

Shetland Partnership Annual Report 2024/25



A Shetland Partnership Report

September 2025



CHI | SHETLAND



The Shetland Partnership

The Shetland Partnership is the Community Planning Partnership for Shetland. Community planning is about how public bodies work together, and with local communities, to design and deliver better services that make a real difference to people's lives. The Partnership is made up of a wide range of public agency partners, and community and third sector bodies, who work together to deliver our collective ambitions for the future. Find out more at the [Shetland Partnership website](#).

Our Annual Report

This is our Annual Report for 2024/25. The purpose is to share information with communities and partner agencies on what has been achieved through Shetland's Community Planning Partnership to support activity to improve outcomes for Shetland's communities.

Progress is monitored using outcome indicators (pages 3 to 14), alongside case studies illustrating collaborative working to improve outcomes across the four priority areas of Participation, People, Place and Money (pages 15 to 16 and online).

This annual report also provides an update on progress against the current Delivery Plan (pages 17 to 21), updates on Supporting Projects (pages 22 to 25) and Locality Plan (pages 26 to 29).

Our Duties

Our Duty	Achieved?	Progress Report
Prepare a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 		The Shetland Partnership Plan outlining the agreed long-term vision and priorities for Shetland was published in 2018. The plan was initially supported by a delivery plan published in 2019. Since the conclusion of our first Delivery Plan, a decision was made to move away from the model of three yearly plans, moving instead to publishing a rolling Delivery Plan on the Shetland Partnership Website. The partnership continues to meet monthly to discuss and review priorities.
Carry out Locality Planning 		In 2020 the Shetland Partnership produced its first Locality Plan, the Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan. A Second Locality Plan for these Islands was approved by partners and communities during 2023/24. Delivery continues with a renewed emphasis on connection between islands, regular engagement and responding to local concerns.
Review and report publicly on progress with the LOIP and Locality Plans 		We are accountable to the Shetland Community for the work we do as a Community Planning Partnership and whether or not we are making a difference to the people of Shetland. This report is an important tool for helping people understand what we do, what we have achieved and whether we are fulfilling our statutory duties. In this report you can find details of the work that has been carried out in 2024/25 as well as a data update, which describes how the outcome indicators included in Shetland's Partnership Plan have changed since the Plan was agreed.

Shetland Partnership Plan

[Shetland's Partnership Plan 2018-2028](#) was adopted by community planning partners in June 2018. It identifies a shared vision and four key priorities for all of us to work towards, both individually and collectively, to improve the lives of everyone in Shetland.

Our shared vision: *“Shetland is a place where **everyone is able to thrive; living well in strong, resilient communities; and where people and communities are able to help plan and deliver solutions to future challenges**”* Our shared priorities:

 <p>People participate and influence decisions on services and use of resources</p>	 <p>Individuals and families thrive and reach their full potential</p>
 <p>Shetland is an attractive place to live, study and invest</p>	 <p>All households can afford to have a good standard of living</p>

Monitoring Progress

Indicators: 2024/25

The Shetland Partnership monitors various 'outcome indicators' that provide insights into life in Shetland. These indicators and their baseline levels are included in [Shetland's Partnership Plan](#) (Appendix 2, pages 16-20) and the [Shetland Partnership Website](#). Most indicators are updated annually, with changes shared on the website and in this Report.

Analysis April 2024 – March 2025

The long-term effects of the cost-of-living crisis continue to present significant challenges for Scotland and low-income households continue to face difficulties. This crisis has resulted in higher household debt, strained public and third sector services, increased inequality, and worsened mental and physical health. Different households, services, and sectors have been affected in various ways, and further action is needed to support those most negatively impacted.

The effects of climate change are already visible and go beyond just environmental issues. It is a broad problem that impacts the ecology, society, and economy, affecting communities, businesses, infrastructure, and daily life in Shetland. Additionally, a shrinking working-age population is putting pressure on businesses and services.

Trends are emerging for some indicators, while others do not fully reflect the local situation. Challenges include: a lack of updates from data sources, changes in data capture methods, or definition changes beyond the Partnership's control. The knowledge and experience of partners remain crucial for interpreting data and providing context.

The **Fragility Index** was added as an indicator to the Shetland Partnership's monitoring in 2024. It is a combined index of three indicators: depopulation, old age dependency ratio (the ratio of older people (65 and over) to the working age population aged 16 to 64), and rural depopulation (the change in the proportion of the population living in rural or rural remote areas). A rising index indicates an increasingly fragile demographic. This indicator is compiled by the [Improvement Service](#) for their [Community Planning Outcomes Profile \(CPOP\)](#).



In 2022/23, Shetland's fragility index score was 114.3, up from 113.2 the previous year. This is the highest score for Shetland since data has been available (2010/11). There has also been an upward trend in Scotland, but the index is lower at 109.2. Shetland had the second highest fragility index compared to other local authorities in Scotland in 2022/23, behind Aberdeenshire.

Over the past 10 years, Shetland's population has decreased by 1%, but the demographic changes were more significant. Between the 2011 and 2022 censuses, the percentage of people over 65 increased from 16.3% to 21.8%, while the working-age population (16-64) dropped from 64% to 60%. In [last year's report](#), it was stated that these shifts mean services and businesses may need to adapt. In 2024, Shetland Islands Council highlighted their [workforce challenge](#) noting recruitment difficulties faced by many organisations and businesses in the isles.



In 2023, 14% of the **population were aged 16-29**, the same as in 2022.

This is down from the baseline of 15.5% in 2018 and below the 2021 target of 18%. Scotland's lower birth rate compared to the rest of the UK may contribute to this decline. Patterns of inward migration may have changed as a result of the UK's adoption of a points-based immigration

system which prioritises skilled workers; anecdotal evidence suggests that Shetland, like other remote areas, has been disproportionately affected by changes to UK migration legislation, due to the prominence of sectors which previously had a high dependence on EU migrant workers (e.g. hospitality, health, social care, processing, aquaculture).

