feel confident in fighting for their rights if necessary.

The Regional Assessment of Need survey noted that many young people lack knowledge about their rights or where to find information, and people have mixed views on whether their rights are respected. Young people stated in the focus groups that they feel more respected in youth clubs and some school classes but not always in the wider community. The majority do not feel confident standing up for their rights due to a lack of knowledge. Stakeholders agreed that young people from the LGBTQI+ community, those with Special Educational Needs and ethnic minorities need targeted support to ensure their rights are respected and they feel included.

Challenges identified by young people include a lack of knowledge about their rights, which affects their ability to stand up for themselves. Young people in the focus groups stated they face discrimination, including sectarian and racist incidents, and feel their rights are not fully recognised by the government. LGBTQI+ young people and those with Special Educational Needs or ethnic minority backgrounds often feel judged and isolated, highlighting the need for inclusive spaces. They also stated that they feel politicians do not care about them because they cannot vote yet, and their rights are not always respected in school settings.

Stakeholders agreed that young people should have the opportunity to be actively involved in decisions that affect their lives. This includes having a say in the development and implementation of programmes, policies, and services that impact them. Participation empowers young people by giving them a voice and enabling them to influence decisions, helping them feel valued and respected. Engaging in decision-making processes helps young people develop critical thinking, leadership, and communication skills. Ensuring young people's voices are heard leads to more inclusive and representative policies and programmes that better meet their needs.

The statistics and feedback from stakeholders highlight the diverse needs and challenges faced by different groups of young people across Causeway Coast and Glens. Supporting young people to have their needs met is essential for ensuring that all young people are treated fairly and have their rights upheld. Overall, there is a demonstrable need for comprehensive support systems that respect and uphold the rights of all young people, ensuring they have the opportunities and resources necessary to thrive.

Good Relations and Equality

Key Facts

20,828 children and young people (47.7%) live in a rural community in Causeway Coast and Glens.

599 Newcomers attend schools in Causeway Coast and Glens (2.2%) – NI Average 5%.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, there is 3 Irish Traveller children and young people.

6,186 (37.4%) of all pupils in Causeway Coast and Glens are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24. (NI average 28%).

4,057 pupils (16.9%) who attend school in Causeway Coast and Glens 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

In Causeway Coast and Glens 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years (18.4%) live in deprivation.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, according to the most recent census, 517 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder Input/Feedback

Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children and young people should be treated equally without discrimination, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, language, religion, political opinion, family background, abilities, or other status. It is important to challenge discrimination and promote equality at an early age to support the most vulnerable in society, including disadvantaged, marginalised, and minority ethnic groups.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 20,828 children and young people, or 47.7%, live in rural communities. This highlights the need for accessible services and opportunities for those in isolated areas. There are 599 newcomers attending schools, making up 2.2% of the student population, compared to the Northern Ireland average of 5%. Whilst this is a positive position for Causeway Coast and Glens further support is needed to make sure that all sections of the community feel part of the community.

In Causeway Coast and Glens, 8,037 children and young people aged 0-25 years (18.4%) live in deprivation, underscoring the urgent need for support to combat poverty and uphold their rights to a decent standard of living, education, and development. The census reveals approximately 517 young people aged 16-24 identify as LGBTQI+, highlighting the critical need for inclusive and supportive environments that respect their rights to safety, equality, and non-discrimination. With 6,186 pupils (37.4%) eligible for Free School Meals, addressing food insecurity is essential to ensure all children have access to nutritious meals. Additionally, 4,057 pupils (16.9%) have a Special Education Need or Disability (Special Educational Needs), emphasising the necessity for appropriate educational support and resources.

Through the regional survey, 88% of young people told us that they feel their youth work programme is inclusive to everyone and includes support for those from different backgrounds. Additionally, 80% stated that youth work programmes are accessible to everyone who wants to take part. Four-fifths, or 81%, said they get the chance to spend time with people from different backgrounds because of their youth work programmes. However, 46% think that children and young people are not treated the same in their local area, and over half, or 51%, believe that other young people do not respect those from different backgrounds or who are different.

The regional youth survey also told us that almost half, or 46%, of young people feel that all young people are included, and no one feels left out, while 88% said their youth work programme is inclusive to everyone and supports those from different backgrounds. Many young people, 80%, feel that youth work programmes are accessible to everyone who wants to take part, and over three-quarters, or 81%, said they get the chance to spend time with people from different backgrounds through these programmes. However, 46% think that children and young people are not treated the same in their local area, and over half, or 51%, think that other young people do not respect those from different backgrounds or who are different.

In the focus groups, young people aged 12-13 stated that some feel people are treated equally because all rights are the same, while others feel people get targeted and are not respected depending on the area they live in. They were unsure about the meaning of prejudice but understood discrimination,

noting issues related to religion (Catholic/Protestant) and the presence of more ethnic minorities in town. They mentioned the "rich vs poor" divide and stated that Youth Services are welcoming and inclusive, providing a safe place in the evenings.

In the focus groups, young people noted the need to have opportunities to meet other young people from diverse backgrounds. This helps everyone get along better, understand and respect different cultures, talk more, feel less lonely, learn new skills and feel healthier.

In the focus groups, young people aged 14-18 stated that equality in their area depends on circumstances. Those from the LGBTQIA+ community, Special Educational Needs, neurodiversity, and ethnic minorities often feel judged and isolated due to their different ways of thinking and acting. They highlighted that racist jokes, derogatory language, and exclusion are common in peer groups and school settings. This leads to feelings of loneliness, isolation, and the need to act differently around certain people, which can be exhausting. They feel that Youth Services are welcoming and inclusive, providing a space to relate to others and discuss issues. They emphasised the importance of having youth workers to talk to about their needs and issues.

Through the focus groups, young people have stated that there is a need for cultural respect and linguistic diversity. This fosters an environment where young people feel valued, and their cultural identities are respected. They need equality-focused initiatives to address issues like bullying and ensure inclusivity. They need access to age-appropriate activities for all groups. Young people need to feel heard and included through various programs. Isolation can create several needs for young people. They need social connections to interact with others and form meaningful relationships. Emotional support becomes crucial, as they seek understanding, empathy, and encouragement from peers and mentors. Feeling part of a community where they are accepted and valued is essential for their sense of belonging. Additionally, maintaining good mental health and well-being requires activities and support systems that help them cope with feelings of loneliness. Addressing these needs can significantly improve their overall quality of life.

Young people aged 16 and over face several barriers to accessing services. Services can be expensive, making them inaccessible for those with limited financial resources. The lack of transportation options, especially in rural areas, can prevent young people from reaching services. Many young people are unaware of the services available to them or how to access them. There can be a stigma associated with seeking certain services, such as mental health support, which discourages young people from using them. Long waiting times for services can also be a significant barrier.

In focus groups, young people noted a growing concern about equality and respect. Many young people feel that their peers do not treat those from different backgrounds equally, highlighting ongoing issues with prejudice and discrimination. This demonstrates the need for fostering equality and respect among young people. It highlights the importance of addressing prejudice and discrimination to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background, are treated equally. This need is crucial for their social and emotional development, helping them build confidence and resilience while promoting positive relationships within their communities. Young people agreed that knowledgeable youth workers can help young people treat others with respect.

