



# Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative

## CYPIC NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026

### Who we are

CYPIC's purpose is to bring focus, connection and method (quality improvement) where it is most needed to improve the wellbeing and life chances of babies, children & young people in Scotland.

- Focus on improving outcomes for evidence-based priorities
- Connect people and share learning to accelerate improvement
- Support systematic use of the Quality Improvement journey to improve outcomes

### More information

Email: [cypic@gov.scot](mailto:cypic@gov.scot)

Website: <https://cypic.co.uk/>

## Welcome to our Spring edition!



Photo by Kimberleigh Crowie on Unsplash

Read on to find out more about:

- Highlights from the Making Breastfeeding a Public Health Priority Conference
- Improving the wellbeing of children with additional support needs in East Ayrshire
- Highlights from the Family Nurse Partnership Celebration Event
- New local authority data profiles from Nesta
- Progress of the National Improving Writing Programme and visit to see it in action in Dundee

# Highlights from the Making Breastfeeding a Public Health Priority Conference



**Scotland has reached its highest breastfeeding rates since records began.** This progress was acknowledged at the Making Breastfeeding a Public Health Priority Conference in early March. Improvements in both **continuation** and **babies starting life being breastfed** are reflecting something far more meaningful than numbers alone: women are experiencing **better support in their infant feeding choices** and more **informed choice**.

Dr Nigel Rollins shared the growing evidence on breastfeeding being a **critical foundation for healthy early child development**. He highlighted the evidence linking breastfeeding and health promotion and prevention, emphasising that breastfeeding is one of the few interventions that delivers immediate benefits for infants and mothers, while also protecting population health for decades to come.

A standout message on the day was the **strong connection between Scotland's progress and the narrowing of breastfeeding inequalities**, with the most substantial improvements emerging over the last five years. Speakers emphasised the contribution of this in reducing the wider impacts of poverty and provided evidence on how this is being achieved through the **effective use of quality improvement initiatives**.

Encouragingly, it was noted this level of progress **did not take a generation**, highlighting that rapid, meaningful change is possible when collaborative leadership, shared purpose, evidence, passion, commitment, and equity focused improvement come together.



# Improving the wellbeing of children with additional support needs in East Ayrshire

There was a National Additional Support for Learners (ASL) Engagement Event at Murrayfield on 12 March, with the aim of bringing practitioners together to share effective practice and share learning. The Improvement Programme in East Ayrshire, which focuses on improving the wellbeing of children with additional support needs (ASN), was the first story of the day.

CYPIC Improvement Advisor Laura Haggarty outlined the programme content and outcomes using the Quality Improvement Journey before the local team shared their experiences. 23 Early Childhood Centres and Funded Providers have been involved in this work to date and another cohort is planned to commence in August 2026.

East Ayrshire Early Years Service Manager Gwyneth Quinn emphasised the value of leadership and visible strategic commitment highlighting "the most powerful aspects of this approach are the collaborative effort from Day 1 and that it's 'bottom up' – the staff who are with the children are the ones who decide what changes to test; this work gives them permission to do something different and learn from their data. Our NHS colleagues in Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy along with our Educational Psychology service are central to the process and direction of the work".

Alana Speirs from Catrine ECC shared a powerful story of the difference being involved in the programme has made to her team, as well as the children. Alana shared that "as sessions progressed and our data improved, we grew in confidence and belief that we really could make a difference and now we have an abundance of QI tools to use as new cohorts of children come through our door".

Alana completed the presentation by sharing "the programme empowered us as a team, improved our provision and provided better outcomes for our most vulnerable children". A short video was shown highlighting changes made through the programme: [View video on Vimeo](#)



# Highlights from the Family Nurse Partnership Celebration Event

NHS teams came together at a Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) event in Glasgow on 16 March to **share learning, celebrate achievements**, recognise the impact of the programme on young parent families and discuss opportunities for the future. The event centred on six priority areas, highlighting how outcomes are strengthened through **personal capital, personal empowerment, and informed choice** for young parents.

Chief Nursing Officer Aisha Holloway acknowledged the dedication, compassion, and expertise of FNP nurses and supervisors; and reinforced the importance of the programme with **national commitment to supporting early years**. This was reinforced by Director of Together Scotland Juliet Harris who called Family Nurses “**children’s rights defenders**” and laid out how their role, acting on the rights of children fed through to what those families experienced, reducing adversity and supporting early child development.

