

**Subject:** **North Ayrshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21, North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21 and update to the Children's Services Plan 2020-23**

**Purpose:** To agree the North Ayrshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 and the North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21 and to note the updated content of the Children's Services Plan 2020-23

**Recommendation:** That the Board:

- (i) approves the Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21;
- (ii) approves the Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21;
- (iii) notes the content of the update Children's Services Plan 2020-23; and
- (iv) agrees that the reports can be submitted to the Scottish Government and published online as required.

<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
NHS AA	NHS Ayrshire and Arran
HSCP	Health and Social Care Partnership
CPP	Community Planning Partnership

<b>1.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>
1.1	This report presents the draft North Ayrshire Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 as attached at Appendix 1, and the draft North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21 as attached at Appendix 2. The Children's Services Plan 2020-23 has been refreshed and updated and is attached as Appendix 3. These reports form part of our suite of Children's Services Planning and Reporting.
1.2	This is the third annual Local Child Poverty Action Plan and builds on the actions agreed in the previous Plans. The 2019/20 Plan was approved by Cabinet on 6 October 2020 and by the Integration Joint Board on 22 October 2020.
1.3	This is the first annual Children's Services Plan Performance Report since the launch of the Children's Services Plan 2020-23 which was also approved by Cabinet on 6 October 2020 and by the Integration Joint Board on 22 October 2020. The

	Children's Services Plan 2020-23 has been refreshed and updated to reflect changes over the last year.
1.4	These reports form part of the overall suite of Children's Services Planning and Reporting requirements.
1.5	Both reports were developed using a collaborative approach with internal and external partners. The Child Poverty Action Plan details the existing and planned activity intended to reduce child poverty in North Ayrshire. The Children's Services Plan Performance Report describes the activity in relation to improving outcomes for children, young people and families over the last year.
1.6	The reports have been circulated for approval by the Community Planning Partnership and the Children's Services Strategic Partnership by email.
<b>2.</b>	<b>CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN AND REPORT 2020/21</b>
2.1	The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out four measures of relative poverty and statutory targets for Scotland to reach by 2030, with interim targets set for 2023. These are detailed below. The statutory targets help focus our efforts to tackle and ultimately eradicate child poverty, assist in monitoring progress and are in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
2.2	<p><u>Statutory Targets</u> The targets state that by 2030, of children living in Scottish households:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 10% should be living in relative poverty (how many families are on low incomes compared with middle income households)</li> <li>• Less than 5% should be living in absolute poverty (how many low-income families are not seeing their living standards improving over time)</li> <li>• Less than 5% should be living with combined low income and material deprivation (how many lower income families cannot afford basic necessities)</li> <li>• Less than 5% should be living in persistent poverty (how many families live on low incomes three years out of four).</li> </ul>
2.3	<p><u>Local Child Poverty Reporting</u> The Act also introduced the requirement for local authorities and relevant health boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Key Themes</u> The key drivers of child poverty have been identified by the Scottish Government as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income from employment</li> <li>• Income from social security and benefits in kind</li> <li>• Cost of living.</li> </ul>
2.5	Our actions as included in the report have been linked to each of the key drivers as set out above. We have included actions where the greatest impact will be made, taking into account scale and pace.
2.6	<p>Some of our key actions are highlighted below:</p> <p>2.6.1 <u>Income from employment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ayrshire Growth Deal activities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Wealth Building approaches</li> <li>• Employment Programmes and in-work support.</li> </ul> <p>2.6.2 <u>Income from social security and benefits in kind:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of money advice services</li> <li>• Encouraging uptake of free school meals, clothing grants and education maintenance allowance</li> <li>• Improving access to information and advice about benefits through the financial inclusion pathway.</li> </ul> <p>2.6.3 <u>Cost of living:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the availability of affordable and energy efficient housing</li> <li>• Introducing the North Ayrshire Food System</li> <li>• A coordinated approach to reducing the cost of the school day.</li> </ul>
2.7	<p>The cost of the school day was a key priority identified in the 2019/20 Action Plan and Report. During 2020, a formal Cost of the School Day (COSD) working group was established comprising Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers to further drive forward a whole systems approach to reducing the cost associated with education. The Working Group agreed a set of North Ayrshire Commitments. We will hold an annual COSD Conference. In line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas of focus for the forthcoming year from the draft action plan will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021. The voices of young people are at the heart of this work.</p>
2.8	<p>The 2020/21 Child Poverty Action Plan and Report was developed using a collaborative approach with internal and external partners and summarises the existing and planned activity intended to reduce child poverty in North Ayrshire. A workshop with senior managers took place on 17 May 2021.</p>
2.9	<p>The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires that reports and action plans are produced <i>‘as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year’</i>. By publishing our report by the end of June we are bringing our reporting back in line with expected timescales which were impacted in 2020 by the Covid-19 Pandemic.</p>
	<p><b>Children’s Services Plan 2020-23 and Performance Report 2020/21</b></p>
2.10	<p>Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated, focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing. It aims to ensure that any action to meet need is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, this is taken to prevent need arising.</p>
2.11	<p>Under section 11(1) of the Act, a local authority and the relevant health board must keep the Children’s Services Plan under review; and may in consequence prepare a revised Children’s Services Plan. The Children’s Services Plan 2020-23 has been reviewed and updated to reflect our current local context and to acknowledge the rapidly changing circumstances in which our services are provided. The updated Plan, as attached at Appendix 3, better reflects our current priorities and multi-agency and partnership working approaches.</p>
2.12	<p>Our first Children’s Services Plan Performance Report covers the period of 2020/21 and highlights the work of all services and partners in improving outcomes for our</p>

	children, young people and families. The report as attached at Appendix 2 shows key highlights, case studies and performance data.
2.13	<p>Some of our key highlights from the last year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We launched our North Ayrshire Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-2025. Young people have been at the heart of the consultation, planning, delivery and providing feedback during the development of the new Strategy. Our Connected Communities Team engaged with young people, youth workers and stakeholders on the key themes affecting young people. This involved continuous consultation with young people through a variety of events and platforms. This engagement will continue throughout the life of the new Strategy.</li> <li>• Our Child Protection Committee ratified the first localised Child Sexual Abuse Strategy in Scotland in 2020. Child sexual abuse is preventable. It is our belief that an overarching strategy that addresses all forms of child sexual abuse is needed if we are to adequately challenge, and ultimately prevent, these behaviours in all their forms. The strategy is available here: <a href="http://childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/media/2014/04/North-Ayrshire-Child-Sexual-Abuse-Strategy.pdf">http://childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/media/2014/04/North-Ayrshire-Child-Sexual-Abuse-Strategy.pdf</a>. The strategy was formally launched in April 2021 and a 3-year implementation plan will be developed to take forward prevention, protection and support and recovery work.</li> <li>• During the second period of lockdown, Children and Families Localities Teams worked in partnership with families to offer one off spends to promote any care experienced child or young person's attainment. This was a one off spend of up to £250 where the child and family could identify an area of interest or passion for the child or young person to promote their attainment in some way. This allowed for creative thinking and flexibility and a range of opportunities were identified for children young people and their families.</li> <li>• We continue to work towards our vision of being a nurturing authority through our "Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery" approach by building emotional resilience in children and develop stronger relationships. Following lockdown, it was found that children who had experienced nurture approaches coped well with the return to school.</li> <li>• Breastfeeding remains a public health priority due to the important role it has on the health and development of babies and on longer term health outcomes for both mum and child. Where mums had more complex feeding problems, they were offered support by our Community Infant Feeding Team. Between January and December 2020, 200 mums were supported with more complex feeding issues, almost twice as many than during the same time period in 2019. Following support, 92.1% of mums continued to breastfeed at 6-8 weeks and 75.5% were breastfeeding at 6 months.</li> </ul>
2.14	<p>Our Children's Services Plan 2020-23 has been refreshed and updated and is attached as Appendix 3. The last year has been a period of rapid change and re-focussing withing our Children's Services Strategic Partnership to best the needs of our children, young people and families. We have a strong commitment to partnership and multi-agency working. The refreshed Children's Services Plan 2020-23 has been updated to reflect the current context and to ensure that our strategic direction is clear</p>



<b>3.</b>	<b>PROPOSALS</b>
3.1	<p>It is proposed that the Board:</p> <p>(i) approves the Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21;  (ii) approves the Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21;  (ii) notes the updated content of the Children's Services Plan 2020-23; and  (iii) agrees that the reports can be submitted to the Scottish Government and published online as required.</p>
3.2	<b><u>Anticipated Outcomes</u></b>
	The purpose of the Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 is to improve outcomes for families in North Ayrshire by ensuring that we continue to focus on the key drivers of poverty. The purpose of the Children's Services Plan 2020-23 is to improve outcomes for all children and young people in North Ayrshire.
3.3	<b><u>Measuring Impact</u></b>
	Actions and performance measures have been provided within the Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 and in the Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21.
<b>4.</b>	<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>

<b>Financial:</b>	None. All commitments are aligned to agreed budgets.
<b>Human Resources:</b>	None. All commitments are aligned to agreed resources.
<b>Legal:</b>	None. The plan meets legal requirements.
<b>Equality:</b>	The Child Poverty Action Plan and Report assists us to meet our Socio-Economic Duty set out in the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The actions contained in the report as at Appendix 1 are intended to reduce future child poverty levels in North Ayrshire. The Children's Services Plan aims to improve outcomes for all children, young people and families.
<b>Children and Young People</b>	The actions contained in the report as at Appendix 1 are intended to reduce future child poverty levels in North Ayrshire. The actions contained in the report as at Appendix 2 are intended to improve outcomes for all children, young people and families.
<b>Environmental &amp; Sustainability:</b>	<p>We are committed to helping young people take action to protect the future of our planet. We do this by raising youth voices on the climate crisis and by increasing youth participation to address climate change.</p> <p>North Ayrshire schools are developing 'whole-school' approaches to Learning for Sustainability and our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy frames the ways we will</p>

	raise awareness and involve young people addressing climate change interventions.
<b>Key Priorities:</b>	The Child Poverty Action Plan Report and the Children's Services Plan and Performance Report link directly to the key priorities contained the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, the Council Plan 2019-2024 and the Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan.
<b>Risk Implications:</b>	None.
<b>Community Benefits:</b>	N/A.