The significant number of young people reporting mental health needs highlights the importance of ensuring they have access to appropriate support for their emotional health and wellbeing. This support is crucial to help young people manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges, and enabling them to thrive in their personal and academic lives.

Feedback from stakeholders has highlighted several key needs for LGBTQI+ young people. They require safe spaces to express themselves without fear and mental health support due to higher risks from stigma. Family and community support to reduce feelings of isolation, and peer groups help them feel like they belong. Representation in media and public life helps normalise their identities. Standing up for their rights and having protective laws are vital for their safety. These needs are even more critical in rural areas due to limited access to services and greater isolation. Creating inclusive and supportive environments is key for all LGBTQI+ youth, regardless of where they live.

Young people need to participate actively to feel more connected, valued, and supported by their community. This engagement helps them develop a sense of belonging and ensures they receive the support they need. Accessibility for those with disabilities is crucial to ensure everyone benefits and feels included. In focus groups, young people expressed a desire for environments where everyone, regardless of background, feels respected and valued. They acknowledged that youth work programs are supporting participation by being inclusive and accessible to all.

Economic challenges, such as deprivation and food insecurity, are also prominent. A substantial number of young people live in poverty, which affects their ability to participate fully in their communities and access essential services. This is reflected in the high percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and the need for targeted support, underscoring the importance of addressing food insecurity to support their health and educational outcomes.

The 2023 Causeway Coast and Glens Good Relations Survey highlighted sectarianism, cultural diversity and racism as key issues. There is a need for shared education, cross-community work, safety, decision making involvement, challenging discrimination, cultural expression, justice for victims and community development.

Overall, the key facts and stakeholder feedback highlight the need for comprehensive support systems that address inclusivity, mental health, economic challenges, and respect for diversity. By understanding and addressing these key trends, we can better support the needs of young people and foster positive youth relations.

Summary Needs across Strategic Themes

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

- Young people need access to safe spaces that reflect their interests, especially in rural areas where opportunities are often limited.
- Young people need support to address issues like bullying (including cyberbullying), vaping, body image, drugs and alcohol, screen time, and obesity.
- Young people need regular physical activities to promote growth, prevent obesity, and enhance overall physical and mental well-being.
- Young people need support with forming and developing healthy relationships.
- Young people need support with mental health and emotional resilience to understand, express, and regulate their feelings, and manage anxiety, low mood, and stress.

Learning and Achieving

- Young people need their achievements beyond educational attainment to be celebrated.
- Young people need the opportunities to develop skills that they can use across different settings relevant to their age.
- Young people need support to overcome educational barriers, including low aspiration, readiness to learn, and behavioural challenges.
- Young people need accessible pathways and progression routes to careers or future learning opportunities.
- Primary-aged children need early support to build capacity, self-esteem, and engagement.

Living in Safety and Stability

- Young people need secure environments and support to address issues of bullying, online harm, and relationships with family, peers and others.
- Young people need help to understand and build healthy relationships.
- Young people require protection from harm, with particular emphasis on safeguarding girls and young women.
- Young people need additional support at key times and in key locations in particular coastal towns impacted by tourism and increased antisocial behaviour.
- Young people need support to address risk-taking behaviour

Economic and Environmental Stability

- Young people need equitable access to opportunities and support to overcome the impact of financial challenges, especially in rural areas with higher poverty and resource deprivation.
- Young people need to be aware of environmental issues, climate change, and their role in promoting sustainability.
- Young people need support as they move into adulthood, particularly those aged 18-25.

- Young people need support with anxiety and stress and low aspiration for the future arising from economic hardship.

Making a Positive Contribution to Society

- Young people need opportunities to contribute to their local community and develop leadership skills.
- Young people need opportunities for political engagement in local issues.
- Young people need safe spaces to express and explore their feelings and opinions, and to test their values and beliefs.

Respect for Young People's Rights

- Young people need to be involved in decisions that have an impact on their lives.
- Young people need help to understand their rights and feel confident in challenging unfair treatment.

Good Relations and Equality

- Young people need opportunities to build positive relationships across different backgrounds and reduce exclusion.
- Young people need recognition and appreciation of their diverse backgrounds, including minority language speakers, to feel welcomed and respected.

Access to Play and Leisure

- Young people need opportunities to play and engage in stimulating activities.
- Young people need safe, welcoming, and inclusive places where they can be themselves.
- Young people need to have fun and build social connections.

The Findings – Identification of Priorities/DEA Profiles

Ballymoney

Key Facts

Population
In Ballymoney DEA, there is 7,710 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old.
3,150 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

Location
The Ballymoney District Electoral Area (DEA) includes the town of Ballymoney and surrounding rural areas. There are 12 Super Output Areas, and 4 of these are ranked in the top 50% for deprivation. Approximately 20% of the settlements in the Ballymoney DEA are urban (Ballymoney town), while 80% are rural, according to the NISRA 2021 Rural Urban Classification.

Deprivation
In Ballymoney DEA, there are 12 Super Output Areas with 4 ranked in the top 50% for multiple deprivation. School data shows Free School Meal entitlement at the highest level of 41.5% for primary and 42.7% post primary significantly higher than the NI average of 28%.

Education
In Ballymoney DEA, 4.1% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 3.8% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 72.1% (NI average 76.1%).

The numbers of young people progressing to further and higher education over a 5yr period of 2018 2023 has fallen by 7.2 and NI average is decrease of 3.1%.

20.1% of young people aged 16-24 have no qualifications or level 1 only which is higher than the NI. average of 19%.

There were 77 pupils suspended in 2022/23 which is higher than NI average of 65.

The rate for unauthorised absence for 2021/22 is 3.8% which is slightly below the NI average of 4%.

Health and Wellbeing
In Ballymoney DEA, there are 830 pupils with Special Education Needs.

1 in 8 young people NI experiencing mental health issues.
15.7% (rates per 000 of the 0-14 population) aged 0-15 have an emotional, psychological, or mental health condition which is higher than the NI average of 13.9%.

Inclusion
In Ballymoney DEA, 53.3% has a learning difficulty by age 0-24 which is higher than NI average of 53.2%.
86 newcomer pupils in primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

Living in Safety and Stability
In Ballymoney DEA, there were 4 racially motivated incidents in 2023/24, a 33% decrease from the previous year's 6 incidents. Domestic abuse incidents increased by 15 to 366 in 2023/24, and there were 16 Youth Justice referrals in 2022/23.

Access to Services
In Ballymoney DEA, there are 20 Council-Maintained play parks, and 1 Neighbourhood Equipped Area for play which caters for children and young people aged 12plus.

There are 31 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Groups, and 2 Council Funded Youth Groups.

One Local Area Funded Award and 1 Area Youth Worker providing access to universal and targeted services across the DEA.

Ballymoney Stakeholder Input/Feedback

The data and feedback for the Ballymoney DEA highlight a mixture of opportunities and challenges faced by children and young people. With a total population of 7,710 aged 0–25 years, and 3,150 within the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9–13 and 14–18 years, there is a significant number of young people at important stages of development. Ballymoney is a rural area, with only 20% of its settlements classed as urban, meaning many young people may experience rural isolation, particularly when accessing services and opportunities typically concentrated in towns.