Foodbank usage tripled between 2018-19 and 2023-24, but 2024-25 saw a reduction in monthly parcels distributed. An average of 92 parcels were distributed per month in 2024-25, down from 137 the previous year. These supplies supported 1,541 people, with approximately 17% of those aged under 16. Some previous figures came from both the Shetland Foodbank and Anchor for Families. However, Anchor for Families, in the process of merging with the Shetland Family Centre, has not been distributing food parcels during the last year.



The Trussell Trust's mid-year report for Scotland (April-September 2024) shows that food bank need remains near record levels, though there was a 6% decrease in parcels

distributed compared to 2023. This may reflect recent income boosts: eased inflation, a 6.7% benefits increase from April 2024, the unfreezing of Local Housing Allowance rates, and the winter payments made through the Islands Cost Crisis fund. While 92 parcels per month is a decrease from the previous year, it is still more than double the baseline and has not met the 2021 target of 34.

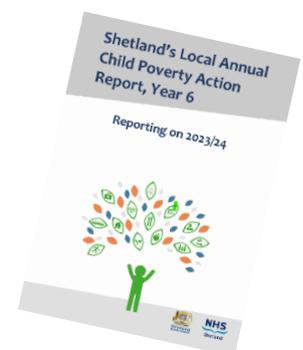


In 2023/24, Shetland had the third lowest level of **children living in low-income families** in Scotland, behind East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire. 9.2% of children were living in low-income families, a 0.2% decrease from the previous year. Whilst lower than Scotland (16.3%) this is, however, higher than Shetland Partnership's baseline

(5.2%) and target levels (5% for 2021 and 3% for 2028). Additionally, the higher cost of living in remote and rural Scotland is not accounted for in these figures.

In general, statistics in Scotland and Shetland have shown a gradual increase in levels of child poverty since the early 2010s ([Scottish Government](#)), although they appear to be levelling off recently. Shetland levels have consistently been lower than Scotland as a whole.

Other indicators such as Free School Meal uptake, Education Maintenance Allowance and School Clothing Grants can provide a more rounded picture of child poverty. The [Local Child Poverty Action Report](#) contains further details about how the partnership is monitoring and working to overcome child poverty in Shetland.



Please note that the statistics for this indicator have changed from what was previously reported. The trend remains similar, but the statistics published in March 2025 reflect some methodological updates. These updates have been applied to the back series and are available on both [the Department for Work and Pensions website](#) and [Shetland Partnership website](#).

As reported previously, **fuel poverty** data at local authority level has not been available since 2019. The [Scottish Household Condition Survey \(2023\)](#) states that enforced changes for the 2021 survey have caused issues with the production of these estimates. The next estimates, based on 2022-2024 data, are expected in early 2026.



Trend analysis is difficult due to outdated data, but the [Scottish Islands Data Overview \(2023\) shows](#) island residents face higher fuel poverty. Many rural homes lack energy efficiency and gas grid access, relying on expensive heating fuels. The [2021 National Islands Plan survey](#) found that nearly three quarters of island residents saw increased

heating bills. Shetland's cold climate, poor insulation, and lack of cheap energy options worsen the situation.



More recently, the [Rural Scotland Data Dashboard](#) shows that while rural areas have lower levels of relative poverty overall, low income households living in rural areas face particular challenges. There is widespread evidence that rural areas, and remote and island communities in particular, experience higher costs of living for some goods and services, such as weekly food costs and fuel.



Although there is no new data for the indicator **businesses struggling to recruit labour**, feedback from businesses, industry, and public agencies highlights ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties, especially in health, social care, construction, engineering, hospitality, processing, tourism, and transportation. The [March 2025 Highlands and Islands Enterprise \(HIE\) business panel survey](#) found that **47% of employers** in the region face a skills gap. The main barriers are **short supply of required skills, business location, and lack of accommodation**. Locally, Promote Shetland is working to attract people to hard-to-fill professions like teaching, social care, dentistry, medicine, and planning.

There has been no update on under-employment since 2020. These figures are now unavailable due to lower sampling sizes over the past few years.



13,600

The **number of employees** in Shetland increased to 13,600 from the previous year's 13,400. This is lower than 14,200 in 2021 and the 2021 target of 13,700. It is difficult to know the reasons for the overall decrease, but it is possible that the number of employees could be stabilising following the impacts of COVID-19 and large-scale construction projects in Shetland. This indicator is impacted by small sample sizes, and figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. While those are the figures for 2023, the [NOMIS Labour Market Profile for](#)

[Shetland](#) shows that 85.9% of the working age population (16-64) were economically active between January 2024 and December 2024.

The latest **Carbon Emissions** figures, released July 2025, relate to the year 2023.



In 2023:

- Carbon emissions in Shetland Islands Council area were 14.1 tonnes per capita compared to 4.6 for Scotland;
- Carbon emissions directly impacted by the Council in Shetland were 4.8 tonnes per capita compared to 4.0 for Scotland.

Shetland's carbon emissions directly impacted by the Council are higher than Scotland's average, though not to the same extent as for the Council area as a whole. Shetland's emissions per capita are significantly higher than Scotland's average due to remote location, population distribution, economy and geology.

The Shetland Climate Change Strategy includes a series of short-, medium- and long-term goals. One such short-term goal is:

Clear Data – We monitor the impact of climate conscious activity, using our specialist knowledge and data

As part of the Shetland Climate Change Strategy Implementation Plan, there is a commitment to develop a mechanism for collecting, analysing and reporting on data annually. This builds on the Net Zero Route Map works and will help to show progress of climate action in Shetland. This includes inputting key Shetland climate data into the ClimateView platform, working with the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service, to make Shetland superusers. The platform will allow for monitoring and reporting on emissions annually. It is planned that this platform and data will be available from 2026, with a framework set up to allow data to be updated efficiently annually.