<b>Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both</b>	Direction to :-	
	1. No Direction Required	X
	2. North Ayrshire Council	
	3. NHS Ayrshire & Arran	
	4. North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire & Arran	

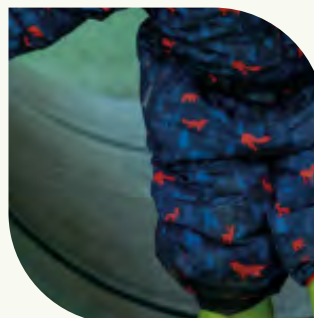
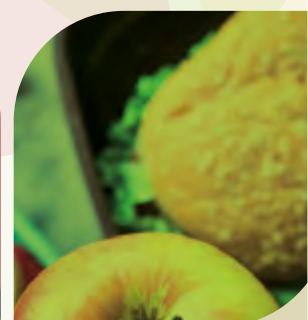
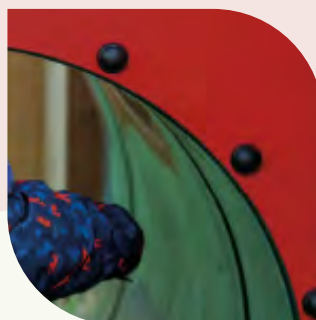
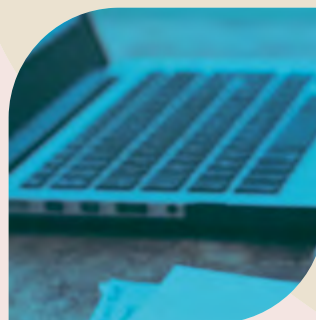
<b>5.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION</b>
5.1	The Community Planning Partnership and the Children's Services Strategic Partnership have influenced and been consulted on the reports.
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>
6.1	The Child Poverty Action Plan and Report 2020/21 focuses on the key drivers to reduce levels of child poverty. The Children's Services Plan Performance Report 2020/21 describes the activity in relation to improving outcomes for children, young people and families over the last year. Both reports are the result of ongoing collaboration.

**For more information please contact Lauren McMath on 01294 324160 or [laurenmcmath@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:laurenmcmath@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)**

North Ayrshire

# Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report

2020/21





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The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic saw an unprecedented situation for us and the whole country. Overnight, this created a vast challenge for all Partners in supporting our residents, communities and businesses.



## Foreword and Introduction

In North Ayrshire we are fully committed to becoming a fairer and more equal society. Our shared strategic approaches shape everything we do and we focus our work on tackling inequalities and creating a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.

Our ambition is shared by all our Community Planning Partners and is demonstrated in our partnership working and joint commitment to the priorities and actions outlined in this report. Our multi-agency partnership approaches are recognised as a key strength in North Ayrshire.

The past twelve months from March 2020 have been heavily focussed on the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time we have experienced the benefit of our trusting relationships with communities and partners. And above all, we have witnessed the dedication of our teams, communities and partners in supporting the people of North Ayrshire in the most difficult of circumstances.

From a Public Health perspective, the focus was on testing pathways, Test and Protect and mass vaccination. This universal crisis has impacted upon children

of all ages. During the pandemic we were acutely aware of the impact on our most vulnerable children and their families and carers which includes those already living in poverty, and those who have not previously experienced poverty but are now living in poverty due to the effects of the pandemic.

Our third annual Child Poverty Action Plan is key to our commitment to mitigating the current and lasting impacts of the pandemic and to demonstrating our determination to reduce child poverty in the longer term.

There are a number of recent areas of work which have a direct impact on each of these ambitions.

Over the past year our new North Ayrshire Food System has been developing and is gradually ensuring that no-one finds it difficult to access food in our area and that we have a more sustainable approach to food with dignity.

We have also made considerable progress with our Cost of the School Day Policy which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2021. The Policy is a partnership approach and in line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas of action will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021. The policy and actions will start





John Burns  
Chief Executive NHS  
Ayrshire and Arran



Councillor  
Robert Foster  
Cabinet Member for  
Health and Social  
Care (and lead  
Member for Poverty)



Craig Hatton,  
Chief Executive,  
North Ayrshire Council

to make a real difference to the lives of our families in the coming year.

A new fund has launched to help relieve some of the financial pressures facing the third and voluntary sector in North Ayrshire. The Community Renewal and Recovery Fund has come to fruition thanks to £100,000 set aside from the North Ayrshire Ventures Trust Board. This is in recognition of the challenges the crucial sector is facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.

At the February meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee, the Full Business Case for the Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund was approved. The £3m Scottish Government funding will resource new Community Wealth Building officers across the whole of the Ayrshire region to support local businesses and community organisations to deliver Community Wealth Building ambitions and a dedicated Fair Work Ayrshire team who will work closely with Ayrshire Anchor Institutions and major employers to establish Ayrshire as a Fair Work region.

Approval has now been granted to fund over 450 Kickstart jobs for young people in the area. As part of the NHS commitment to Community Wealth Building across Ayrshire, linked to the Growth Deal,

and to the NHS operating as an anchor organisation, the NHS Employability Strategy is being refreshed and an aspect of this will focus on young people, including a commitment to increasing the number of Modern Apprentices, with the guarantee of job availability at the end of the apprenticeship and a focus on Care Experienced Young People, further assisting the NHS in relation to its Corporate Parenting commitment.

We have embarked on a two-year financial inclusion demonstrator project 'Better Off Hub' following North Ayrshire Cabinet approval in October 2020. The project will see the creation of a Public Social Partnership, to develop a new model through co-production with the third sector. The Better Off Hub would deliver vital financial advice services, in a new holistic way, focused on the whole person with an objective to build capacity and reduce future demand on services. The proposals align with Community Wealth Building ambitions and support our economic recovery.

We hope you will find our Child Poverty Action Report informative and ambitious. Please let us know your thoughts. You can email us at: [info@northayrshire.community](mailto:info@northayrshire.community)



## National Context

Eradicating child poverty is fundamental to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up as well as meeting the Fairer Scotland Duty.

Child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of the children who experience it. Poverty also has a wider cost for society. For example, Scottish Government [statistics](#) show:

- **61%** of low-income families with children in Scotland can't afford to make regular savings of £10 a month or more.
- **51%** report that they don't have a small amount of money to spend each week on themselves.
- **10%** can't afford to have friends of their children round for tea or a snack once a fortnight.

The Fairer Scotland Duty is an overarching strategic duty on public bodies (including local authorities). It has interactions with the Equality Act 2010; Scotland Act 2016; and came into force on 1 April 2018.

The Duty requires that: "An authority to which this section applies must, when

making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage."

## Local Action Plans and Reports

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 introduced a new requirement for local authorities and each relevant Health Board to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Report, as soon as practicable after the end of each reporting year.

## National Child Poverty Targets

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out four measures of relative poverty and statutory targets for Scotland to reach by 2030. This establishes Scotland as the only part of the UK with statutory income targets on child poverty. These targets are:



**Figure 1:** National Child Poverty Targets

Target	Description	Rationale
For less than 10% of children to be in <b>relative poverty</b>	The proportion of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median (middle) UK income in the current year.	Recognises that individual and household needs are relative to societal standards of living and measures whether the incomes of the poorest households are keeping up with growth in average (middle) incomes in the current year.
For less than 5% of children to be in <b>absolute poverty</b>	The number of children living in households with incomes below 60% of the median UK income in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.	Assessment of whether living standards at the bottom of the income distribution are rising or falling (keeping pace with inflation) irrespective of those elsewhere in the income distribution.
For less than 5% of children to be in <b>combined low income and material deprivation</b>	The number of children living in households with incomes below 70% of the median UK income AND going without certain basic goods and services (such as a warm winter coat, a holiday away from home, money to replace worn out furniture etc.)	Enables an analysis of a household's ability to use resources to buy essentials as well as of the income coming into the household.
For less than 5% of children to be in <b>persistent poverty</b>	The number of children who have lived in relative poverty in 3 of the last 4 years.	Living in poverty for a significant period of time is more damaging than brief periods spent with a low income.

**Source:** Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2017-20 (data.gov.scot)



## National Child Poverty Levels

It is estimated that 24% of children (240,000 children each year) were living in relative poverty after housing costs in 2017-20. Before housing costs, it is estimated that 21% of children (210,000 children each year) were in relative poverty.

After a decreasing trend between the late nineties and 2010-13, which slowed briefly just before the recession, child poverty rates have been gradually rising again.

Two thirds of children in poverty live in working households. While the poverty risk is much lower for children in working households compared to those in non-working households, not all work pays enough to lift the household above the poverty threshold.

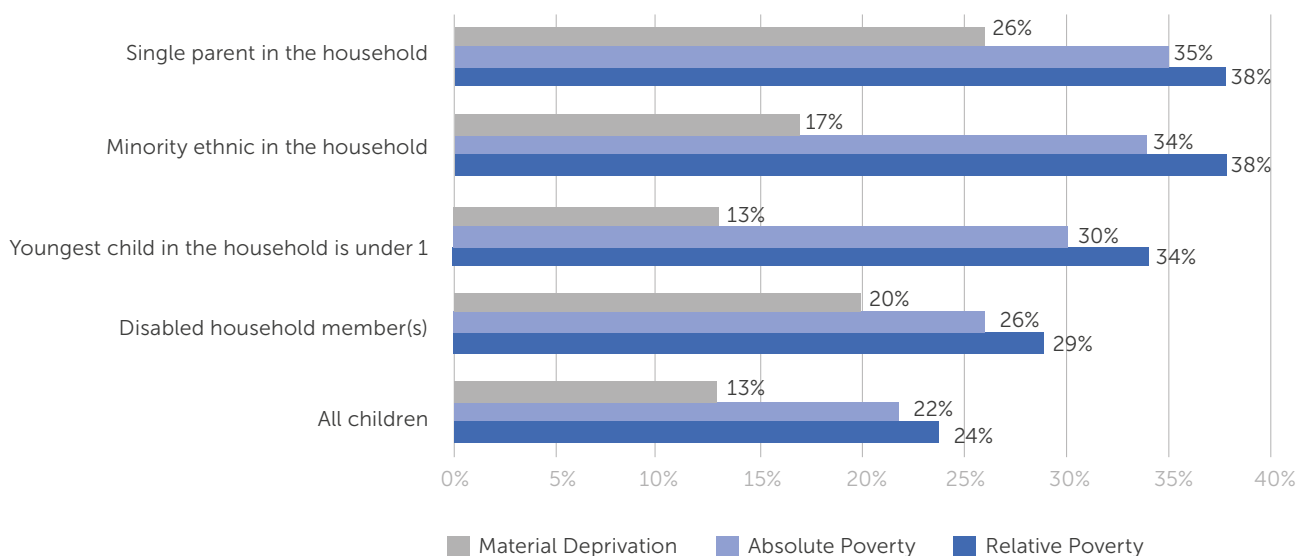
It is estimated that in 2017-20, 68% of children in relative poverty after housing costs were living in working households (160,000 children each year). This data suggests that after a steady and steep increase of in-work poverty since 2007-10, reflecting high employment rates, in-work poverty is now stable at a high level.