Young people have said that high levels of anxiety and depression are prevalent among them, affecting their overall well-being and ability to cope with daily life. Many feel unsupported during significant educational transitions, leading to difficulties in adapting to new environments and achieving academic success. Both urban and rural young people experience social isolation, which impacts their ability to form friendships and engage in community activities.

Young people have expressed that insufficient opportunities for physical activities contribute to a lack of motivation and engagement in healthy lifestyles. They face challenges in preparing for future job opportunities and overcoming economic barriers, which affects their ability to participate in activities they enjoy. Those from LGBTQIA+ communities face difficulties in finding safe spaces and support, while incidents of racism create an unsafe and non-inclusive environment.

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, significantly impacts young people's sense of safety and well-being, both online and offline. They are worried about environmental issues and feel unprepared to address climate change, affecting their sense of empowerment and outlook. A lack of platforms for young people to express their views and be heard impacts their ability to contribute positively to their community.

Deprivation remains a notable issue, with four of the area's twelve Super Output Areas ranked among the top 50% most deprived in Northern Ireland. Free School Meal entitlement rates in both primary and post-primary schools are markedly higher than the Northern Ireland average, reflecting higher levels of economic disadvantage. Despite these challenges, educational outcomes show some resilience, with Ballymoney school leavers performing close to the Northern Ireland average, although still slightly behind in key measures such as GCSE achievement and progression to further and higher education. Notably, the area has seen a sharper fall in progression to further and higher education over a five-year period compared to the Northern Ireland average, indicating a growing gap in opportunities for some young people.

Young people have said that a significant proportion of them are leaving school without qualifications or only basic qualifications, potentially limiting future employment outlook. Suspension rates in local schools are higher than the Northern Ireland average, raising concerns about behaviour and engagement in the school environment. In terms of health and wellbeing, the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs is high, and the percentage of young people experiencing emotional, psychological, or mental health conditions exceeds the Northern Ireland average, pointing to a growing need for mental health support and inclusive educational practices.

While the incidence of racially motivated incidents has decreased, the presence of newcomer pupils in schools suggests an increasingly diverse young population that will require continued support for inclusion and integration. Rurality may compound difficulties in accessing Youth Services, leisure, and play facilities, with only one Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play aimed at older children and young people across the entire DEA.

Feedback from stakeholders indicates that young people in Ballymoney DEA need support to cope with the impacts of racially motivated and intercommunity violence, domestic abuse, Youth Justice referrals, and misogyny. These issues affect their mental health, emotional resilience, and overall well-being to support and protect vulnerable young people, stakeholders have identified the need to address underlying issues such as lack of parental support, unaddressed mental health conditions, substance abuse, educational challenges, social pressures, and economic hardship. Young people need comprehensive support to overcome these challenges and reduce the likelihood of justice system involvement.

Young people who live in rural communities' report facing significant challenges such as poverty, education, mental health, and access to services. It is essential to address these issues and consider the impact of rural living, as emphasized by the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, to ensure they receive the necessary support to thrive now and in the future.

Ballymoney Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in Ballymoney DEA as follows:

- Young people need support with their physical and mental health, self-image, healthy relationships.
- Safe and secure places to hang out and easy access to services.
- Ensuring their well-being and safety in the digital world.
- Safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and tackling racism.
- Access to services and facilities in rural areas and young people with additional needs.
- Help during school transitions.
- Reducing barriers to educational achievement.
- Support to address the impact of economic disadvantage.
- Pathways and progression routes for young people with limited qualifications.
- Inclusion and integration support for newcomer pupils.
- Support for vulnerable young people and measures to safeguard them.

Bann

Key Facts

Population
In Bann DEA, there is 5,496 children and young people aged 0-25 years old.

2,310 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

Location
The Bann DEA includes the smaller town network of Kilrea and Garvagh. According to the 2021 Rural Urban Classification, both Kilrea and Garvagh are classified as rural settlements. Therefore, the Bann DEA primarily consists of rural settlements.

Deprivation
In Bann DEA, above the NI average for health deprivation 45.2. % and NI average is 45%. There are 8 Super Output areas with 4 being ranked in the top 50% for multiple deprivation.

Education and Employment
In Bann DEA, 4.9% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 6.1%. compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 77% (NI average 76.1%).

2 A levels 54.3% and NI average is 56.2%.

33 newcomer pupils in Bann DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

Living in Safety and Stability
In Bann DEA, there was one incident with a racist motivation in 2023/24, which is the same as the previous year. There were 84 domestic abuse incidents, a reduction from 127 in the previous year. Additionally, there were 12 referrals to the Youth Justice Agency.

Access to Services
In Bann DEA, there are 10 Council-Maintained play parks.

There are 14 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Groups, and 1 Council Funded Youth Group.

Stakeholder input/feedback

The data and feedback from Bann DEA show that children and young people growing up in this rural area, centred around the small towns of Kilrea and Garvagh, face a range of challenges alongside the benefits of a close-knit community. Out of a total population of 5,496 aged 0–25 years, 2,310 fall within the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9–13 and 14–18 years. The rural setting can offer strong community ties, but it also brings barriers around access to services, transport, and opportunities for social engagement.

Health deprivation in Bann is slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average, and emotional health and wellbeing have been raised by young people as major concerns. Thirteen percent report no opportunities for physical activity locally, and another 13% say they are unable to access help for emotional needs. Alongside this, self-image was ranked as one of the biggest issues for young people in local surveys, suggesting that isolation, lack of services, and pressures from social media may be taking a toll on young people's confidence and mental health. Without appropriate early support, the emotional resilience and wellbeing of young people could continue to be negatively impacted.

Feelings of personal safety also emerged as a strong theme. Twenty-seven percent of young people said they do not feel safe in their local area, and many raised concerns about crime, the safety of women and girls, and pressure from social media to engage in harmful behaviours. Sixty percent reported the negative impact of social media on their lives. Despite the perception that rural areas are safer, these findings highlight that young people's lived experiences are often different, which can affect their freedom to move around their communities and their overall sense of security.

Educational outcomes show mixed results. Bann is performing slightly above the Northern Ireland average for GCSE attainment, with 77% of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs including English and Maths. However, 6.1% of school leavers are either unemployed or unknown, which is higher than the NI average of 4.7%. Ten percent of young people reported facing barriers in education, and 27% said they felt unsupported during key educational transitions such as moving to secondary school. This could contribute to disengagement, underachievement, and challenges in making successful transitions to employment or further study, especially in an area where job opportunities are more limited.

Access to safe spaces and leisure activities was another major gap identified by young people. One in five said there was no safe place to hang out, and two-thirds stated there was a lack of fun activities in their area. With only ten council-maintained play parks across the DEA, rural spread and limited infrastructure contribute to young people feeling disconnected and bored, which could, in turn, increase risk-taking behaviours or deepen isolation.

Economic pressures are also strongly felt by young people in Bann. Thirty-four percent feel unprepared for future jobs, 20% struggle to afford activities, and 80% believe that poverty affects young people locally. These concerns reflect the real barriers young people face in accessing the kinds of experiences and opportunities that could broaden their horizons and prepare them for secure futures.

Environmental issues are a key concern too. Sixty percent of young people worry about climate change, and 80% feel that not enough is being done to address it. Young people are aware of and engaged with wider global issues, but the feeling that their concerns are not acted on may contribute to frustration and a sense of powerlessness.