In 2023, 53% of people were **satisfied with public services**, a 1% increase from 2022 but below the baseline of 59% and the 2021 target of 65%. Shetland has consistently had higher satisfaction rates with public services than Scotland overall, apart from 2018. In 2023, 43% of people in Scotland were satisfied with public services compared to Shetland's 53%, which was the joint sixth highest in Scotland alongside East Renfrewshire.



53%

Looking at each public service individually, satisfaction with the quality of local health services in Shetland was 84%, much higher than Scotland's 67%. Satisfaction with the quality of local schools was 82%, compared to Scotland's 69%. Satisfaction with the quality of public transport in Shetland was 68%, above Scotland's 64%.



24%

In 2023, 24% of **people felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area**, marking the lowest level recorded since monitoring began in 2016.

This represents a 6% decrease from the previous year. Despite this overall decline, Shetland, Stirling, and Fife had the joint second highest percentage of people who felt they could influence local decisions in Scotland. The trend has fluctuated since 2016, with the low of 24% in 2023 and a high of 34% in 2021. The Scottish average was 18%.

30% of people said they wanted **greater involvement in decision making** in 2023. This is a decrease from the previous year's 37% and the 2018 baseline (41%). This could indicate there is more satisfaction with opportunities to get involved in decision-making, and the desire to be involved is more readily being met. Alternatively, it could indicate that there is an apathy towards decision-making, and the community are disengaged from participation processes.



30%



There have been no Community Council elections in this reporting period, therefore there are no updates to the **number of Community Council seats contested**. Shetland Islands Council completed a review of its [Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils](#) in March 2025 where the Council approved a new Scheme. This covered a range of matters such as the number of Community Councils, Community Council areas and boundaries, election rules, the roles and responsibilities of community councillors, community council funding and other

governance requirements. The next Community Council elections will be held in November 2025.

Between 2019 and 2023, 19% of people in Shetland were drinking at harmful levels. This is the same level as between 2018 and 2022 and is lower than the Scottish rate of 20%, however, is higher than the 2021 target of 18%. Almost a fifth of people in Shetland drink above the Chief Medical Officers' low-risk guidelines. This includes 12% of women and 27% of men (2019-2023). More information on alcohol harms in Shetland can be found on [Alcohol Focus Scotland's local profiles](#).



19%

Last year we reported that Shetland had a higher rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions compared to Scotland, in 2022/23. In 2023/24, the rate had lowered below the Scottish level. While the rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions for 11-25 year olds remains higher than the Scottish rate, this has decreased from the previous year. Shetland has a high prevalence of alcohol availability compared to Scotland.



17.9%

The percentage of **children who are not a healthy weight in Primary 1** increased from 13% in 2022/23 to 17.9% in 2023/24. In Scotland, this figure rose from 15% to 15.7% over the same period. The [Primary 1 Body Mass Index \(BMI\) statistics for the 2023-2024](#) school year highlight that the

proportion of children classified as having a healthy weight in Scotland ranged from 78.9% in NHS Lothian to 67.9% in NHS Orkney, with 72.3% of children in Shetland having a healthy weight¹. Similarly to Scotland, Shetland saw a spike in unhealthy weight during COVID-19, followed by a decline, but has experienced a rise again in 2023-24.

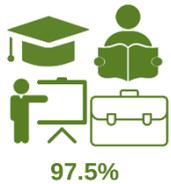
In 2023, 82% of **people engaged in some form of sport and physical activity**, a decrease from 87% in 2022. However, this is an increase on the baseline of 77% and exceeds the 2021 target. It is also above the Scottish level of 79%. Last year we reported that physical activity levels from the



82%

¹ This is using the epidemiological category as opposed to clinical. Epidemiological thresholds are used for population health monitoring purposes and refer to those at risk within the population.

Scottish Health Survey showed that Shetland was slightly lower than Scotland in 2022. However, in 2023 66% of people met the activity guidelines compared to Scotland's 65%. This is a different indicator that measures meeting the current activity guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week or an equivalent combination of both.



97.5%

Shetland maintains a high **participation rate** (percentage of 16-19 year olds who are in education, employment, training and personal development) with 97.5% in 2025. This was the highest in Scotland, with Shetland being among the top four local authorities since the Shetland Partnership began monitoring in 2016. In comparison, 93.3% of 16–19-year-olds in Scotland were participating in education, employment, or training.

Of those participating in education, employment or training in Shetland in 2025, 65.3% of those were in education, 29.6% in employment and 2.6% in training and development. 1.9% were not participating (those unemployed and seeking, or not seeking), and 0.7% had an unconfirmed status.

Between 2016 and 2023, Shetland has experienced a higher percentage of **people who feel part of their community** than Scotland as a whole each year. 91% of people felt part of their community in 2023, compared to 82% in Scotland.



91%



In 2016, the nationally developed **Place Standard** tool was used in Shetland as the best way to establish what people think about their place, give people the chance to say what should be improved and identify how best to make improvements. People were invited to rank the place they live against 14 themes which focused on the important connection between physical and social environments and how this affects our health and sense of wellbeing. The tool has a seven-point scale, where a score of 7 means that less improvement is needed, and a score of 1 indicates that more improvement is needed.

The study was carried out again in 2025. It should be noted that for 2025 there were 15 themes, with Nature & Land Management added. A further change included updating the name of the Facilities & Amenities theme (2016) to Facilities & Services (2025). These

changes were made as part of the process for developing a Rural and Islands Lens for the tool.

Place Standard Average Scores from the 'Our Place – Your Say' 2025 – Initial Quantitative Findings include:

- Public Transport **3.7**
- Work and Local Economy **4.2**
- Housing and Community **4.0**
- Natural Space **5.3**

There was a slight increase in scores between 2016 and 2025 for Public Transport and Work and Local Economy. There was no change in Housing and Community, and a decrease in the score for Natural Space. Of particular note for the 2025 Place Standard is the change in the age demographics of respondents, with 49% of respondents being under 18. In contrast, in 2016, 8% of respondents were aged under 24.