### Who is affected?

Figure 2: Priority Groups

Figure 2 below shows the proportion of children living in poverty in Scotland by the priority group status of their household.

Proportion of Children in Priority Groups in Relative Poverty after housing costs, Absolute Poverty after housing costs and Material Deprivation (Scotland 2017-20)



Source: [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2017-20 \(data.gov.scot\)](#) (as at March 2021)

The priority groups are households with children that are known to be at high risk of poverty. These groups have been identified by the Scottish Government using available data, but we know this does not cover all groups at higher risk of poverty.

However, the following groups when viewed together cover the majority of households in poverty:

- Having a lone parent (mainly women)
- Having two or more siblings (3+ children)
- Being disabled or having a disabled sibling or parent
- Being from a minority ethnic background
- Having a young child in the household (less than 1 year old)
- Having young parents (using data for households where the mother is aged under 25 years)

The chart on page 8 (Figure 4) shows the projected trend of child poverty for each target. By 2030/31, it is estimated that 38% of children will be in relative poverty, 32% of children will be in absolute poverty, 17% of children will be in combined low income and material deprivation and 16% of children will be in persistent poverty.

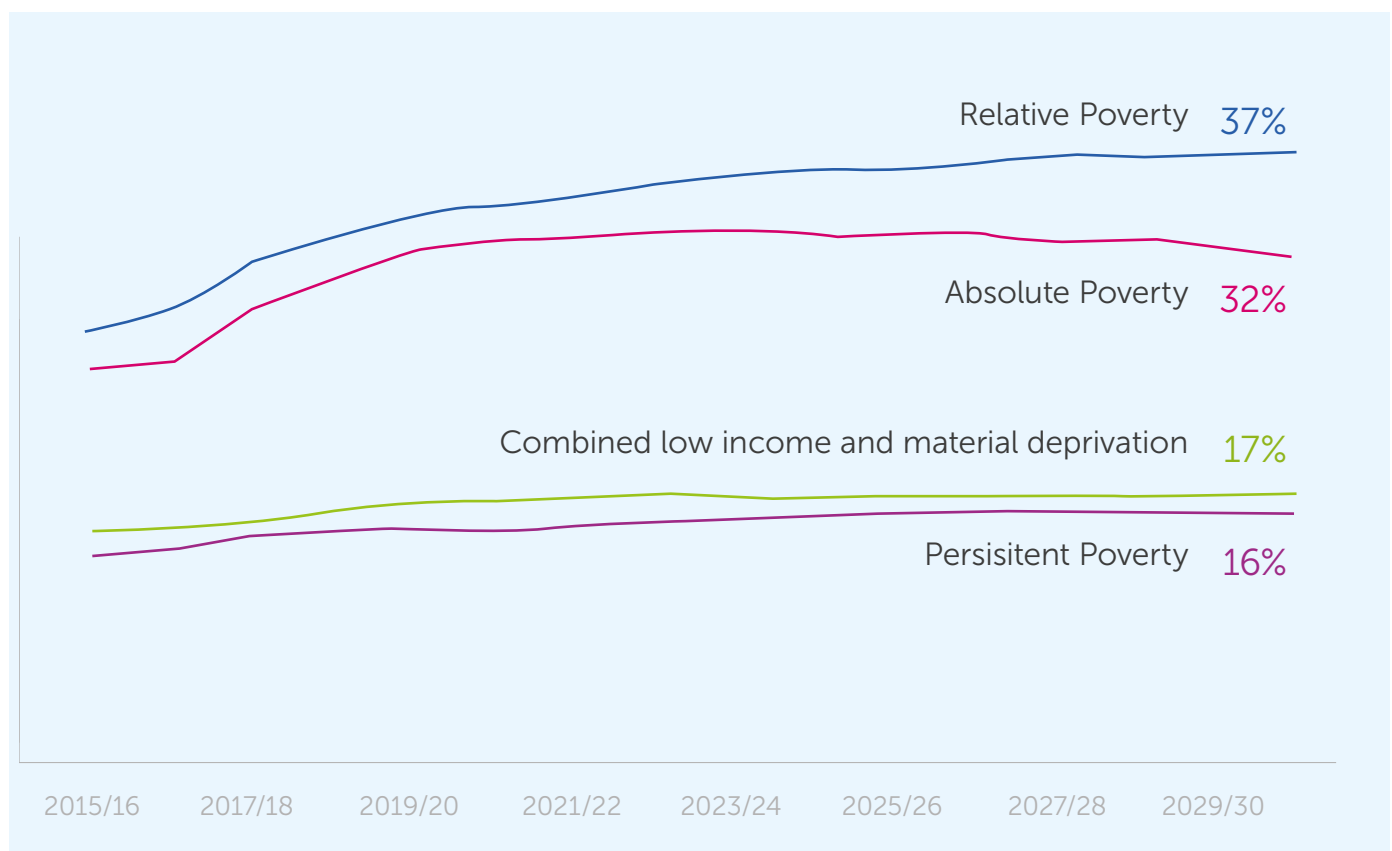
The key reason for these projected rises is the impact of welfare reform, primarily the benefit freeze and the two children limit on tax credits.

The Scottish Government recognises that in the context of these projections the child poverty reduction targets within the Act are ambitious. However, Scottish Ministers are clear that in the current environment, which threatens to make many families worse off, there is a strong case for intensive action at national and local level to tackle child poverty.





**Figure 4:** Projected Child Poverty Levels to 2029/30



**Source:** Reed and Stark 2018





## What are the drivers of child poverty?

The direct drivers of poverty fall into three main categories – income from employment, costs of living and income from social security.

**Figure 5:** Direct Drivers of Poverty

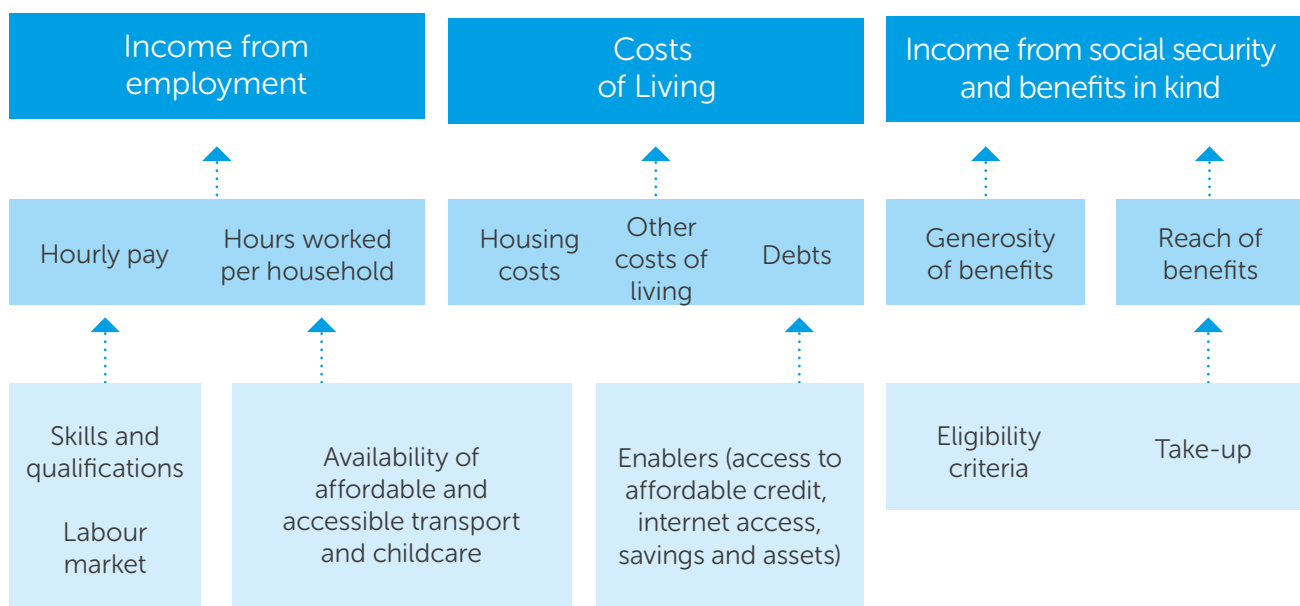




Figure 6 below shows the links in our Children's Services Planning approach.