When it comes to participation and influence, 73% of young people feel they can express their views, but 53% believe they lack real opportunities to make a difference, and 34% feel that their views are not taken seriously. Although there is a strong desire among young people to be involved and active in their communities, they often do not feel meaningfully heard or empowered, which risks disengagement over time.

Good relations and respect for equality are valued by many, with 60% of young people feeling that youth programmes are inclusive and 80% having opportunities to mix with people from different backgrounds. However, 40% of young people believe that not everyone is treated equally, and 34% feel that people do not respect those who are different. These issues highlight the ongoing need to promote inclusion and challenge prejudice, even in rural areas.

Young people in Bann DEA have clearly expressed that their key health and well concerns are self-image, health and wellbeing, and drugs, alcohol and vaping. These concerns reveal underlying vulnerabilities linked to both personal challenges and wider systemic issues within the community. Without sustained support to address these pressures, children and young people risk becoming increasingly disengaged, unhealthy, and disconnected from the opportunities that could help them achieve their potential.

Bann Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in Bann DEA as follows:

- Access to health, emotional support, and physical activity services.
- Enhanced personal safety measures and crime prevention, including digital safety.
- Better support during educational transitions and addressing barriers to educational achievement.
- More safe places and leisure activities for young people in outdoor environments.
- Support for job readiness and pathways for young people with limited qualifications.
- Addressing climate change concerns and providing education on environmental issues.
- Opportunities for young people to express their views and make a difference, including inclusion and integration support for newcomer pupils.
- Promoting inclusion and respect for diversity, ensuring all young people feel valued and supported.
- Addressing self-image, mental health, healthy relationships, and substance abuse issues.

Benbradagh

Key Facts

Demographics
In Benbradagh DEA, there is 6,109 children and young people aged 0-25 years old in Benbradagh DEA. 2,440 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

Deprivation
In Benbradagh DEA is above the NI average for employment deprivation 19.5% and NI average is 16.5%. Above the NI average for health deprivation 46.8% and NI average is 45%.

Location
There are 8 Super Output Areas of which one, Dungiven is in the top 20% for Deprivation and 4 in the the top 50%. Approximately 80% of the settlements in the Benbradagh DEA are rural.

Education
In Benbradagh DEA, 4.6% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 6.3%. compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 70.4% (NI average 76.1%).

Below NI average for higher and further education 39.3% and NI average is 41.5%.

Below NI average for 2 A levels 55.8% and NI average is 56.2%.

23 newcomer pupils in Benbradagh DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

Living in safety and Stability
In Benbradagh DEA, there were 3 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is the same as the previous year. There were 192 incidents of Domestic Abuse an increase of 4 from the previous year.

Access to Services
In Benbradagh DEA, there are 12 Council-Maintained play parks, 1outdoor gym and 1 community owned play park.

There are 19 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Groups, and 1 Council Funded Youth Group.

Benbradagh Stakeholder input/feedback

The data and feedback from Benbradagh DEA show that children and young people here are growing up primarily in rural communities, with approximately 80% of settlements classified as rural. Out of a population of 6,109 aged 0–25 years, 2,440 fall within the key Youth Service priority age groups of 9–13 and 14–18 years. While rural living can foster strong community connections and access to natural spaces, the data highlights a range of significant challenges that could seriously impact the wellbeing, opportunities, and outlook of young people in this area.

Deprivation levels in Benbradagh are notably higher than the Northern Ireland average. Employment deprivation stands at 19.5%, compared to the NI average of 16.5%, and health deprivation is 46.8%, higher than the NI average of 45%. The DEA includes eight Super Output Areas, with Dungiven ranked among the top 20% most deprived areas and half of all SOAs falling within the top 50% for multiple deprivation. Many families are facing financial pressures, barriers to employment, and poorer health, which can directly affect children and young people's mental health, their ability to access opportunities, and their overall sense of security and wellbeing. Growing up in households under strain can increase young people's risk of experiencing stress, anxiety, or disengagement from education and community life.

Young people have said that economic stability is a major concern. Many feel there will not be enough career options for them in the future, and some feel unprepared for employment. Cost is a significant barrier, with some young people expressing that it is difficult for their families to afford activities they would like to take part in. These challenges can make young people feel uncertain about their futures, limit their participation in positive social activities, and increase their risk of long-term economic disadvantage.

Educational outcomes show a mixed picture. Although only 4.6% of young people aged 20–24 are not in employment and do not have a qualification, concerns remain. The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or whose destinations are unknown is higher than the NI average, and fewer young people are achieving five good GCSEs including English and Maths. Access to higher and further education is also slightly lower. Young people have expressed that they want more opportunities to gain real-world experience and preparation for employment. Educational underachievement can limit young people's future earning potential and make it harder for them to access good quality jobs, which can in turn reinforce cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

Feeling safe in their local communities is another significant concern. Young people have said that they do not feel safe where they live. Experiences of bullying, social media-related harm, and feelings of vulnerability contribute to this. While only a small number of incidents with racist motivation were recorded, young people emphasised the importance of feeling respected and secure. When young people do not feel safe, it can impact their willingness to engage in their communities, affect their mental health, and reduce their confidence.

Access to recreational services and activities remains limited. Despite the presence of play parks, an outdoor gym, a community-owned park, and various youth groups, many young people feel there are not enough physical activity opportunities or fun things to do locally. For rural young people, transport

issues can make accessing even the existing services difficult. The lack of accessible recreational spaces can lead to isolation, reduced physical activity, and fewer chances to build friendships, skills, and confidence.

Concerns about the environment and climate change were also raised. Many young people worry about the future of the planet but feel they lack opportunities to get involved in environmental action. Feeling powerless about such a major global issue can add to anxiety and reduce young people's hope for the future.

Participation and having a voice are important to young people, but many feel their views are not listened to or taken seriously. Only a small number said they fully understood their rights. While many feel included and respected within youth work programmes, there are still concerns about inequality and discrimination. When young people feel ignored or excluded, it can damage their confidence and reduce their willingness to engage in civic life or to advocate for their needs and the needs of their communities.

Many young people in Benbradagh want to make a positive difference, but some feel there are not enough opportunities to get involved in their schools or communities. Although a majority believe they can express their views, many feel they are not taken seriously when they do. Without opportunities to contribute meaningfully, young people can feel disconnected and undervalued, which can impact their sense of purpose and belonging.

When asked about their biggest personal challenges, young people identified issues such as health, self-image, and relationships. Parents responding to a stakeholder survey highlighted health, lack of safe spaces, and bullying and cyberbullying as major issues. These challenges impact young people's emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, and ability to form healthy relationships.

Overall, children and young people living in Benbradagh DEA experience a combination of rural isolation, higher levels of deprivation, and barriers in education, employment, and recreation. These factors interact to create risks for poorer physical health, mental health, social development, and future economic stability. Without continued investment in education, wellbeing supports, community spaces, participation opportunities, and rural transport solutions, young people in Benbradagh risk falling further behind their peers elsewhere. However, the strong sense of community and the ambitions expressed by young people themselves present real opportunities for positive change, if the right supports are put in place.