Some indicators show an improvement from last year; however, they have worsened overall since 2018 — including foodbank usage, children in low-income families, and satisfaction with public services. There are a few showing positive trends such as physical activity, participation rate and people who feel part of their community.

The Shetland Partnership will continue to monitor data and indicators over the next year. Updates to indicators will be added to the website when new data becomes available. The Management and Leadership team will also continue to lead and inform on strategy for the Partnership. This includes supporting the Delivery Plan.

Data Sources:

Shetland Foodbank 2024/25; UK Government Department for Work and Pensions - Children in low income families: local area statistics 2023/24; Scottish House Condition Survey, Local Authority Analysis 2017/19; CACI Paycheck data 2021, Highlands and Islands Enterprise - Minimum Income Standard 2016; Improvement Service 2022/23; Shetland Employment Survey, Shetland Islands Council 2017; National Records of Scotland (NRS) Population estimates 2023; UK Government Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 2023; Scottish Household Survey (SHS) 2023; Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2022); Public Health Scotland

2024; Community Council Elections, Shetland Islands Council 2022; Public Health Scotland 2023/24; Skills Development Scotland 2024; Our Place – Your Say 2025, Place Standard, Shetland Islands Council 2025.

Table of Indicators

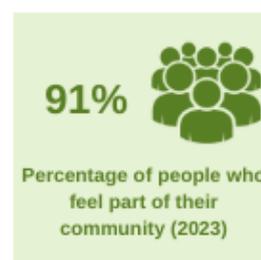
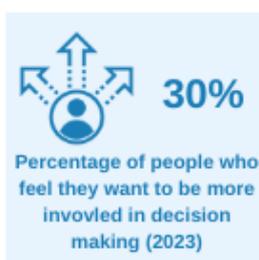
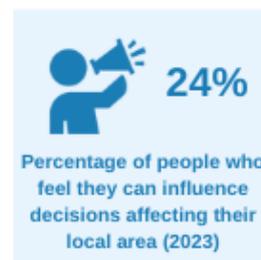
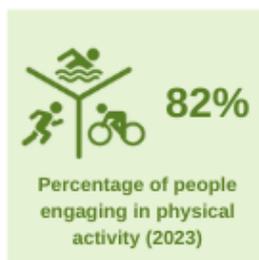
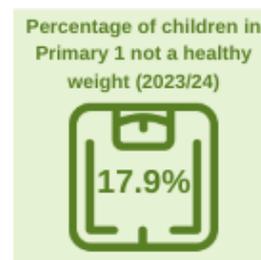
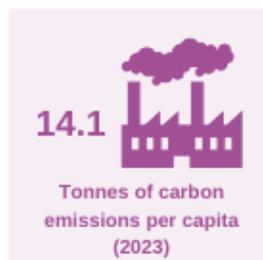
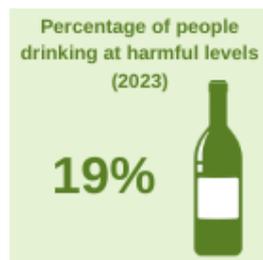
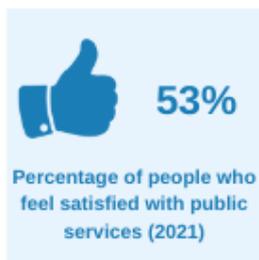
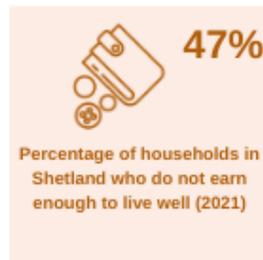
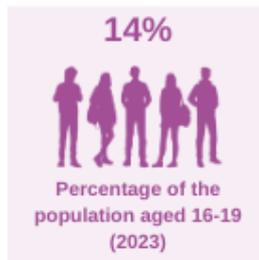
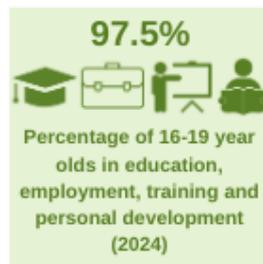
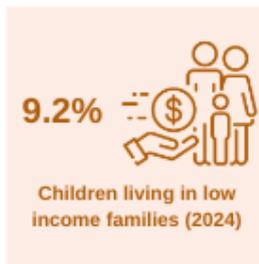
The table below provides a summary of Shetland Partnership Plan indicators, with the following key used to illustrate current status:

-  Negative trend, highly unlikely to meet target
-  Fluctuating trend / slight improvement in trend, unlikely to meet target
-  Positive trend, likely to meet target
-  Unknown

Where data is not currently available or up-to-date, local knowledge and understanding has been used to determine the Status.

Indicator	Baseline (2018)	Latest Value	Status
Foodbank usage	45 parcels on average distributed per month	92 per month in 2024/25	
Children living in low-income families	5.7% of children live in low-income households	9.2% in 2024/25	
Fuel poverty	53% of Shetland households in fuel poverty	No longer comparable data and no up to date value. Likely to have increased	
Households in Shetland who do not earn enough to have an acceptable standard of living	49% of households in Shetland do not earn enough to have an acceptable standard of living	Not currently measuring, awaiting new MIS for Remote and Rural Scotland.	
Fragility Index	Ratio of 106.9	Ratio of 114.3 in 2022/23 New indicator from 2023/24, no target set	
Businesses struggling to recruit labour	20% of businesses struggle to fill vacancies due to a lack of local labour	No up-to-date value Likely to be high	
Under-employment	21.3% under-employment	6.5% in 2020 – no up to date value	