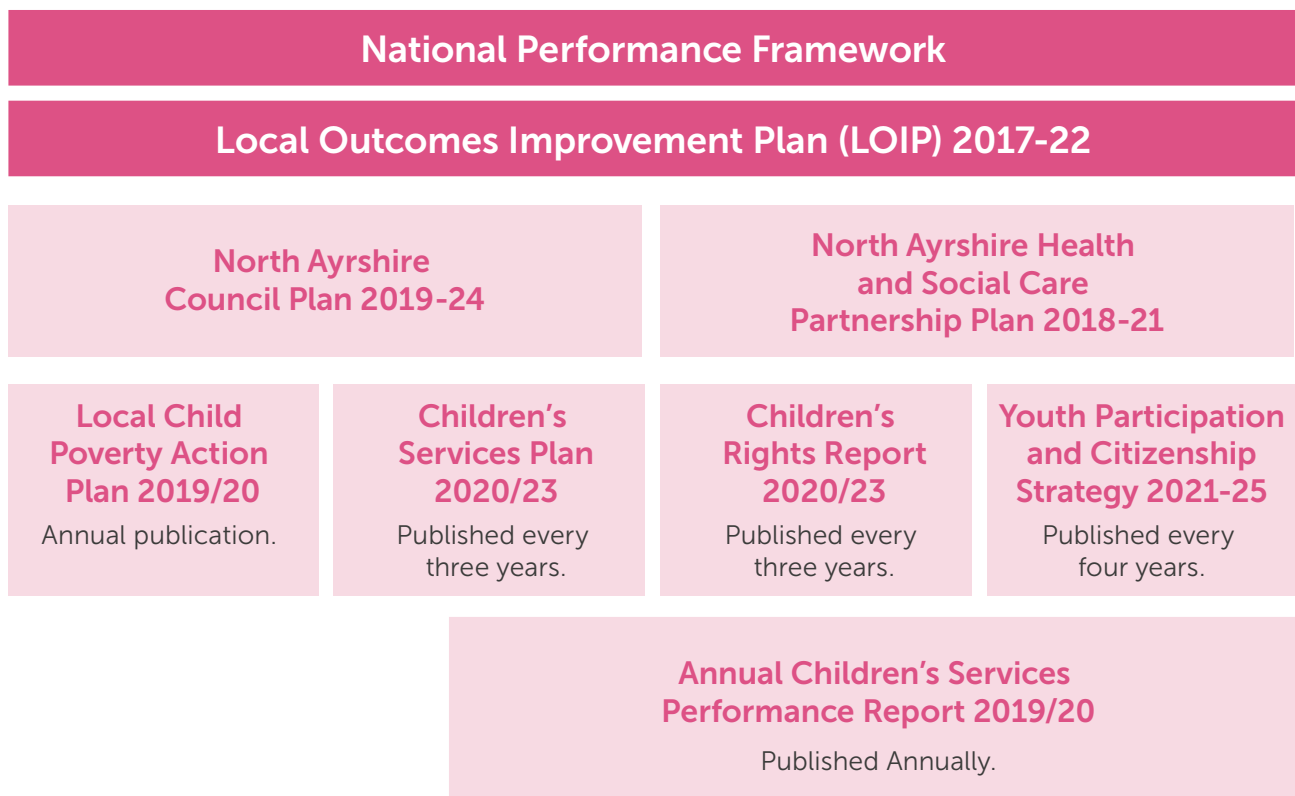


## North Ayrshire Strategic Context

Figure 6 below shows the links in our Children's Services Planning approach.

**Figure 6:** Children's Services Planning Dashboard

### Children's Services Planning 2021





We recognise that high levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. In our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2022, we have increased our focus on child poverty.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is a strong and effective collaboration of a wide range of organisations. Through working together, we continue to realise the benefits of sharing our resources, knowledge and skills to improve the lives of local people. All partners have a shared commitment and partnership vision: *"North Ayrshire – A Better Life"*.

We recognise that high levels of inequality, particularly poverty exist in North Ayrshire. [In our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(LOIP\) 2017-2022](#), we have increased our focus on child poverty. This is in response to very concerning local trends in child poverty levels.

Underpinning this we have four priority areas:

- A Working North Ayrshire
- A Healthier North Ayrshire
- A Thriving North Ayrshire – Children and Young People

Our cross-cutting themes influence our approach to these priorities:

1. Building stronger communities – empowering communities to increase control over their lives, being supported to do things for themselves and having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services.

2. Prevention – being proactive to avoid negative outcomes and early intervention in existing issues to mitigate their future impact.

These do not operate in isolation. We draw from a range of partner plans to support these priorities. Our six Locality Partnerships alongside our Connected Communities Service are fundamental to ensuring that plans are built on lived experience.





**Figure 7:** Community Planning Structure in North Ayrshire







We became the **first Child-Centred Council in Scotland**, putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do and making sure that we give our young people the best possible start in life.

The [2019-24 North Ayrshire Council Plan](#) was approved in June 2019. The plan titled 'North Ayrshire: A Council that is Fair for All' describes our vision, mission and priorities. It sets out our new strategic approach which is focused on making North Ayrshire a fairer and more equal society.

We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.

Our plan has three strategic priorities linking all of the work we do:

#### [Aspiring Communities](#)

A society where everyone, has the same life chances to grow, prosper and have fulfilling and healthy lives.

#### [Inspiring Place](#)

An enterprising, vibrant and sustainable environment, appealing to investors, attractive for visitors and a place where our residents are proud to live and work.

#### [A Council for the Future](#)

Our Council is forward thinking – motivated to transform and improve the services we provide for our communities, through innovation and reshaping our approach. We will focus investment towards our priorities.



[We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.](#)



The focus of the group is on prevention and early intervention and the role it has to play in improving child health outcomes, breaking the cycle of health inequalities in Ayrshire and Arran.



NHS Ayrshire and Arran continues to work in partnership to reduce the impact of poverty on children's lives. The Health Inequalities Impact Assessment Tool was developed and work to promote the use of this alongside increasing awareness of child poverty amongst NHS staff is an ongoing priority.

**The Pan-Ayrshire Infant, Children and Young People's Transformational Change Programme Board (ICYPTCPB)** provides the partnership vehicle to support and improve the health and social outcomes for infants, children and young people in Ayrshire and Arran and provides a strategic view across Ayrshire for children's health and social outcomes and health inequalities. The focus of the group is on prevention and early intervention and the role it has to play in improving child health outcomes, breaking the cycle of health inequalities in Ayrshire and Arran. It proposes ways of encouraging all agencies to work together to offer infants, children and young people the best start in life and realise their full potential. This begins before birth and continues through the early years of life, school years and transition to adulthood supported by the national practice model, 'Getting it Right for every Child' (GIRFEC). The work of the Board is intrinsically linked to the vision of Caring for Ayrshire and places the person at the centre of care.

Other strategies which tie in to reducing child poverty and its wider impacts and contribute to equity of outcome for all in Ayrshire and Arran include: Caring for Ayrshire, CWB Pledge signed by NHS, our Employability Strategy, Population Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and our tobacco, oral health and sexual health strategies. NHS have continued to prioritise improving health information and health literacy to support our most vulnerable families in obtaining, communicating, processing, and understanding health information and services.

Our [Children's Services Plan 2020-23](#) was launched by our North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership in October 2020. This Plan details how North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership aims to give our children the best start in life and to make North Ayrshire the best place in Scotland to grow up.

To ensure our plans link together to tackle Child Poverty, we have a number of priorities which relate to our ambition to





Our Children's Rights approach will ensure that children's rights continue to be at the centre of our Children's Services Planning, including our Child Poverty Action Plans.

address poverty and equality. They focus on working with parents and carers to build capacity, enabling them to provide the most positive start for their child and improve their future life chances.

Our Children's Services Strategic Partnership provides the strategic governance for our Children's Services Planning and this includes the Child Poverty Action Plan.

## Children's Rights

The [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 1st September 2020 and was passed unanimously on 16th March 2021. The main purpose of the Bill is to bring the UNCRC into Scots law. The Bill aims to ensure that:

- children's rights are respected and protected in the law in Scotland
- public authorities are legally required to respect and protect children's rights in all the work that they do

In 2020 we published our Children's Rights Report which demonstrates our commitment to the articles of the UNCRC and delivering them through The Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, which encompasses 8 Wellbeing Indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included). GIRFEC recognises that

all children are unique and that each child should be helped to reach their full potential.

Our Children's Rights approach will ensure that children's rights continue to be at the centre of our Children's Services Planning, including our Child Poverty Action Plans.

In February 2015, the **Scottish Attainment Challenge** and the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund was launched. This initiative aims to provide targeted support to increase the educational attainment and outcomes of children in Scotland's highest concentrated areas of deprivation. An allocation of £120m is allocated directly to schools in the form of the Pupil Equity Fund to support schools to use additional resource to target a reduction in the poverty-related attainment gap. North Ayrshire had made significant demonstrable progress in reducing the gap.

Every council area benefits from **Pupil Equity Funding** and 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding for pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible for free school meals. For every child that is registered, the school receives £1,200 in addition to their normal budget.

## Inclusive Growth

We worked with the Scottish Government to develop and pilot the “inclusive growth diagnostic”. The main purpose of the diagnostic was to see how economic growth could benefit all our residents by identifying any barriers, such as access to transport as well as opportunities. Our award-winning North Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Diagnostic identified job density, health and skills as key issues that the Council and partners need to tackle if we are going to achieve an inclusive economy.

This significant piece of work gives us the information we need to prioritise actions, such as investing in a supported employment programme to help more disabled people access and sustain employment. The diagnostic has been rolled out across Ayrshire and is central to the Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal.



## Ayrshire Growth Deal

The Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal was signed On 19 November 2020 and secures £251.5 million worth of funding to help realise Ayrshire’s potential as a world-class business region for the aerospace and space, energy, tourism, manufacturing and engineering industries, and reaffirms our commitment to the region and the collective desire to support ambitious plans for renewal and long term sustainable growth.

The aim is to marry business growth opportunities to employment progression, developing the future workforce and community development, ensuring all our communities and residents benefit from economic growth.

## Community Wealth Building

Together with our Community Planning partners, we have launched our first [Community Wealth Building Strategy](#) for North Ayrshire. We are the first Community Wealth (CWB) Council in Scotland.

Community Wealth Building is a radical and bold approach that will see key institutions use the economic levers available to us to support our local economy. The result will be a more resilient local economy with more diverse businesses and well-paid jobs for our residents. Key to this approach is partnership working and we are working alongside the CPP and wider regional partners to deliver inclusive economic outcomes that will benefit all our residents.

Community wealth building is key to tackling poverty and deprivation.

## Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach

In September 2020 our [Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach](#) was agreed and published. This approach to an inclusive and green economic recovery is framed within the wider strategic framework for the Council including the Council Plan – focusing on our priorities of Community Wealth Building and climate change, and within these the need to create an inclusive local and regional economy. Our approach will see a re-framing of our capital investments through a Community Wealth Building lens.