Benbradagh Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in Benbradagh DEA as follows:

- Environmental action and involvement.
- Support for self-image, relationships, and bullying.
- Feeling safe and respected in their communities.
- Opportunities to express views and contribute to their communities.
- Addressing social isolation, especially in rural areas.
- Accessibility to fun, leisure, and special interest groups regardless of location and transport issues.
- Access to safe and secure spaces to meet and build social connections.
- Support to address the impact of economic disadvantage.

Causeway

Key Facts

Demographics
In Causeway DEA, there is 7,018 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old.
2,663 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

Location
The Causeway District Electoral Area (DEA) is primarily classified as urban due to its significant population and infrastructure, especially given its status as a popular tourist destination. However, the surrounding areas include more rural landscapes, contribute to a mix of urban and rural characteristics within the broader region. Additionally, gentrification has impacted various parts of the Causeway DEA, leading to increased property values and change in the community.

Deprivation
Causeway DEA is above the NI average for percentage of household that do not have at least one adult in employment with dependent 17% and NI average is 16%.
Equal to NI average for housing tenure non-owner-occupied rate 34%. The hub town of Portrush is in Causeway DEA. Out of 14 SOA one is ranked the top 20% for deprivation and 6 in the top 50% for deprivation. Causeway DEA is ranked higher than the NI average for Employment.

Education
In Causeway DEA, 3.1% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

641 pupils have Special Education Needs (18.5%) SEN 1-3.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 3.4% compared. to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 78.3% (NI average 76.1%).

79 newcomer pupils in Causeway DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
42 pupils suspended in 2022/23.

Above NI average for pupils who have a learning difficulty, by age 0-24 (rate per ,000 of population) 57.5 and NI. Average 53.2.

The average unauthorised absence rate (post primary 2021/22) is 5.0% which is higher than the average of 4%.

Living in Safety and Stability

In Causeway DEA, there were 16 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 20% decrease from the previous year of 20 racial motivated incidents. There were 198 Domestic Abuse incidents in 2023/24 which is down from 241 the previous year.

The Youth Justice referral total is 27 which is higher than the NI average of 17.

Access to Services

In Causeway DEA, there are 21 Council-Maintained play parks, and 2 Neighbourhood Equipped Areas.

There are 11 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Youth Groups and 1 funded by the Local Council.

There is one full time EA Youth Centre in Portrush.

Causeway Stakeholder input/feedback

The data and feedback from Causeway DEA reveal a range of challenges and concerns expressed by young people, parents, and stakeholders. With a population of 7,018 children and young people aged 0-25 years old, including 2,663 within the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years, the area is home to a significant number of young individuals. The demographic and socio-economic context, as well as feedback from young people, highlight several key issues.

Young people in Causeway DEA are facing challenges associated with gentrification, which has led to increased property prices and displacement. As a result, many young people and their families find it harder to afford housing, disrupting their sense of stability and community. This economic strain has further exacerbated the difficulty young people have in accessing essential resources like education, extracurricular activities, and social services. Young people have stated that poverty significantly impacts their ability to thrive, with 94% believing poverty affects young people's opportunities, and 43% struggling to afford activities.

Emotional health is a major concern for young people in Causeway. According to the local survey, 26% of young people said they are unable to get help for their emotional needs, and 15% expressed there are no opportunities for physical activities in their local area. These findings highlight the lack of adequate support systems for mental health and physical well-being. Additionally, 45% of young people reported feeling pressured to engage in harmful activities, and 53% cited negative impacts from social media on their emotional health.

Safety remains a significant concern in Causeway DEA, with 26% of young people stating that they do not feel safe in their local area. Furthermore, 78% of young people expressed worries about crime, and 52% are concerned about the safety of women and girls. These concerns contribute to a climate of insecurity and affect young people's overall wellbeing and their ability to engage positively within their communities.

The availability of safe spaces for play and leisure is another pressing issue. 20% of young people said there is no safe place to hang out, and 35% reported a lack of fun activities in their area. These gaps in recreational opportunities limit young people's ability to relax, socialize, and build positive relationships. Education is another area of concern. While 67% of young people reported learning and achieving through youth work programmes, 32% said they face barriers in education, and 18% feel unsupported during transitions, such as moving to secondary school.

Young people expressed a desire to make a positive contribution to their community, yet 29% of them feel they lack opportunities to do so, and 38% feel that their views are not taken seriously. Issues around equality and respect for rights were also raised, with 45% of young people believing they are not treated equally and 29% feeling others do not respect those who are different. The arrival of newcomers to the area has highlighted the need for better understanding and inclusion of young people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and sexual orientations.

These insights, drawn from local surveys and focus groups, reveal the complex and interconnected challenges faced by young people in Causeway DEA.

Causeway Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in Causeway DEA as follows:

- Opportunities for physical activities and emotional support to maintain good mental health and build resilience.
- Safe places to hang out and fun activities to encourage social interaction and a sense of community.
- Access to education, help during school transitions, and support to overcome learning barriers.
- Enhanced safety measures to feel safe and secure, addressing concerns about crime, social media impacts, and pressures to engage in harmful activities.
- Preparation for future careers and affordable activities to ensure economic stability and independence.
- Action on environmental issues, especially climate change, for a sustainable future.
- Opportunities to contribute positively and have their views taken seriously to feel valued and empowered.
- Feeling their rights are respected and that they are included, regardless of background or identity, promoting equality and fairness.
- Understanding and respect for people from different backgrounds and sexual orientations to foster a cohesive and inclusive community.
- Mitigating the effects of tourism on local communities, ensuring sustainable and inclusive development.
- Managing the impacts of gentrification, including displacement and access to affordable housing.
- Support for vulnerable young people and measures to safeguard them.

Coleraine

Key Facts

Population:

7,249 children and young people aged 0-25 years.

2,857 within the key Youth Service priority age bands (9-13 years and 14-18 years).

Location

The hub town is Coleraine. There are 11 Super Output Areas, of which 5 are ranked in the 25% most deprived and 1 in the top 50% most deprived. The Northern Regional College campus is in Coleraine, as is the University of Ulster campus and the Causeway Hospital. The Coleraine DEA (District Electoral Area) is classified as a mixed urban/rural area, according to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Coleraine itself is considered an urban hub, while the surrounding areas include both urban and rural characteristics. This classification reflects the diverse nature of the region, encompassing both densely populated urban centres and more sparsely populated rural areas.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas:

Coleraine East and Coleraine Churchland's (Ballysally, Millburn, The Heights, and Killowen housing estates) neighbourhoods identified as experiencing the most severe multiple deprivation and received support under the Department for Communities People and Place Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. These areas face higher rates of unemployment, lower educational attainment, and greater health challenges compared to non-NRA areas. In the Coleraine Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs), there are 2,126 school pupils. Of these, 1,042 (49%) receive Free School Meals, compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 28%. Additionally, 265 (43%) of pupils do not achieve GCSEs A-C including English and Math, while the NI average is 25%. There are 291 (13%) pupils with a Special Educational Need (SEN) Category 1, higher than the NI average of 12%. Furthermore, 212 (10%) pupils have a Statement, compared to the NI average of 7%. The area also has 39 (1.8%) Children Looked After, with the NI average being 0.9%. The absence rate stands at 7.6%, above the NI average of 6.6%. There are 77 (3.6%) Minority Ethnic pupils, compared to the NI average of 2.9%. The area has no Traveller pupils, while the NI average is 0.3%, and fewer than 5 Roma pupils, with the NI average also at 0.3%.