Indicator	Baseline (2018)	Latest Value	Status
Population aged 16-29	15.5% of the population is aged 16-29	14.0% in 2023	
Carbon emissions in Council area	75% higher than Scottish average	14.1 tonnes per capita compared to 4.6 for Scotland in 2023.	
Satisfied with public services	59% of people are satisfied with local services	53% in 2023	
Number of employees	13,600 employees in Shetland	13,600 in 2023	
Drinking at harmful levels	20% of people are drinking at harmful levels	19% in 2023	
People who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area	27% of people feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area	24% in 2023	
People who feel they want to be more involved in decision-making	41% of people want to be more involved in decision making about their area	30% in 2023	
Number of Community Council seats contested	None of the Community Council seats are contested	0 in 2022 – no elections since last report (update in November)	
Children who are not a healthy weight in Primary 1	17.4% of children are not a healthy weight	17.9% in 2023/24	
Participation rate	96.1% participation	97.5% in 2025	
People engaged in some form of sport and physical activity	77% of people engage in some form of sport and physical activity	82% in 2023	
People in Shetland who feel part of their community	88% of people feel that they are part of their community	91% in 2023	
Place Standard – how people in Shetland rate ‘Our Place’	Public Transport: 3.6 Work & Local Economy: 4 Housing: 4 Natural Space: 5.6	Public Transport: 3.7 Work & Local Economy: 4.2 Housing: 4 Natural Space: 5.3	



Case Studies

The case studies gathered to illustrate collaborative improvement activity are available on the [Partnership website](#). A summary of this year's case studies, the relevant Priority Areas and partners involved are provided below, with a hyperlink to the full case study.

Case Study	Summary	Partner Involvement	Priority Area
Shetland Youth Voice Transport Summit	Young people leading change in Shetland's transport system through a youth-led summit on buses, ferries, and air travel.	Shetland Islands Council, NHS Shetland, ZetTrans, Police Scotland, Voluntary Action Shetland (via Youth Voice support).	
Community Action Planning in Nesting	A community-led process identifying shared priorities for the next decade, shaped through wide local consultation and collaboration with Shetland Partnership organisations.	Shetland Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, ZetTrans, Voluntary Action Shetland.	
Shetland Employer Recruitment Incentive – Traineeships in Catering & Cleaning	A Test for Change project offering flexible, paid traineeships to parents, helping them return to work while addressing local recruitment challenges.	Shetland Islands Council, NHS Shetland (Employability Pathway support), Skills Development Scotland.	
Recovery Month	A month of inclusive, community-led events raising awareness of addiction recovery, reducing stigma, and fostering wellbeing across Shetland.	NHS Shetland, Shetland Islands Council, Police Scotland, Integration Joint Board, Voluntary Action Shetland, Shetland Recovery Hub & Community Network.	
Outdoor Clothing Swap Shop	A free community event redistributing outdoor clothing to remove barriers to nature, promote wellbeing, and ease winter costs for families.	Shetland Islands Council, NHS Shetland, RSPB Shetland, Ability Shetland, Voluntary Action Shetland, Mind Your Head, Community Connections, Anchor for Families.	
Sound School Christmas Dinners	Volunteers from Sound School catering team prepared and delivered over 100 free Christmas meals to households	Shetland Islands Council, Voluntary Action Shetland, Anchor Early Intervention Team, local volunteers.	

	and community groups, supporting those struggling during the festive season.		
Polycrubs for Wellbeing and Recovery	Two new Polycrubs at NHS sites provide staff with green spaces for wellbeing and therapeutic gardening opportunities for individuals and families affected by substance use.	NHS Shetland, Integration Joint Board, Voluntary Action Shetland.	
Suicide Prevention Workshop	A multi-agency workshop strengthening Shetland's suicide prevention and response, focusing on information sharing, support, communications, and training.	NHS Shetland, Shetland Islands Council, Police Scotland, Integration Joint Board, Voluntary Action Shetland.	
Equalities Research	Focus groups gathered lived experiences from people with protected characteristics to inform Shetland's 2025–29 Equality Outcomes Reports and shape more inclusive services.	Shetland Islands Council, NHS Shetland, Integration Joint Board, ZetTrans.	
Back to School Event	A Lerwick event brought services together to ease the cost of the school day, offering free clothes, healthy lunch ideas, and advice on benefits, discounts, and support for families.	Shetland Islands Council – Community Learning & Development, Youth & Employability, Sport & Leisure, Anchor for Families, Shetland Library; NHS Shetland.	
CPR Training and Community Resilience	Free CPR and defibrillation training in Bressay, with plans to extend across Shetland to strengthen community resilience and equip residents with lifesaving skills.	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Shetland, Shetland Islands Council.	
Even Here, Even Now	An artist-led manifesto, developed through Shetland Arts and partners, amplifies the voices of island artists and communities, highlighting the role of creativity in reducing isolation and shaping policy.	Shetland Arts, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Voluntary Action Shetland.	

Delivery Plan Implementation and Next Steps

The [first Delivery Plan](#) for the Shetland Partnership Plan ran from 2019 to 2022. Following a review at the beginning of 2023, a [new Delivery Plan](#) for 2023 to 2028 was approved by the [Management and Leadership Team](#) (MLT) of the Shetland Partnership.

This Delivery Plan focuses on developing and delivering on Shetland's Place-Based Approach: collaborative working between partners and communities, at a local level, to identify and deliver solutions for improved outcomes. This work is taken forward through four Improvement Projects, each contributing across the Shetland Partnership's priority areas of **Participation, People, Place, and Money**:

- **Compassionate Shetland** – supporting communities to be more connected, caring and resilient.
- **Climate Conscious Shetland** – helping Shetland adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- **Person-Centred Shetland** – focusing on services that work for people, built around their needs and circumstances.
- **Empowering Shetland** – enabling inclusive opportunities for people and communities to participate and thrive.