We will use our economic levers across the Council and our new economic model of Community Wealth Building to develop a Green New Deal for North Ayrshire. We will use our capital investment to accelerate our recovery and wider regeneration of our area, at the same time as tackling climate change. We will support our existing businesses and social enterprises to rebuild, diversify and become more resilient, green and inclusive. We will support our communities who have lost their jobs or are in insecure work, and encourage community entrepreneurship.

The twin priorities of a North Ayrshire Green New Deal to build back better, fairer and greener are to:

- Ensure an inclusive economic recovery and renewal by delivering our Community Wealth Building mission; and
- Ensure a green economic recovery and renewal focussed on achieving our net zero carbon ambitions through the creation of sustainable infrastructure and regeneration projects and creating fairer jobs.

## North Ayrshire Fairer Food

As part of our Community Wealth Building Strategy, we have established our North Ayrshire Fairer Food approach to ensure that demand for emergency food provision is reduced and that residents can access affordable and nutritious food.

The Community Support Hubs act as brokers who can signpost to local food provision. Using a community wealth building approach, third sector organisations provide low cost or free food to local people who need it with local businesses being partners in this.

Working with the North Ayrshire Foodbank and a range of community partner organisations, networks of community fridges, larders, community shops and food coops have been developed to ensure a more sustainable approach to food with dignity.







## Lived Experience of Poverty – Fair for All Commission

Lived experience is known to be the most valuable consideration when addressing areas as complex and challenging as child poverty. By creating a shared insight of lived experiences, we not only begin to understand how to tackle real life issues, we also gain knowledge of how to measure whether a positive impact is really being made.

Our North Ayrshire Fair For All Commission consists of:

- Community Commissioners – representatives of our communities who have knowledge of poverty and insecurity.
- Civic Commissioners – representatives from a wide range of policy areas including universities, public services, health services and businesses.
- Fair for All Commission Officer – provides support to the Commission.

The four key themes identified are:

- Poverty and Health
- Poverty and Housing

- Poverty and Benefits
- Poverty and Cost of the School Day

The Commission also agreed that the theme of stigma was cross cutting and affected all four themes. It explores the causes of the issues raised through the stories shared by the Community Commissioners, the unintended consequences on communities of policies, procedures and decisions and what possible changes or improvements can be made.

## Get Heard Scotland Discussions

Get Heard Scotland (GHS) is designed to help people on low incomes get their voices heard on the policies and decisions that most impact their lives and their communities. The programme is coordinated by the Poverty Alliance and funded by the Scottish Government as part of Every Child Every Chance, the Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. By holding discussions with people affected by poverty they find out what is working in their community, what is not working and what needs to change to better support



people living on low incomes and loosen the grip of poverty on their lives.

A total of 37 GHS discussions took place across Scotland between August 2019 and December 2019, with more than 200 people taking part in these discussions. Ten discussions took place in North Ayrshire.

In North Ayrshire, discussions took place in partnership with organisations, services and projects such as:

- Stevenston Library
- Garnock Valley Men's Sheds
- North Ayrshire Disability Alliance
- Garnock Valley Youth Forum
- Kilwinning Junior and Senior Youth Forum
- Kilwinning Academy Accredited Learning Group
- Café Solace
- North Ayrshire Youth Conference
- Centrestage

The full report can be viewed [here](#).

Most of the recommendations raised in the report are already in progress or are

being considered as part of our future actions. The recommendations are a key resource to enhance our understanding of the impact of our actions on local residents.

### **Social Renewal Advisory Board Listening Events in North Ayrshire August/September 2020**

The pandemic and the associated lockdown has been a difficult time for many, and we know that the impact has not been felt equally. We also know that the effects will not be short lived. However, during this time, we have also seen inspiring efforts within North Ayrshire's communities – volunteers stepping forward, neighbours reconnecting with one another, organisations working together to tackle access to food, loneliness and all forms of disadvantage.

A Social Renewal Advisory Board has been set up by Scottish Government to advise on how best to tackle poverty and inequality as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Members of the board include experts in housing,



disability, poverty, homelessness and the third sector. The Social Renewal Advisory Board held listening events to hear and learn from individuals, community groups and organisations around Scotland.

The published principles for the Board state that the work will be 'participative and informed by a wide range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience'. They also state that 'a detailed programme to bring in the voices of lived experience will sit alongside the Board. This will inform every decision taken as part of this process, ensuring that those with lived experience are right at the heart of discussions.'

To capture the experience of those with lived experience from life under lockdown, the Connected Communities team organised a series of six virtual meetings with representatives from local community groups and organisations. Special events were organised with young people and the Fair For All Commission. These Community Based Listening Events were a great opportunity to hear about communities where we have seen growing leadership and community

resilience as a result of the pandemic and associated lockdown.

The learning gained from these listening events will not only feed into Scottish Government's Social Renewal Advisory Board to re-form and re-shape local government in Scotland but will provide North Ayrshire Council an opportunity to inform our own renewal plans too.

### **Cost of the School Day**

We are fully aware that costs associated with attending school can be major barriers for families living on low incomes. Families can often struggle to afford uniforms, trips, school lunches, gym kits, pencils and pens, and dress down days can be difficult or impossible. This can have an impact on children's ability to learn and have an impact on how children feel and engage with school.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted children and young people's learning due to school closures. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the economy, resulting in a reduction in income for many of our families.





Poverty can have a lasting impact on children and young people's health and wellbeing as well as the significant and persistent gap in attainment from lower and higher income families. Education can represent a route out of poverty, but crucially only if children and young people can access education as fully and equally as possible.

The cost of the school day has been and will continue to be a major priority for us. In 2020 we established a working group comprising of Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers.

North Ayrshire has previously participated in work with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.

The aim of the Cost of the School Day (COSD) Working Group was to further drive forward a whole systems approach

to reducing the cost associated with education. We already have strong approaches to this across North Ayrshire and we continue to look for new whole-system commitments from the Council and its CPP and community and business partners.



North Ayrshire has previously participated in work with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.



Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing



## Poverty in North Ayrshire – what do we know?

High levels of inequality exist in North Ayrshire, particularly poverty and the associated effects this has. North Ayrshire is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. Deprivation levels are significantly higher than the Scottish average. The latest 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highlighted continuing levels of deprivation in North Ayrshire. 52 of our 186 datazones now fall within the 15% most deprived in Scotland. 39,139 people live within these deprived areas representing 28.8% of North Ayrshire's population, significantly above the Scottish average.

In addition, unemployment levels in North Ayrshire are high, there are significant numbers of people on low income and almost a third of children live in poverty.

Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing. They are the result of an imbalance in power, money and resources across society, further compounded by the recent economic conditions of recession, austerity and welfare reform.





The new data shows that an estimated figure of over 6,200 children (27.9%) age 0-16 could be living in poverty in North Ayrshire in 2019/20.

### Local child poverty indicators (After Housing Costs) 2019/20

New data on child poverty was released in May 2021. This new estimate is based on Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) data but is based on family income levels, after housing costs. The data only covers the age group of 0 to 16-year olds. This analysis, by Loughborough University can be viewed [here](#).

The new data shows that an estimated figure of over **6,200 children (27.9%) age 0-16 could be living in poverty in North Ayrshire in 2019/20.**

When comparing local authority areas in Scotland, North Ayrshire has the second highest level of child poverty of any area in Scotland (27.9%) and is higher than the national average of 24%. North Ayrshire has seen a 3.2 percentage point increase in child poverty levels since 2014/15 and is above the Scottish percentage point increase (2%). However, seven local authorities have seen slightly higher percentage point increases (between 3.3 and 5.1 percentage points). Please note that previous years figures have been recalculated to comparisons with previously released data will not be accurate.

### Local Poverty Related Indicators

Further analysis of local data available to us provides further insight into our local context. The information has been displayed below. The main issues highlighted in terms of employment are more 'lower paid' jobs, higher underemployment levels and higher unemployment compared to Scotland as a whole. In terms of benefits, there are higher level of out of work benefit claims. In terms of other related issues that impact on people's lives, we have higher levels of children looked after by the authority, higher rates of children admitted to hospital due to asthma and higher levels of domestic abuse incidents. This analysis aids our understanding of issues impacting local residents and families.



**This analysis aids our understanding of issues impacting local residents and families.**



**Figure 8:** Local Data Overview

Indicator	North Ayrshire	Scotland	Source
% Households managing well financially (2018)	62%	55%	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey – Adults dataset
Children in working households (2018)	62.4%	62.0%	ONS, Annual Population Survey, Workless households for regions across the UK
% Employees (18+) earning less than the Living Wage (2019)	16.0%	16.9%	ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
% P4-P7 pupils registered for free school meals (2018)	25.2%	17.0%	Healthy Living Survey
Employment in 'lower paid' occupations (% of all in employment) (2019)	35%	29%	ONS, Annual Population Survey, year to Jun 2019
Underemployment of 16+ population (%) (2018)	13%	7%	ONS, Annual Population Survey
% Adults reporting a limiting long-term physical or mental health problem – household with children (2018)	21.6%	14.9%	Scottish Government, Scottish Surveys Core Questions
Age of first time mothers – 19 and under (% of all first time mothers) (2015/16 – 2017/18)	12.6%	7%	NHS Information Services Division, Age of First Time Mothers
% Single parent households (2018)	6%	5%	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey
% Large family households (2018)	4%	5%	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey
Employment Rate	72.7%	76.5%	Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (Oct 2019-Sep 2020).
Unemployment Rate	6.0%	3.5%	
Working age population claiming out-of-work benefits (2016)	14.6%	10.56%	Public Health Information for Scotland



**Figure 8: Local Data Overview (cont.)**

Indicator	North Ayrshire	Scotland	Source
Households with children living in fuel poverty (2014-16)	18.1%	16.7%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Children admitted to hospital due to asthma, rate per 100,000 population (2016/17- 2018/19)	268.55	151.97	Public Health Information for Scotland
Children looked after by Local Authority, rate per 1,000 (2019)	20.4	13.1	Public Health Information for Scotland
Domestic Abuse Rates, per 10,000 population (2018)	123.5	111.5	Public Health Information for Scotland
Annual Participation (in education, training or employment) measure for 16-19 year olds (2019)	90.5%	91.6%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Households with children living in homes that fail the SHQS (2015/17)	47%	38%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Proportion of Working age population employment deprived (2019)	17.1%	12%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Children referred to the Children's Reporter for offences, rate per 1000 children age 8-15 (2018/19)	7.36	6.12	Public Health Information for Scotland
Young people living in the most income deprived quintile, age 0-25 (2018)	47.64%	21.75%	Public Health Information for Scotland
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (2019-20)	16.0%	16.9%	Local Government Benchmarking Framework

\*All Data correct as at March 2021.