Household Deprivation:

- Education: 28.3% (NI average: 23.9%)
- Employment: 18.8% (NI average: 16.5%)
- Health: 48.3% (NI average: 45%)
- At least one adult employed: 23% (NI average: 16%)
- Non-owner-occupied households: 42.8% (NI average: 34.8%)
- Lone parent households: 33.4% (NI average: 25.7%)

Education

In the 2022/23 school year, 5.9% of school leavers were either unemployed or their status was unknown, which is higher than the Northern Ireland average of 4.7%.

70.1% of school leavers achieved at least 5 GCSEs (A*-C, including English and Math), compared to the NI average of 76.1%.

45.4% of school leavers achieved 2 A levels, which is below the NI average of 56.2%.

The number of pupil suspensions is 119, which is significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 65.

The unauthorised absence rate for post-primary pupils stands at 4.2%, slightly above the NI average of 4%.

In the 2023/24 school year, there are 278 newcomer pupils.

Additionally, there are 772 pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) levels 1-3, making up 20.5% of the student population, compared to the NI average of 19%.

Among young people aged 20-24, 6.9% are not in employment and do not have a qualification, which is higher than the NI average of 4.9.

Living in Safety

In the 2023/24 period, there were 13 racist incidents, marking a 7% decrease from the previous year. Additionally, there were 22 youth justice referrals, which is higher than the Northern Ireland average of 17. There were 377 Domestic abuse incidents in 2023/24 which is higher than the NI average of 260.

Access to Services

Facilities include 8 Council-Maintained play parks, 9 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Groups, and a full-time Youth Centre at Sunlea.

Coleraine Stakeholder input/feedback

The data and feedback from the Coleraine DEA illustrate the challenges and opportunities faced by children and young people in the area, emphasising how socio-economic factors significantly impact their lives and wellbeing. The population of 7,249 children and young people aged 0-25 years, with 2,857 in the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years, reflects a substantial segment of the local community. These young people are influenced by both the urban environment of Coleraine town and the surrounding rural areas, creating a diverse landscape that presents both opportunities and significant challenge.

Coleraine is classified as a mixed urban/rural area, with the town itself providing more access to key educational institutions like the Northern Regional College, the University of Ulster, and potential job opportunities at the Causeway Hospital. However, young people in the more rural parts of the DEA face barriers in accessing these resources, contributing to disparities in educational and employment opportunities. As young people expressed, those living in rural areas feel disconnected from the opportunities available in urban settings, exacerbating their sense of exclusion.

The high level of deprivation in Coleraine, particularly in five of the 11 Super Output Areas (SOAs) ranked in the 25% most deprived, reveals the socio-economic difficulties faced by many young people. These young people are disproportionately affected by poverty, with higher rates of unemployment, lower educational attainment, and poor health outcomes. For example, 18.8% of young people live in households affected by unemployment, and 48.3% live in areas with significant health deprivation. The high rates of household deprivation directly affect their ability to access opportunities for personal and social development, which young people themselves said contributes to stress, feelings of insecurity, and a lack of hope for the future.

In areas like Coleraine East and Coleraine Churchlands, where there are higher rates of deprivation, young people face even greater challenges. As young people expressed, their education outcomes are hindered, with 49% of pupils receiving Free School Meals and 43% not achieving at least five GCSEs. These statistics underscore the barriers that young people face in accessing quality education, contributing to lower self-esteem and limiting their outlook for the future. Many young people from these communities shared that they feel unsupported in their education, with 31% stating they felt unprepared during transitions, such as moving to secondary school.

The prevalence of lone-parent households, which make up 33.4% of the population in Coleraine, places additional pressures on young people, impacting their emotional and financial stability. Young people from these households expressed feelings of isolation and instability, which can negatively affect their mental health and academic performance. They noted that such stress often leads to disengagement from education and difficulty in forming stable relationships.

Moreover, Coleraine has a higher-than-average rate of school suspensions (119 compared to 65) and unauthorised absences (4.2% compared to 4%), indicating that many young people struggle to stay engaged in their education. These challenges reflect broader issues such as disengagement, family pressures, and mental health struggles. Young people themselves highlighted these challenges, noting

that they often feel overwhelmed by external pressures and lack the support needed to stay on track academically.

In terms of safety, 26% of young people expressed that they do not feel safe in their local area, with many citing concerns about crime and social instability.
The high level of concern about crime, with 78% of young people expressing worry, further emphasizes the insecurity felt by many in their communities. This sense of insecurity is compounded by negative experiences with social media, with 30% of young people stating it has a detrimental impact on their lives. The increase in bullying and cyberbullying, coupled with concerns about safety, reinforces the urgency of addressing issues of crime and creating safer environments for young people to thrive.

Youth justice referrals in Coleraine were also above the Northern Ireland average, with 22 referrals compared to 17, indicating that some young people may be more vulnerable to engaging in anti-social behaviour or criminal activities. This may be linked to the socio-economic stressors and a lack of positive role models or opportunities in their communities, as expressed by young people. The socio-economic pressures they face can lead to disengagement and a greater propensity for involvement in risky behaviours.

Furthermore, young people in Coleraine are acutely aware of the impact of climate change, with 80% expressing concern about the environment and 74% feeling not enough is being done to address the issue. This awareness reflects a growing sense of social responsibility among young people, who are eager to see change in their communities and the world. Despite this, many young people feel their concerns are not being taken seriously, with 66% stating that their views are not listened to when decisions affecting them are made. This sense of being disregarded contributes to their feeling of disempowerment and a lack of agency in their communities.

The challenges outlined above highlight how deprivation and socio-economic instability create significant barriers for young people in Coleraine, particularly those in more deprived or rural areas. These barriers limit their access to education, employment opportunities, and social engagement, which in turn affects their mental health and overall development. As young people themselves have expressed, the lack of safe spaces, support for emotional wellbeing, and opportunities for personal growth are key issues that hinder their ability to reach their full potential. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring that young people in Coleraine have the resources, opportunities, and support they need to thrive. The voices of young people, expressed through surveys and feedback, underscore the need for systemic change and more tailored interventions to address the socio-economic disparities that shape their lives.

Coleraine Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in Coleraine DEA as follows:

- Emotional and mental health support.
- Fun and safe places to hang out and make friends.
- Help with school transitions and attainment, available at convenient times and locations.
- Feeling safe from crime and online dangers.
- Support for vulnerable young people and measures to safeguard them
- Preparation for future careers, including volunteering and leadership opportunities.
- Awareness and initiatives on environmental issues like climate change.
- Opportunities to share ideas and feel valued.
- Feeling included and respected, regardless of background or identity.
- Reducing school suspensions and unauthorised absence.
- Positive role models and opportunities to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- Healthy relationships peers, family.

Limavady

Key Facts

Demographics
In Limavady DEA, there is 4,781 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old.
2,019 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

Location
The Limavady District Electoral Area (DEA) comprises a mix of rural and urban settlements. Limavady town is the primary urban centre, while surrounding villages like Ballykelly, Greysteel, and Aghanloo represent rural areas. There are 10 Super Output Areas, with 3 ranked in the top 20% for deprivation and 3 in the top 50%. Limavady hub town includes one neighbourhood renewal area.