These priority areas continue to be the Shetland Partnership's four significant Improvement Programmes. During 2024/25 the Management and Leadership Team (MLT) has provided ongoing strategic direction, including guiding consultation on Shetland's Place-Based Collaborative Working Framework, agreeing the development of an Implementation Plan, and endorsing a new Supporting Framework to the Delivery Plan. MLT also undertook a formal self-assessment with the Improvement Service, helping to identify strengths and prioritise areas for improvement such as tackling inequalities and enhancing resource sharing across the Partnership.

A place-based approach continues to underpin this work, ensuring decisions are made holistically and with communities at the heart.

Shetland's Place-Based Approach

This section provides an update on progress in 2024/25, and next steps on delivering Shetland's Place-Based approach:

- A consultation draft of the Shetland Place-Based Approach and Framework was circulated to all Shetland Partnership Network partners. Thirteen partners responded, broadly supporting the approach and offering constructive feedback, which has been used to refine the framework and strengthen its clarity and usability.
- Internal consultation with Community Involvement and Development Officers (CIDsOs) has also taken place. Their input informed an updated baseline document, which was presented at a Shetland Partnership Network session, highlighting changes and improvements.
- Work has now commenced on developing an Implementation Plan. This will set out how the framework will be applied in practice, with particular focus on communication, capacity-building, and proportionate approaches to stakeholder engagement and planning.
- There has been a focus on Place-Based work, including developing an Implementation Plan and supporting wider partnership activity. This will progress to include training to build knowledge and capacity around this way of working.
- Community Planning Groups and Plans have been mapped, alongside wider stakeholder mapping activity. This is helping identify overlaps, gaps, and opportunities to strengthen collaboration across services and communities.
- Existing examples of Place-Based working have been gathered, including both local initiatives (e.g. Nort Natters, Brae Rural Energy Hub, and Bressay Development Ltd) and sectoral work, to provide case studies that demonstrate how this approach is already being applied in Shetland.

Next steps will include finalising and publishing the Implementation Plan, producing user-friendly guidance and tools to support partners in applying the approach, and embedding case studies and examples to ensure the work is grounded in practical experience.

Four Improvement Programmes

This section provides an update on progress in 2024/25 and next steps.

EmPowering Shetland

EmPowering Shetland is bringing partners together to ensure that major economic developments – particularly in energy and net zero transition – deliver tangible benefits for Shetland’s people and communities. Over the past year, the initiative has moved from strategy into action, with progress including:

- Establishing the Fair Share for Shetland framework, setting out expectations for community wealth building, shared ownership, and fair value from energy developments.
- Early engagement with developers, promoting community benefit, supply chain opportunities, and strong environmental protections.
- Creating a Shetland-led offshore wind monitoring group, giving the islands a stronger role in environmental leadership.
- Strengthening collaboration across sectors through working groups, helping to align energy transition with housing, skills, transport, and wider community priorities.
- Engagement with industry on workforce accommodation solutions, and key worker accommodation study.
- Continuing to align with national and local strategies, including the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Strategy, Shetland Energy Strategy, and Local Child Poverty Action Plan.

Next steps will focus on embedding the framework into practice with developers and communities, expanding case studies of community wealth building, and ensuring that future investment in Shetland reflects the principle of inclusive growth: prosperity shared fairly across all communities.

Climate Conscious Shetland

During 2024/25, work on Shetland’s Climate Change Strategy and Implementation Plan reached an advanced stage following two years of development. Partners across the isles contributed through workshops, sector-led engagement, and community input, shaping a shared response that reflects Shetland’s unique emissions profile and climate risks.

Progress in the year included:

- Identifying local climate risks such as increased storms, flooding, and ocean acidification, and building this into planning.

- Developing priorities across key themes: energy, transport, waste, business and industry, buildings, and land.
- Highlighting the importance of a Just Transition, ensuring fairness and inclusion for communities and industries.
- Strengthening partnership collaboration to reduce duplication, stimulate investment, and embed climate action across strategies.
- Piloting practical actions such as energy efficiency retrofit, electric bus, local car club, and local renewable and storage feasibility, while building climate literacy through community engagement.

Next steps, moving into 2025/26, include seeking full partner approval of the Strategy and Implementation Plan, embedding its actions into organisational strategies, and delivering measurable projects that reduce emissions, strengthen resilience, bring benefit to the community, and protect Shetland's environment. An annual progress report will track delivery and impact.

Compassionate Shetland

Compassionate Shetland is an improvement initiative and movement to embed kindness, empathy and dignity across Shetland. In 2024/25, progress included:

- Running Human Library CPD sessions with 50 staff and leaders, hearing directly from people with lived experience of stigma.
- Developing the Mair dan Wirds campaign, and working towards promotion of compassion and tackling stigma through schools, community posters and digital resources.
- Delivering stigma awareness and compassion training, supporting more empathetic and inclusive services.
- Promoting compassionate leadership and workforce development, embedding care and emotional intelligence in organisational practice.
- Engaging with children, families and services through interviews, focus groups and workshops, ensuring lived experience shaped the work.

Next steps, moving into 2025/26, include showcasing progress through Shetland Partnership Network sessions, expanding campaign resources, and developing a network of compassion champions across services, employers and communities – in particular looking at areas where there is less likely to be engagement or awareness of the work.

Person-Centred Shetland

Person-Centred Shetland is focused on changing how services in Shetland work together to deliver better outcomes for people, now and in the future. It aims to shift the focus from organisational systems and processes to what matters most for individuals, families and communities, while making services more sustainable.