#### Sources:

- <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/IncomePoverty/LAPovertyData/LAdashboard>
- <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157425/report.aspx>
- <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/>
- <https://scotland.mylocalcouncil.info/>

# The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

## The Impact of Covid-19 in a UK and Scottish Economic Context

Total economic output (GDP) in January 2021 was 9.0% below the levels seen in February 2020 (the last month before the effects of the pandemic were felt in the economy), compared with 4.0% below October 2020 (the initial recovery peak). In Scotland, economic output is 8.4% below the levels of February 2020.

In the UK, the number of payroll employees has fallen by 693,000, with the largest falls seen at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Analysis by age band shows that under 25s contributed over 60% of the fall seen since February 2020.

## The Economic Impact of Covid-19 on North Ayrshire's Labour Market

North Ayrshire's claimant count (estimate of people claiming unemployment related benefits) is 6,835, that is 49% higher than February 2020. The North Ayrshire rate for claimants as a proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) remains the highest in Scotland at 8.4% – Glasgow City is second at 8.2% and Orkney is lowest on 2.8%. The ratio of male to female claimants in North Ayrshire is roughly three to two. This pattern of notably more male than female claimants is observed across all age groups.

Although people aged 16 to 24 account for only 10% of North Ayrshire's total population, they account for 20% of all claimants in North Ayrshire. Analysis using population data shows that roughly 12.4% of all males and 8.1% of all females aged 16-24 are captured in the claimant count statistics.

Economic inactivity is a persistent issue in the North Ayrshire economy, unfortunately Covid-19 has worsened this picture further. Over the year since the latest data release the economic inactivity rate has increased by 10%, bringing it up from 24.8% (Oct 2018-Sep 2019) to 27.3% (Oct 2019-Sep 2020); the North Ayrshire rate is 16% higher than the Scottish rate (23.5%).

This increase over the past year potentially highlights a rise in those discouraged from searching for work due to Covid-19, and this could be exacerbating an already persistent problem in North Ayrshire.



The North Ayrshire rate for claimants as a proportion of the working age population (aged 16-64) remains the highest in Scotland at 8.4%.

## A note on Furlough

At the end of January 2021 over 360,000 jobs remained on furlough in Scotland, meaning that many people who might otherwise have become unemployed have instead been furloughed. This is why North Ayrshire's unemployment rate has not increased significantly over the past year and remains at 6% – although this is still the highest rate in Scotland. However, once furlough ends in September it is uncertain how many furloughed staff will be welcomed back to their workplace and how many will be made redundant. For local context, the number of people on furlough in North Ayrshire as of the 31st of January is 7,700.

## North Ayrshire's Economic Resilience

In terms of economic resilience, a Scottish Government report found that North Ayrshire ranked as the least resilient local authority in Scotland; however, this reflects the potential resilience of areas based on pre-crisis characteristics, and it does not account for the relative severity of the impacts that regions will face, for example due to sectoral exposure.

Separate analysis by SDS, ranks North Ayrshire as the 10th most vulnerable local authority to the impacts of Covid-19. Poor broadband quality, low rates of home working and a high reliance upon sectors more heavily impacted by Covid-19 were sighted as the most prominent factors for North Ayrshire's vulnerability in the analysis. North Ayrshire's business environment contributed to resilience, suggesting that there is a lower share of small firms and self-employment. The differences in the results between the SDS and Scottish Government analyses likely reflects differences in methodologies between the two studies.

## Sectoral Picture in North Ayrshire

Analysis by the Fraser of Allander Institute shows that around 11% of businesses in North Ayrshire are in the hospitality sector, this is the second largest number across all Scottish local authorities (Argyll and Bute have the highest concentration at roughly 13%). Areas with higher than the national average concentration in hospitality are particularly reliant on tourism, making them more vulnerable to the economic impact of Covid-19. At a Scotland level economic output in this sector is only at 34% of the level it was at in February 2020.

Encouragingly, in North Ayrshire's largest sector in terms of economic output (GVA), manufacturing, economic output at a Scottish level is estimated to have recovered to around its pre-Covid-19 levels. For local context, manufacturing is estimated to account for roughly 27.2% of local economic output (2020), and it accounts for 11.2% of North Ayrshire's total employment (2019).



## North Ayrshire Economic Context

The North Ayrshire economy faces major structural challenges that require significant national and local investment, policy change and innovation, and strategic long-term approaches to address them. Despite sectoral strengths in manufacturing, North Ayrshire has a low job density, faces a weak labour market, as well as evidence of certain groups within North Ayrshire being particularly excluded from the labour market. This briefing provides an overview of the key socioeconomic challenges in North Ayrshire with a specific focus on the labour market and regional inequality.

We understand that at this time we need to focus even more on reducing child poverty. Both the Fairer Scotland Duty and the requirements of the Child Poverty Act will remain at the heart of our decision making, to ensure we provide support to those most in need.

## Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

In response to the Covid-19 situation, we provided immediate support for our communities. Working with our communities and partners we were well placed to provide this.

## Community Hubs

North Ayrshire acted early to set up Community Support Hubs in each of our local areas to respond to and intervene early in issues related to the Covid-19 crisis. Our “Humanitarian Hubs” across North Ayrshire were established during the week of 23 March 2020 to prepare for and respond to the crisis. These are run by the Council staff and third sector partners including Vineburgh, Fullarton, Cranberry

Moss, Whitlees and Woowynd community centres, North Ayrshire Foodbank and Café Solace, with support from Health and Social Care Partnership staff and a range of community and staff volunteers.

Our Community Hubs remained operational and were there to support those who needed support, including those who were previously shielding. If residents needed help, with food, heating, prescriptions or other matters, residents were asked to reach out to their local hub. With the creation of our Community Hubs at the start of lockdown this has allowed our communities to remain connected and our most vulnerable supported. Numbers of support requests from the Hubs have declined since the shielding requirements ended and lockdown rules changed.



North Ayrshire acted early to set up Community Support Hubs in each of our local areas to respond to and intervene early in issues related to the Covid-19 crisis. Our “Humanitarian Hubs” across North Ayrshire were established during the week of 23 March 2020 to prepare for and respond to the crisis.



## Trauma

The ultimate impact of the Covid-19 crisis on children is dependent upon time and we know that prolonged exposure to toxic stress, particularly during the critical window of early childhood development can impact across the life course. By using a trauma informed lens across the whole system we can realise the widespread impact of trauma, stress and adversity and recognise the signs and symptoms for our citizens, their families and our staff.

Trauma and adversity profiles which examine the levels of exposure to and effects of childhood adversity and trauma across the life course will be updated as we move into the next phase of the pandemic. This will allow for a baseline measurement of the issues related to trauma and adversity, including newly updated figures on those experiencing poverty, in North Ayrshire. The profiles will be used to help to raise awareness and stimulate discussion about how to respond appropriately.

## The Health and Social Impacts of Covid-19

The Infant Children and Young People's Transformational Change Programme Board provides a Pan Ayrshire Platform for discussion of the issues affecting Infants Children and Young People. The work streams are being re-evaluated to ensure that they take into account the health and social implications of the virus on Children's health.

There will be a new work stream added which will look at the impact of Covid-19 on ICYP health specifically and will measure and monitor impact and outcomes in several key areas including:

- Impact on access to healthcare and other services

- Impacts on learning and education
- Impacts on Mental Health
- Impact on Families
- Impact on Inequalities
- Impact on Commercial Determinants of health (Drugs, Alcohol, Unhealthy Commodities Industries)
- The UNCRC and the opportunities it affords us to mitigate these impacts.

The long-term health and social impacts are unknown and emerging, however these will require to be measured and monitored accurately and closely moving forward.

## North Ayrshire Community Book(s)

We have developed six locality-based [community books](#) and a North Ayrshire wide Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that signpost and guide people in relation to issues such as access to food, prescription delivery, and financial advice.





## North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan

### Understanding Inequalities – Our Approach

Inequalities in individual outcomes are directly linked to wider socio-economic inequalities in society. The distribution of power, money and resources has a direct influence on environmental influences such as:

- Availability of health enhancing work
- Access to good quality and affordable housing
- Social and cultural experiences
- Transport
- Education and learning opportunities
- Availability and quality of services

While there will be some fundamental causes of poverty which are out with the control of North Ayrshire CPP, there are many areas where an impact can be made. In order to be most effective, interventions need to be taken at all three levels:

- Undo the fundamental causes
- Prevent the wider environmental influences
- Mitigate the individual experiences

As well as needing to ensure that our approach intervenes at all three levels described above, research also demonstrates that a combination of approaches across three areas of the population is essential to effectively tackle inequalities. These three approaches are:

1. Targeting – targeting the worst off in society
2. Enhanced – reducing the gap between groups
3. Universal – reducing the gradient across the population

Our Action Plan will reflect these approaches where relevant.

**Our Action Plan approach was developed in order to ensure clear links to our LOIP and to reflect the above approach. This, our third annual Action Plan, builds on the work done to date, develops some of the existing work, and introduces new actions.**

Our key actions have been identified and included in the following sections of the report. Our key actions have been linked to and summarised in **Appendix 1**. We have included actions where the greatest impact will be made, taking into account scale and pace.

The six priority groups (lone parents; families where a member of the





household is disabled; families with three or more children; minority ethnic families; families where the youngest child is under one year old; and mothers aged under 25) have been considered in developing our Action Plan. They will continue to be a focus as part of the development of our future actions.