Education
In Limavady DEA, 7.8% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 61.7% (NI average 76.1%).

63 newcomer pupils in Limavady DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.
383 pupils with SEN 1-3 (14.3%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 5.3% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The average unauthorised absence rate (post primary 2021/22) is 5.7% which is higher than the average of 4%.

Deprivation
In Limavady DEA, above the NI average for number of adults employed in a household with dependents 21% (NI average 16%).

Above the NI average for household deprivation in Education 29.4% (NI average 23.9%), employment 20.6% (NI average 16.5%), health 50.7% (NI average 45%).

Above the NI average for number of adults employed in a household with dependents 21%
(NI average 16%).

Neighbourhood renewal Area
Limavady is a neighbourhood renewal area. These are neighbourhoods identified as experiencing the most severe multiple deprivation and received support under the Department for Communities People and Place Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. The Limavady Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA)

covers several specific geographical areas within Limavady, including Limavady Town Centre, Coolessan, Glens Estate, Ballyclose, and Greystone. In the Limavady NRA, there are 673 children and young people, including nursery schools. Of these, 347 (51.6%) receive Free School Meals, compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 25.9%. Additionally, 139 (57.44%) of school leavers do not achieve 5+ GCSEs A-C including English and Maths from 2017/18 to 2021/22, while the NI average is 25.25%.

There are 92 (13.67%) pupils with a Special Educational Need (SEN) Category 1 & 2, higher than the NI average of 11.54%. Furthermore, 65 (9.66%) pupils have a Statement, compared to the NI average of 8.55%. The area also has 54 (8.02%) Minority Ethnic pupils, with the NI average being 7.65%, and 5 (0.74%) Children Looked After, compared to the NI average of 0.92%.

Health and Well Being

Limavady DEA is above the NI average by age 0-24 to have Asperger or Autism Syndrome (50 and NI average is 49).

Living in Safety and Stability

In Limavady DEA, there were 7 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 75% increase from the previous year of 4 racial motivated incidents. There were 164 Domestic abuse incidents in 2023/24 a decrease from 220 in the previous year.

The Youth Justice referral total is 35 which is higher than the NI average of 17.

Access to Services

In Limavady DEA, there are 8 Council-Maintained play parks of which 1 is Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play.

There are 11 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Groups in Limavady DEA.

Limavady Stakeholder input/feedback

The data and feedback for Limavady highlights the significant socio-economic challenges faced by children and young people in the area, with these challenges having a direct impact on their education, mental health, and overall wellbeing. These issues are further compounded by a lack of resources, limited access to opportunities, and the effects of living in an area with high levels of deprivation.

A key concern in Limavady is the level of socio-economic deprivation, which impacts a large portion of the local population. For example, 33.4% of households in Limavady are classified as lone-parent households, a statistic that is notably higher than the Northern Ireland average of 25.7%. This places additional pressure on young people, particularly in terms of emotional and financial stability, potentially contributing to higher rates of mental health struggles and social exclusion. Young people in Limavady expressed that their socio-economic circumstances make it difficult for them to access opportunities for personal development and future success.

Educational attainment is another area where young people in Limavady face significant challenges. The data shows that 18.8% of young people in the area live in households with education deprivation, which can have a negative impact on their academic performance and outlook. As a result, many young people are not achieving at the expected level in school. For example, the percentage of pupils receiving Free School Meals in Limavady is 49%, compared to the Northern Ireland average of 28%. This points to the higher levels of disadvantage that many young people face, and the corresponding educational barriers they encounter. Many young people expressed frustration at not having the necessary support to succeed academically, which limits their ability to reach their full potential.

In terms of school attendance, the figures indicate that there are higher-than-average rates of pupil suspensions and unauthorised absences in Limavady, which reflect deeper issues related to engagement and wellbeing. In 2023/24, Limavady had 119 pupil suspensions, which is more than double the Northern Ireland average of 65. This figure highlights the challenges young people face in terms of engagement with education, which could be linked to issues such as stress, family difficulties, or mental health struggles. Additionally, the unauthorised absence rate of 4.2% in Limavady is above the Northern Ireland average of 4%, further illustrating the difficulties young people face in staying engaged with school.

Mental health concerns are prevalent among young people in Limavady, with many expressing struggles related to anxiety, depression, and stress. This is reflected in the high rates of emotional deprivation, with 21% of young people stating that they cannot access help for their emotional needs. The lack of sufficient mental health services and support is a critical gap, as it leaves young people vulnerable to prolonged mental health issues. Many young people stated that their emotional wellbeing is impacted by the stresses of school, family life, and financial difficulties, and the absence of adequate support exacerbates these struggles.

Young people have expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of physical activity opportunities, with 37% reporting none in their local area. This contributes to feelings of isolation and boredom, especially in

rural Limavady, where access to services and transport is limited. The absence of safe spaces for activities further isolates them, increasing the risk of social exclusion and disengagement.

Safety is a significant concern for young people in Limavady, with 26% stating that they do not feel safe in their local area. This feeling of insecurity is compounded by concerns about bullying, cyberbullying, and crime. 30% of young people expressed that social media has a negative impact on their lives, contributing to issues such as low self-esteem and mental health problems. Additionally, 39% of young people reported feeling pressured to engage in harmful activities, and 78% were worried about crime in their communities. These concerns about safety affect young people's ability to fully engage in their community and contribute to their feelings of anxiety and isolation.

The overall lack of opportunities in Limavady extends to young people's outlook as well. The data reveals that 48% of young people feel there will be no career options available to them in the future, and 44% feel unprepared for jobs. This reflects the limited access to career development and skill-building opportunities for young people in the area. Furthermore, 52% of young people stated that they find it difficult for their families to afford activities they want to do, which adds to the barriers they face in terms of social participation and personal development.

In addition, young people in Limavady expressed discontent over not being heard in decision-making processes. 66% of young people felt that their views were not listened to in decisions that affect them, and 52% felt that they were not treated equally in their local community. This lack of respect for young people's voices can contribute to feelings of disempowerment and alienation. However, 74% of young people stated that they know their rights, and 84% felt that their youth work programmes respected their rights and ensured they had a voice. This shows that young people want to be involved in their communities and decisions that affect their lives, but they often feel excluded from these processes.

Overall, the data illustrates that children and young people in Limavady face a complex web of challenges related to socio-economic deprivation, educational barriers, mental health issues, safety concerns, and a lack of opportunities for personal development. These challenges have a profound impact on their wellbeing, limiting their outlook and contributing to feelings of frustration, isolation, and disengagement. The voices of young people in Limavady clearly express the need for more opportunities, support services, and resources to help them overcome these barriers and build a brighter future.

Limavady Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in Limavady DEA as follows:

- Support with physical and mental well-being.
- Extra support for individuals facing socio-economic or situational challenges.
- Support for vulnerable young people and measures to safeguard them.
- Help to succeed in school and overcome barriers to learning.
- Career guidance and job training programmes.
- Safe places to meet, play, and relax.
- Help to manage stress and mental health issues.
- Opportunities to express their views and be heard.
- Building healthy, supportive relationships with peers and adults.
- Access to programmes that promote respect for everyone.
- Support to overcome the challenges of living in poverty.
- Feeling included and valued in their community.
- Support to reduce barriers to learning.