In 2024/25, progress included:

- Building on the learning from the Anchor Project, which showed the value of early intervention and family-led, flexible support.
- Application of local evidence gathering from Good Mental Health for All project and Population Health Survey to understand need and inform local approach
- Engagement with Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland (CHES) to optimise use of national learning and evidence in a Shetland context
- Developing proposals for a Fairer Futures Partnership, bringing together leaders across sectors to explore system-wide change, focusing on prevention, early intervention, and tackling inequalities.
- Beginning work to establish a System Change Board to provide strategic leadership, alongside a practitioner-led learning network to share practice, test new approaches, and build confidence in person-centred ways of working.
- Exploring tools and frameworks such as Human Learning Systems and values-based leadership to support culture change and long-term system reform.
- Strengthening links with national programmes (e.g. Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE), Whole Family Wellbeing) and with partners such as Public Health Scotland, to draw in external learning and align with wider reform efforts.
- Inclusion of Person-Centred approaches as a key component of NHS and Integration Joint Board (IJB) Strategic Plans
- Work to align strategic approaches across key initiatives, for example Trauma Informed Practice, Realistic Medicine, and Good Conversations.

Next steps in 2025/26 will include formally launching the System Change Board and learning network, carrying out system mapping, and putting in place monitoring and evaluation approaches. These will help track progress, capture learning, and ensure changes are grounded in the real experiences of people, families, and practitioners.

Supporting Projects

The Delivery Plan and wider community planning processes are supported by a number of work-streams and projects. This section provides an update on progress and next steps.

Evidence Base

Profiles providing a snapshot of the community, with comparisons to Shetland-wide and National data for each of the [Protected Characteristics](#) under the Equality Act 2010 were published on the Shetland Partnership Website.

The Community Planning Support Team has continued to work with SIC's Development Directorate and Public Health to create a simple and clear way to use data. Using tools such as Power BI and MapInfo to help with strategic development and improvement activity.

Work has started on updating Locality Profiles, however delays to the publication of up to date nationally produced lower-level geographies population data has pushed the planned schedule for these updates back until 2026.

Demonstrating Impact: Monitoring & Evaluation Frameworks

During 2024/25, the Management and Leadership Team commissioned and took part in outcomes training, building a shared understanding of how to define activity and monitor impact. A self-assessment with the Improvement Service was also completed, helping the Partnership to identify strengths and areas for improvement, such as tackling inequalities and improving collaboration on resources.

Community Participation

Work progressed on a Participation Hub and Toolkit for the Shetland Partnership website. This will include resources on why and how to involve communities, national standards, methods of engagement, and examples of good practice. Publication is expected during 2025/26.

Strong, Honest & Trusted Relationships

The Shetland Partnership Network met six times in 2024-25. The Shetland Partnership Network aims to help partners create a sense of shared ownership of community planning and to create a safe environment for open and honest conversations around the challenges and opportunities to tackle inequalities in Shetland. The Network brings together representatives of all [community planning partners in Shetland](#) and offers opportunities for information sharing, developing ideas and building relationships.

The following events took place over the last year.

- April 2024: The focus was on the Shetland Partnership's Delivery Plan Project to reduce stigma across our communities.
- August 2024: Members learned more about, discussed, and provided feedback on Shetland's Climate Change Strategy.
- October 2024: Skills Development Scotland and Shetland Arts Development Agency hosted the event, highlighting the work both organisations are doing with a focus on careers and young people.
- December 2024: As part of the Compassionate Communities work, members had the opportunity to experience online training through the Human Library—a registered international non-profit headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- February 2025: Feedback from the Shetland Partnership Place-Based Approach Consultation and the Shetland Place Standard Consultation was presented. Additionally, a draft Shetland Partnership Communications Strategy—aimed at enhancing awareness of community planning and the Partnership's website—was shared and discussed.

Feedback from these events highlighted the value of learning from each other and building collaboration around key local challenges.

Understanding and Sharing Resources

The Management and Leadership Team, and the Network, provide opportunities for partners to share information on resource challenges.

The Deep Dive Profiles remain an opportunity to discuss resource allocation across organisations, to achieve early intervention and potential to reduce spend on crisis interventions. The work around data is also a further opportunity for understanding and sharing resources.

Effective Partnerships and Partnership Agreements

Initial coordination began in 2024/25 to take forward the Strategic Alignment workstream designed to streamline Shetland's strategic plans, reporting processes and partnership groups. Work to date has focused on engaging managers and project officers to identify existing partnerships and associated reporting requirements. This early scoping will provide the foundation for more detailed mapping and recommendations in 2025/26.

Impact Assessments

Statutory partners have legal duties around impact assessments. For example, the Council has in place templates, guidance and other resources, for individual impact assessments.

The Council has been working on an Impact Assessment policy, and a link will be made between Place and Wellbeing Assessment and Impact Assessments, to be delivered as part of the Place-Based Programme.

Risk Register

The Management and Leadership Team continued to maintain and review risk registers for both the Partnership and Shetland overall, with reviews taking place on a four-monthly cycle.

Regional & National Understanding

Partners make use of opportunities to strengthen external bodies' awareness of Shetland's unique characteristics and opportunities. Examples include:

- Officers working with the Scottish Government to shape data zone geographies, enabling more accurate information at both locality level and in national datasets covering island regions
- Contributing Shetland perspectives into the development of Scotland's new Population Health Framework (2025–2035), ensuring island contexts are considered within national prevention priorities and place-based approaches.

Effective Communication

A Shetland Partnership Communications Strategy 2025-28 and a Communications Plan for 2025-26 were approved in March 2025. The Strategy and Plan outline how the Shetland Partnership will engage with and inform stakeholders over the period 2025 to 2028. They aim to build awareness of community planning, the Partnership's role, Shetland's strategic direction, and the resources available.

The strategy aims to support collaboration, encourage participation in shaping future plans, and ensure that communications are timely, coordinated, and aligned with the Partnership's goals.

The 2025-26 Communications Plan includes monthly information sharing with staff across Partner organisations. The goal is to ensure that staff in Shetland Partnership organisations have access to high quality information about the Partnership – covering key issues facing Shetland and its communities, ongoing improvement projects, inspiring local stories, and access to local data.