### **Poverty Impact Assessment Approach Pilot**

On 19 February 2020, we held a Child Poverty Workshop for senior managers across the Council, Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Ayrshire and Arran. This event was designed to bring senior managers together to look at actions through a poverty lens and to encourage consideration of any poverty implications of their work. The session also facilitated partnership working and discussions. The event included the Fairer Scotland Duty, including the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, our Financial Inclusion Referral Pathway and Rights Based Approaches. Feedback from the event was very positive and this remains a focus for 2021/22.

### **Facilitating Multi-agency Working**

A key theme in North Ayrshire is our strong partnership and multi-agency working approaches. In May 2021 we held our second Senior Manager Child Poverty Workshop. This session facilitates our partnership and multi-agency working and

allows connections to be made. This way of working informs our plan and brings the content into focus for all services. Feedback from the sessions have been positive.

### **Monitoring of this plan**

This report requires agreement and monitoring by the Community Planning Partnership. Reporting will link to other strategic groups as required. Our Performance Framework has been created and is monitored regularly. This ensures consistency in reporting across all our plans and strategies. We report on our progress every six months to the Community Planning Partnership to ensure we are achieving our ambition of a fairer and more equal society.

In 2020 it was agreed that the Child Poverty Action Plan and Report would be included within the governance of the Children's Services Strategic Partnership. This ensures we have aligned Children's Services Planning and that children, young people and their families continue to be at the heart of all we do.



Our Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.



# 2020/21 Key Highlights – What have we been doing to tackle child poverty in North Ayrshire?

## Section 1 – Maximising Income from Employment

### Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Income from Employment

1. We will continue to use procurement powers and increased quick quote thresholds to help more local suppliers win contracts. Our activities aim to stimulate the local economy, by securing jobs or generating community benefits.
2. Our Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.
3. Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.

### In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- ✓ Inward Investment Strategy
- ✓ The Ayrshire Growth Deal
- ✓ Living Wage
- ✓ In-Work Support Programmes
- ✓ Employment Support
- ✓ Employability Hubs
- ✓ Disability Employment Support
- ✓ Early Years and Childcare:
  - Delivery of 1140 hours
  - 2-year old nursery provision





Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.

## How we will monitor our progress – Income from Employment

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of jobs created by businesses in North Ayrshire supported by Business Development	555	524	163
Percentage of people in North Ayrshire earning less than the living wage	24.3%	16.0%	Not Available
Percentage of working age population in employment	69.7%	70.2%	69%
Employment Rate – percentage women age 16-64	64.4%	65.5%	64.2%
Employment rate – percentage aged 16-64 EA core or work limiting disability	44%	49.2%	46.7%
Youth Employment Rate (16-24)	60.00%	58.30%	55.6%
Participation Rate for 16-19-year olds (per 100)	90.53%	90.56%	Not Available
Women's Median Gross Weekly Pay	£501	£518	£596
Gross weekly earning of full-time employees in North Ayrshire (Median)	£563.60	£550.10	£599.00
Cumulative number of unemployed disabled residents supported into employment	Data not available	18	18
Number of employed modern apprentices recruited to North Ayrshire Council	87	54	40
Number of Modern Apprentices recruited by North Ayrshire Council, who are care experienced or disabled	Data not available	10	8
No of weeks employment through using Community Benefit clauses	2093	2864	2882
Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities	23.88%	23.84%	24.18%
Percentage Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated/funded Employability Programmes	16.97%	20.1%	Not Available

## What we are doing

### Bringing new and better jobs to the area

- Our **Ayrshire Growth Deal** was signed in March 2019 with c. £200M of investment in aerospace and space, energy, tourism, manufacturing and engineering industries
- In February 2021 the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee approved the Full Business Case for the Ayrshire Growth Deal **Community Wealth Building Fund**.
- The £3m Scottish Government funding will go towards new Community Wealth Building officers across the whole of the Ayrshire region to support local businesses and community organisations deliver Community Wealth Building ambitions and a dedicated **Fair Work Ayrshire** team who will work closely with Ayrshire Anchor Institutions and major employers to establish Ayrshire as a Fair Work region.
- A range of targets have been set to ensure that hundreds of Ayrshire **businesses are supported** over the next three years, subject to Scottish Government final approval and following the recruitment of project staff.
- We have led the development of a major **Kickstart programme**. Approval has now been granted to fund over 450 jobs for young people in the area – the jobs will be advertised and filled from March to December 2021.

## A Green New Deal for North Ayrshire

- As part of our **Covid-19 Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach**, we will use our capital investment to accelerate our recovery and wider regeneration of our area, at the same time as tackling climate change.
- At the heart of this is the **£8.8m Investment Fund** which will support an inclusive and green economic recovery.
- We will maximise **renewable energy generation**, using the Council's existing land assets
- We will invest in our **commercial estate** including improving the sustainability of assets
- We will tackle vacant and derelict land and building in our town centres by **investing in town centre living**
- We will support community economic development through **community regeneration and ownership**
- We will implement Community Wealth Building town centre priorities identified through **Place Plans** for our major town centres; and
- We have created a £500,000 **Green Jobs Fund**.
- We will work with community groups and businesses to explore **renewable energy generation and circular economy schemes** that would create local fair green jobs.
- We will support green business adaptation to encourage and support local businesses to adapt their processes and business models to **support industrial decarbonisation and meet net zero**.

## Encouraging the Payment of Living Wage Across the Area

- We have developed our Community Wealth Building Strategy, to **enhance local wealth and create fair jobs**, and will utilise a £3M Ayrshire Growth Deal Fund to progress this agenda.
- Part of this will be encouraging and supporting local businesses to pay the Living Wage. **Currently 24 businesses in North Ayrshire are accredited as Living Wage employers.**

## Providing In Work Support

- Our North Ayrshire employability services are moving to focus more on in-work support. **Employed parents on low incomes** are now being targeted through new funding available from the Scottish Government.

## Employment Support Programmes

- We continue to invest in services to support unemployed residents back to work. The **We Work for Families** programme is targeting parents with key worker support to get them into secure and fair work. The Council currently invests over £1.5M a year in such schemes and utilises EU funding to enhance this further.
- Our **Skills for Life** initiative is an intensive skills and training programme that helps support the long-term unemployed get back into employment. It is a partnership approach where the Council, Ayrshire College, Department for Work and Pensions, CEIS Ayrshire and Childcare and Recreational Information Service (CARIS) all work together to provide participants with a meaningful and valuable experience.
- The **We Work for Families** Programme specifically engages with parents of young children under five, particularly

women, who may find it difficult for a range of reasons to take the next step to realising their potential. The programme is delivered using a partnership approach. **194 referrals were received with 112 registrations. 22 people went into employment, 108 entered education or training and 60 were upskilled.**

- The programme works closely with health visitors and family nurse practitioners.
- Our **Equal Supported Employment**, for people with additional support needs, has been working on an online basis using Teams meetings, What'sApp calls and Zoom groups. 52 residents have been supported and 16 of those have entered into work. Of these 7 parents were supported and 4 entered work.
- Our **employability services** have moved online through CEIS Ayrshire. We intend to re-open hubs once Covid-19 restrictions make this viable. Between April and December 2020 over 527 participants were registered and assisted.
- As part of the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund a priority focus is around Youth Employability. This includes an employability roadshow that rotates around our secondaries to provide information, signposting and access to employability support and programmes. This gives information further education, work placements, Playback ICE, Kickstart, Ambition Agreement and informal awards and opportunities. This will be replicated across our summer programme with pop ups that will allow young people to access the same information during events and activities already taking place in the community.

# Case Study: We Work For Families Programme



Our client resides with his wife and 3 children in a private let, the family are supported by their Health Visitor and Early Years Social Worker. The main barrier identified for the referral was under employment and no regular hours of work; one week he would work 46 hours per week and for the next few he would only work 6 hours per week. These fluctuating hours were due to Covid-19 restrictions and were having a detrimental impact on the families already low income and on our client's mental health.

Not long after our client was registered on We Work for Families he was let go from his job which really took a toll on his mental health. He was referred to ANCHO's Small Steps project who keep in touch weekly to offer support with mental health.

The family has also been issued with a notice to quit their private let tenancy, so they were referred to the Community Housing Advocacy Project for support. Support is being put in place not just for this but to arrange payment plans to assist the family with their finances to try and make things more manageable for them.

The employability toolkit was used to support the client to get ready to look for sustainable employment. CV assistance was provided as well as supported job searches. An employer asked if he would be available for an interview. We ensured our client knew how to get to his interview and gave support with interview preparation. He has now successfully secured full time paid employment with regular hours with this company and has built friendships with his colleagues.





## Procurement

- We have been working with suppliers to help them through the Covid-19 situation by allowing more time to **complete existing contracts** and allowing more time for completion of tenders.
- We have continued to use **emergency powers to buy local** where appropriate, particularly PPE and we have increased the quick quote threshold on a number of contractions contracts to try and help local suppliers win more business.
- We support fair working practices by actively encouraging the **payment of the real living wage** and encouraging **fair work practices within contracts**.
- We also require suppliers to agree to **community benefits** for contracts over £500,000 which insists on local employment, apprenticeships, work experience or educational activities.



## Section 2 – Maximising Income from Benefits

### Our Priorities and continuing work

#### Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Maximising Income from Benefits

1. We will hold further sessions with senior managers to encourage poverty impact assessment approaches in our work.
2. Continue to take forward the single shared assessment project
3. Upgrading our online customer services system and implementing one point of contact.
4. Take forward automation of payment of some benefits where possible.
5. Planning for additional free school meals provision
6. Work will be commencing Welfare Rights Officers based within GP surgeries.
7. We will further consider locating Welfare Rights Officers within schools and education settings.



### Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Maximising Income from Benefits (cont.)

8. Roll out of training in financial inclusion direct referral pathways for maternity services in the first instance.
9. Provision of information relating to financial inclusion via the Better Health Hub.
10. Provide access to free quality assured health information materials on financial matters via the Health Information & Resources Service including continued provision of access to non-digital versions (and free print and post service).
11. Provide training and capacity building for staff on the most effective ways to have conversations with residents about financial matters.
12. Monitor and support benefit automation and portal, being implemented by the end of 2022 by Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland.