**Innovation** featured strongly throughout the event with a rich series of quality improvement projects showcasing insights and innovations across a number of key themes including **advocating to remove multi-level systems barriers**. This highlighted how iterative learning cycles can collectively strengthen the FNP programme and amplify the voices of young families.

Read more about FNP in this report on the Scottish Government website: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/revaluation-family-nurse-partnership-scotland/>



Improving early child development is a big priority for us in CYPIC and it is great to have [Nesta](#), a research and innovation foundation, working alongside us with their aligned Fairer Start mission.

Nesta has recently pulled together a useful resource for all Scottish local authorities to use to support local planning. Based on publicly available data sources, it has been designed to help areas better understand their own local landscape around pregnancy and early childhood.

Access the resource: <https://scotland-early-years.products.nesta.org.uk>

## National Improving Writing Programme Visit to Tayview Primary in Dundee

Our thanks to Tayview Primary School and the Dundee City Council Pedagogy Team for hosting a visit for Neil Rennick, the Director General of Education and Justice at Scottish Government and CYPIC colleagues on 20 February. The visit was an excellent opportunity for Neil to see first hand implementation of the National Improving Writing Programme. We got to see the bundle being carried out in classrooms and witness the engaged and motivated children busy with their writing.



**"It was fantastic to be able to share all the hard work we have been doing in Dundee with CYPIC to improve writing. The data is showing us that it is paying off, staff and learners involved are not only more enthused about writing, but they are also showing progress in their learning."**  
Dundee Local Lead



Visitors had the opportunity to visit two classrooms and hear directly from children and teachers about the difference it has made to them. Teachers reflected that children are increasingly able to articulate their learning. Data charting achievement of success criteria was displayed and children were very proud to talk about the impact in their jotters.

Dundee City joined the writing programme in Wave 3 and their first two cohorts improved writing attainment from **54% on track for first level in P3 to 75% achieving first level in P4**. One year on they are building on this momentum across the city. The programme is being taken up beyond P4 with around 90 teachers from initial schools participating. As part of the current national implementation wave, Dundee City is testing the bundle in a secondary setting. Six schools will have trained all staff by the end of this session, including our hosts Tayview PS.

An important element of their approach has been the integration of the Writing programme into their broader literacy and attainment strategies from the outset. The work has been delivered by the pedagogy team of the local authority so that it remains fully integrated with local professional learning.

Colleagues reflected on the value that comes from being part of a country-wide improvement programme. It has been energising for teams to hear the impact this change is having across Dundee and other participating local authorities.



Reviewing 105 schools starting the programme in 2023/24, national data indicates that these schools increased by 9 percentage points more than other schools. Along with the positive impact on Talking and Listening (5 percentage points more) and Reading (6 percentage points more) combined Literacy increased by 9 percentage points more. Numeracy has also increased by 6 percentage points.

**Thank you Tayview Primary School and Dundee City Council!**



## Reconnect Days

The end of February is always a highlight in the CYPIC calendar as we get to hear the learning and successes of the latest cohorts of the National Improving Writing Programme. This year we had colleagues from Wave 4 (Edinburgh, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire) and Implementation Wave 2 once again enabled additional teachers in schools from previous waves to become trained.



Wave 4 represented 1007 children with 50% on track for age and stage in August which increased to 61% on track now with a prediction that 68% will be on track by June. The Implementation wave had 1708 children with 61% on track in August and 71% by February with a prediction of 78% by June! Implementation waves (whether run locally or nationally) are a great way to increase the rate and scale of change within a school, while increasing continuity for P4 children when staff change stage or roles.





Nationally, the programme remains focused on first level outcomes, while cognisant of needs being different within local authorities. As a result, around 45% of children on Wave 4 and 20% on Implementation Wave 2 are in P4. The Implementation Wave had teachers from all stages, including a small number of secondary teachers. This initial testing was to explore the impact of applying the change theory in a secondary and third level setting. Early data is promising with more secondary testing planned for 2026/27.

Across both waves, 480 children and young people more than predicted are expected to be on track for their age and stage by the end of this session, with reduced variation enabling greater focus on the groups most needing support. Congratulations to all for their hard work implementing changes in their classrooms, schools and local authorities to make this happen.

One teacher summarised what he's witnessed in class:

**“Writing had been ok, but everything was a bit pedestrian. [Now writing is] ...longer, neater, more sophisticated, better handwriting, more vocal about their writing and asking me things – for example we had an intense conversation about semi-colons!**

**The sophistication of ideas has improved. They are trying things out ..with style, flair and bravery. And it made for easy discussions on parents' night.**