Support to Embed Outcomes within Organisations & Partnerships

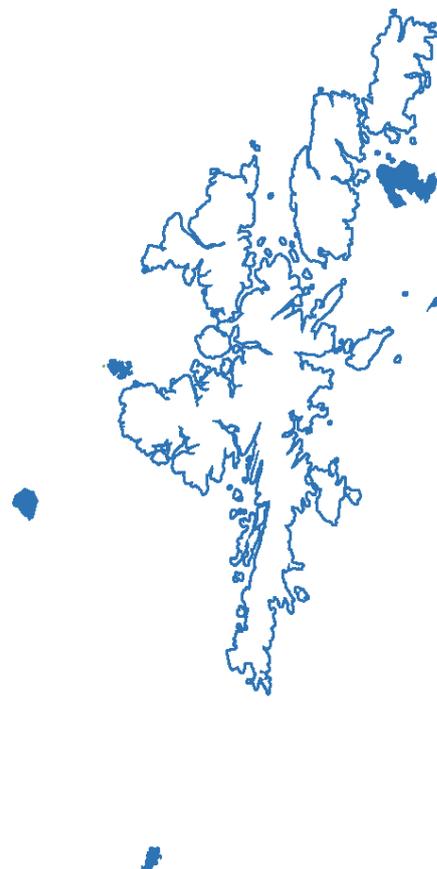
This will be progressed, in 2025/26, through the Demonstrating Impact and Effective Partnership work-streams.

Shetland's Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan: Annual Report 2024/25

Locality Planning

In addition to producing Shetland's Partnership Plan, which covers the whole of Shetland, the Shetland Partnership is also required to plan at a more local level. These Locality Plans should enable communities and wider partners to find innovative solutions to key local challenges, for those areas with poorer socio-economic outcomes. Locality Plans can be based on geographic areas, administrative boundaries or communities of interest (a group of people with shared characteristics).

[Shetland's Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan](#) was delivered between 2020 and 2023. Following an assessment of socio-economic data across Shetland in May 2023, the Management and Leadership Team, in dialogue with the island communities, agreed that a second Locality Plan for the island communities of Fair Isle, Fetlar, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries was needed. The process of community engagement and review led to the development of a [second Locality Plan](#), which was signed off by partners and communities in March 2024.



Our Activity

In 2024/25, delivery of the Second Locality Plan for Shetland's Islands with Small Populations was taken forward through several meetings and events that built on issues raised directly by island residents.

Senior managers from across the Council and the Shetland Partnership's Management and Leadership Team met in June 2024 to consider service challenges and aspirations identified by the island communities. Discussion focused on how best to respond to these,

with attention to areas such as community resilience, the school estate, and the development of community maintenance roles.

In August 2024, the Islands with Small Populations Annual Event brought island representatives together with elected members, senior managers, partner agencies, and the Scottish Government's Islands Team. Workshops explored eco-tourism and the transition to net zero — both themes within the Second Locality Plan — while also providing space to discuss resilience, service delivery and the next National Islands Plan.

Alongside these events, contact between Community Planning & Development officers, senior managers, isle representatives and the island communities sought to keep communication open, enable local concerns to be raised, and ensure service issues remained visible to partners.

Monitoring our progress

The Locality Plan outlines a number of ways in which the performance of partners against the Plan's objectives are measured. These include monitoring population levels and balance, income levels, the number and nature of jobs, volunteering levels, and community morale. Many of these indicators align closely with those being monitored in the Shetland Partnership Plan; however, there are some challenges with gathering and analysing data at a small community level.

This year the data for some of the Benchmarking Indicators is being gathered through work with island representatives. This data will be published with the Island profiles, in line with the publication schedule for the Locality Profiles.

The community survey, first implemented in 2020/21, was repeated in July / August 2025. These statistics should be interpreted with caution due to sample size, varying sample sizes across the islands, and presenting combined statistics for all five islands.

The response rate to the survey was lower than in previous years at 48 responses from across the 5 islands, a decrease from the high of 87 responses in 2024. Despite being markedly lower than 2024, the number of responses against the population of the islands is deemed acceptable for the results of the survey to be published. The findings are outlined below.

The survey opened with a question asking people how they rate their place to live; 69% of respondents rate their community as a 'Very Good' or 'Fairly Good' place to live, this is an increase from 63% in 2024, but still lower than the high of 74% in 2023.

63% of respondents expressed a sense of belonging to their community; a decrease from 71% in 2024 and the lowest since the 68% in 2021.

The percentage of respondents who feel optimistic about the future of their community has increased to 50%, from 43% in 2024. Though it is lower than 2023 (57%) and 2021 (51%).

When asked how they felt about the statement 'Service providers listen well to my community when it comes to issues affecting us', 29% of respondents either 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed'. This is a 1% decrease from 2024, the same as 2023 and 1% higher than in 2021.

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with public services:

- 46% of respondents are 'Very Satisfied' or 'Fairly Satisfied' with healthcare provision, a 4% decrease on 2024, but still higher than in 2021 (40%);
- 29% of respondents are 'Very Satisfied' or 'Fairly Satisfied' with education provision, a 2% decrease since 2023 and a 28% decrease from 2021;
- 65% of respondents are 'Very Satisfied' or 'Fairly Satisfied' with public transport provision, a 12% increase since 2024, and slightly lower than the high of 68% in 2023.

The survey closed with questions related to connectivity:

- 77% of respondents reported that they have access to 4G coverage, an increase on the 72% reported in 2021, 2023 and 2024;
- 42% of respondents reported that they have access to super-fast broadband (30Mbps+), a 2% increase since 2024 and a 40% increase from 2021;
- When asked to rate current broadband, 56% of respondents rate their current broadband service as 'Very Adequate' or 'Adequate', a decrease from 2024 (73%), whilst 42% rate it as 'Inadequate' or 'Very inadequate', an increase from 2024 (21%).

In summary, a number of indicators measured by the survey have declined since 2024, whilst most increases do not surpass 2023 figures. Indicators for super-fast broadband and 4G coverage have increased year on year since 2021.



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