The Glens

Key Facts

Demographics
In The Glens DEA, there is 5,299 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old.
2,211 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

Location
The Glens has the hub town of Ballycastle. There are 9 Super Output Areas ranked in the top 20% of deprivation and 2 in the top 50%. The Glens District Electoral Area (DEA) in Northern Ireland includes a mix of rural and urban settlements. The rural areas are predominant, with small villages and open countryside making up a significant portion of the DEA. Urban areas are limited, with Ballycastle being the primary urban centre. This area is also known for its coastal scenery, including beaches, cliffs, and seaside towns.

Education
In The Glens DEA, 2.9% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 2.8% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and Math in 2022/23 is 77.3% (NI average 76.1%).

16.6% of school leavers going into employment in 2022/23 compared to NI average of 11.3%.

37 newcomer pupils in The Glens DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

519 pupils with Special educational need 1-3 16.8%.

The average unauthorised absence rate (post primary 2021/22) is 4.2% which is higher than the average of 4%.

Deprivation
In The Glens DEA, above NI average in household deprivation in health dimension 48.2% and NI average 45%.

Living in Safety and Stability
In The Glens DEA, there were 3 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is the same as the previous year. There were 116 Domestic Abuse incidents in 2023/24 which is a slight decrease from 121 in the previous year. There were 8 Youth Justice referrals.

Access to Services

In The Glens DEA, there are 27 Council-Maintained play parks.

There are 8 Generic Non-Targeted Funded Groups in The Glens DEA and 2 Funded by the Local Council.

The Glens Stakeholder input/feedback

The data and feedback for children and young people living in the Glens area reveals the significant socio-economic and educational challenges they face, which deeply impact their well-being, opportunities, and outlook. These challenges are heightened by factors such as financial hardship, limited access to resources, and geographical isolation, all of which directly affect their mental health, education, and personal development.

A key issue in the Glens area is the prevalence of socio-economic deprivation. Many young people expressed that their families face significant financial struggles, with 33.4% of households classified as lone-parent households, a figure much higher than the Northern Ireland average of 25.7%. This adds considerable emotional and financial stress, with young people saying it affects their sense of stability and security. Living in single-parent households makes it more difficult to access resources and opportunities, further compounding feelings of insecurity and limiting their chances for personal development.

Education deprivation is another major challenge, with 28.3% of households in the Glens facing difficulties related to education. Young people in the area often struggle to achieve academically, and many expressed frustrations with the lack of academic support available. For example, the percentage of pupils receiving Free School Meals in the Glens is 49%, significantly higher than the Northern Ireland Young people said that money problems often stop them from getting the school supplies and activities they need to do well in school and achieve academic success. These educational barriers contribute to lower academic achievement, and young people expressed that they feel this limits their outlook and opportunities.

Additionally, young people in the Glens face issues of school disengagement, with higher-than-average rates of pupil suspensions and unauthorised absences. The unauthorised absence rate in the Glens is 4.2%, higher than the Northern Ireland average of 4%. Many young people said that they feel disconnected from their education due to these disruptions, which impact their learning and increase feelings of alienation. This disengagement not only affects their academic performance but also their ability to build social relationships and gain the skills needed for future success.

Mental health is a significant concern for young people in the Glens. With socio-economic pressures, poor educational outcomes, and limited access to support services, many young people are struggling with emotional distress. In fact, 21% of young people in the Glens stated that they do not have access to the emotional support they need. This lack of mental health resources leaves many feeling isolated and unsupported. Furthermore, the geographical isolation of the Glens makes it harder for young people to access services or safe spaces where they can seek help, exacerbating their mental health challenges. Young people expressed a need for more emotional support and mental health services to help them navigate the stresses and pressures they face.

Physical inactivity is another issue impacting the health and well-being of young people in the Glens. 37% of young people expressed that there are no opportunities for physical activities in their local area.

This lack of recreational facilities means that many young people are missing opportunities for physical fitness, social interaction, and stress relief. The absence of safe, accessible spaces for physical activity leads to a decline in both physical and mental health, and young people stated that it increases feelings of isolation, especially for those living in more remote, rural parts of the area.

Safety is a primary concern for many young people in the Glens. 26% of young people expressed that they do not feel safe in their local area, and many are worried about the prevalence of crime and anti-social behaviour. In fact, 39% of young people said that they feel pressured to engage in harmful activities, while 78% are concerned about crime. These feelings of insecurity affect young people's ability to fully participate in their communities, which, in turn, impacts their social development and overall well-being. Many young people said that these safety concerns are compounded by worries about bullying and cyberbullying, which make it difficult for them to feel secure in their social interactions and daily life.

Economic instability is another significant issue that many young people in the Glens face. 48% of young people expressed concern that they will not have career options in the future, and 44% stated that they feel unprepared for the workforce. These concerns reflect the lack of career development and training opportunities available to young people in the area, which contributes to a sense of uncertainty about their future. Many young people said that they feel unsupported in preparing for the workforce or pursuing further education, which diminishes their confidence and ability to build a successful future.

Despite these challenges, young people in the Glens also expressed a strong desire for positive change. They want more opportunities to engage in activities that promote personal growth and social development. Youth work programmes are seen as a valuable resource, with 87% of young people stating that they learn and achieve through these programmes. However, many expressed that they still face barriers to success, particularly during important transitions, such as moving from primary to secondary school. They said that more tailored support during these transitions would help them navigate these challenges and build confidence in their academic abilities.

Furthermore, many young people in the Glens feel that their voices are not being heard in decisions that affect them. 66% of young people expressed that they feel their views are not listened to by those in positions of authority, and 52% said they do not feel that they are treated equally in their local communities. This lack of respect for their opinions and contributions leads to feelings of powerlessness and alienation. However, many young people also stated that they are confident in fighting for their rights, showing a strong desire to be heard and involved in decisions that impact their lives. They expressed that they want more opportunities to have their voices taken seriously and to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Overall, the data highlights that there are children and young people in the Glens who are facing significant socio-economic and educational barriers that affect their mental health, engagement with education, and opportunities for personal growth. These challenges, including poverty, poor educational outcomes, limited access to support services, and concerns about safety, have a profound impact on young people's ability to succeed and thrive. Many young people expressed a desire for more opportunities to engage in activities that promote physical health, emotional well-being, and social

development. They want to be supported in building a brighter future for themselves, but they need access to the resources, support, and opportunities that will help them overcome the barriers they face. Addressing these challenges is key to ensuring that young people in the Glens have the chance to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.

The Glens Summary

Stakeholder insights and desktop analysis have prioritised the needs for young people in The Glens DEA as follows:

- Help with managing stress and emotional health, including mental health support.
- Opportunities for physical activities and safe places to hang out.
- Safe and secure places to meet, play, and relax.
- Support to deal with challenges like gentrification, living in rural areas, and poverty.
- Help to succeed in school, career advice, and job training programmes.
- Chances to share views, build supportive relationships, and feel included in the community.
- Access to programmes that promote respect and inclusive Youth Services.
- Preparation for future careers and learning about climate change.
- Reliable and safe transport options to help get around and stay safe on rural roads.