### In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ✓ Money Matters Service   | ✓ Cashless Catering in schools   |
| ✓ Free School Meals and Clothing Grants online application              | ✓ Housing Welfare Reform Advice Team (WRAT)  |
| ✓ Encourage EMA uptake  | ✓ NHS – Referral tool for NHS staff to sign-post families to appropriate specialist services |
| ✓ Social media promotional campaigns                                    | ✓ Best Start payments cards  |
| ✓ Free School Meals uptake campaigns                                    |  |
| ✓ Healthy Breakfast service in secondary schools (as well as primaries) |  |

## How we will monitor our progress – Maximising Income from Benefits

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Speed of processing Housing Benefit (New Claims) days	8.51	7.38	8.89
Speed of processing Housing Benefit (Change of circumstances) days	10.46	7.63	7.59
Speed of Processing (Council Tax Reduction) new claims (days)	28.28	24.96	19.05
Speed of processing (Council Tax Reduction) changes of circumstances (days)	7	5.8	5.13
Number of Crisis Grants Paid	4579	3856	3539
Uptake of EMAs (Academic Sessions)	835 young people applied, 729 young people received at least one payment.	806 young people applied, 718 young people received at least one payment.	785 young people applied, 716 young people received at least one payment.
Uptake of Free School Meals (Primary)	87.5%	82.72%	63.79%
Uptake of Free School Meals (Secondary)	75.45%	61.49%	44.87%

## What we are doing

### Income Maximisation

- In 2020/21 the amount of income generated (£) for service users by the **Money Matters Service** was **£15.9m**, despite the changes in working practices due to the Covid-19 restrictions.
- The Team have found new ways of working including Appeals Tribunals via video and telephone calls.
- **Money Matters received 3,601 enquiries/referrals in 2020/21.** The team had a **76% success rate for appeals** which proceeded.
- Training was provided for the Child Protection Team, Health and Social Care Partnership staff and the Family Learning Team. This has increased knowledge of the benefits families are entitled to and increased confidence of staff.
- The Money Matters Team continue to keep up to date with the changing landscape and prepare for future changes such as the end of the furlough scheme. There may also be consequences to rent arrears and universal credit claims.
- Since January 2021 ,North Ayrshire Foodbank have part funded the employment of a HSCP Money Matters Welfare Rights Officer. Both organisations are working in partnership to ensure everyone who receives a Foodbank parcel is offered a Benefits check and receive any advice, assistance or representation to ensure they receive their legal entitlement to benefits. From February to May 2021, 161 referrals were received with overall financial gains of £34,358.73.



## Case Study

### Money Matters 1

Money Matters Welfare Rights Officer represented at Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Appeal Tribunal for a 4-year-old boy with behavioural issues and language delays but no diagnosis. DLA Middle Rate Care awarded £59.70 pw and arrears £5,662.97. Parent claimed backdated carers allowance and carers element in Universal Credit, £37.59 per week and arrears £3,979.16 paid

Our Welfare Rights Officer also assisted our client to claim backdated Scottish carers supplement £8.85 and arrears £1,150 paid and Scottish child payment £10 per week and arrears £50 paid. Weekly financial gain £116.14 and arrears £10,842.13



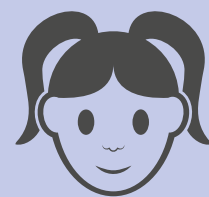
## Case Study

### Money Matters 2

Our client contacted Money Matters for assistance with Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for her daughter aged 2 years who has Cerebral Palsy. Previously refused DLA and did not challenge decision. Client was in receipt of Universal Credit; she was working but had to give up her work due to shift work and difficulties with childcare.

Money Matters Welfare Rights Officer assisted with completion of DLA form. Her daughter was awarded DLA High Care Rate Care and as a result, has entitlement to Disabled Child Higher Element of £400.29 per month and Carers element of £162.92 on her Universal Credit. Carers Allowance is also in place and will be entitlement to Scottish Carers Supplement twice yearly.

Weekly benefit increase of £227.95 was received as well as £820.35 of arrears of DLA and £1,169.64 of Universal Credit. Our client no longer needs to worry at this time of returning to work and can focus on looking after her daughter who requires additional support.





## Improve access to information and advice about benefits

- Money Matters receive direct referrals from Health and Social Care colleagues such as GPs, Health Visitors, Social Workers, Community Link Workers, Nurses, Alcohol and Drug Workers as well as other agencies including North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, The Ayrshire Community Trust and others.
- We have a financial inclusion pathway in place. During 2019-20, training has been provided to Health Visitors and other Early Years staff, and a pilot session with other managers took place to raise awareness.
- Information leaflets are available at a variety of locations promoting the work of the Money Matters Team. The team is also promoted on Twitter and Social Media.
- The Housing Welfare Reform Advice Team (WRAT) provide support to manage claims, maximise income and make rent payments to avoid arrears. The Team provide a 'live' Welfare Rights

messenger service through Facebook messenger. WRAT also have regular Facebook posts on the Housing Services Facebook Page to promote the service, advertise new benefits particularly Scottish Social Security benefits as well as outcomes achieved for our tenants.

- We have embarked on a 2-year financial inclusion demonstrator project '**Better Off Hub**' following Cabinet approval in October 2020. The project is a Public Social Partnership, developing a new model through co-production with the third sector. The Better Off Hub delivers vital financial advice services, in a new holistic way, focused on the whole person and set out with an objective to build capacity and reduce future demand on services.



## Case Study

### **Involvement Of Recovery Development Workers Alongside Service Access & MAASH**

Our Service Access and MAASH (Multi-Agency Assessment and Screening Hub) teams had identified that during initial assessments for drug/alcohol misuse at the pre-contemplative stage for change, Service Users were at times reluctant to become involved with services to address their addiction. Various issues often led to appointments being offered and declined. It is recognised this is an extremely difficult time for individuals.

It was agreed that Recovery Development Workers (RDW's) with lived experience would make immediate and timeous contact with Service Users at the earliest opportunity. This aimed to mitigate risks for people struggling with addiction, help adults previously difficult to reach and prevent further harm. This would be person-centred approach to engage individuals with addiction issues.







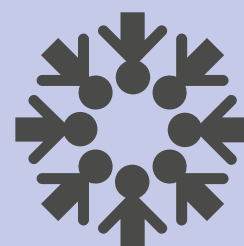
## Case Study (cont.)

### Outcomes

This process was received extremely positively by all workers involved and to date there have been 14 individuals supported by this process. Twelve were adults living in the community either on their own or with a partner and two were parents residing with their children.

The Recovery Development Workers have lived experience and extensive knowledge of the local areas and are relatable to Service Users. As well as advice, guidance and support with regards to addiction, Service Users were offered additional practical supports including engaging with Money Matters and other services such as utility companies. They offered emotional support, improving Service Users overall wellbeing.

Service Users who were affected by poverty were supported to engage to have benefits maximised. People were encouraged and signposted to supports within their own Communities including on-line supports as well as Turning Point and groups which aided with their recovery. This has also brought a level of autonomy for most of the Service Users and prevented statutory measures which further relieves pressure on services.







## School Clothing Grant, Education Maintenance Allowance and Other Grants/Benefits

- We have been issuing **supermarket vouchers** to all children eligible for Free School Meals during school holidays. This has encouraged an increase in Free School Meals applications. We are currently exploring the possibility of system integration which would enable a degree of automation between benefits and Free School Meals.
- Customer Services administered the **Winter Hardship** payment of £100 per child in receipt of free school meals in December and further Spring Hardship payment of £100 is due to be issued from 1st April and will also include Early Years Children.

Measure	2019/20	2020/21
No. of Applications for Free School Meals/ Clothing Grants	2,326	3,007
No. of Children	3,931	4,923

- Over the last year we have been applying maximum discretion on applications for Crisis Grants in cognisance of the impact of Covid-19.
- We received funding from the Scottish Government to help towards food poverty and this was used to purchase supermarket vouchers which have been used to provide support to those in most need.
- The **Single Shared Assessment** project is in development. This work is expected to take around 18 months.



Our Family Learning Team also supports parents and carers in the completion of the application, if required



## Encouraging the Uptake of Free School Meals

- Facilities Management has issued **over 60,000 shopping vouchers for children eligible for free school meals** (from July 2020 – end March 2021). The value of these vouchers totals £1.7 million.
- All **school handbooks and websites** contain information on accessing Free School Meals. Schools also provide leaflets to parents and carers at P1 Registration. Schools use their regular newsletter to promote our school meals.
- Our **Family Learning Team** also supports parents and carers in the completion of the application, if required.
- Our Facilities Management Team are **Gold level “Food For Life Served Here”** certificate holders, awarded by the Soil Association Scotland. We are the highest awarded local authority in Scotland for the number of schools holding this accreditation. This award recognises the use of local suppliers and quality produce. We have retained this award every year since 2013.

## Emergency Food Response

- During the first week of lockdown we delivered 852 food boxes on the mainland and 25 on Arran. The **food box was for a household** rather than individual children eligible for free school meals. This ensured most if not

all people in the household benefited from this pack. Most of the food was fresh produce and the supply was enough for 4 people for 5 days of the week.

- By week 2, we were distributing almost 2,000 packs. During the second week we also started a **community food distribution hub** which was to serve those who were not eligible for free school meals but who were still struggling with their own food provision.
- The food boxes ran until the beginning of July and over that time we delivered the equivalent of **1.26 million meals**.
- Facilities Management were also supporting the food requirements of the **childcare hubs** at schools across North Ayrshire which were set up for children of key workers and those children who required additional support. Almost 8,000 hot meals and snacks were provided over this time.
- Food boxes were replaced by **shopping vouchers** and provided £20 per child per week for those eligible for free school meals. This has continued and covered all school closures and holiday periods.
- For children and young people returning to school in August 2020, we wanted to ensure that **hot meals** were available from the first day and a good selection was available to encourage pupils back into the dining halls. It was also important for us to have primary school children back in the



We will now be working towards the extension of universal free school meals (UFSM) to primary 4 children in August 2021 and the future provision for primaries 5 to 7.

dining hall in their bubbles to benefit from the hugely important social and well-being aspect of their lunch break. More staggered lunch breaks were introduced to facilitate the numbers safely and to ensure children felt safe in this environment. Making them feel comfortable and confident that it was a safe space was our main objective to ensure we maximised uptake.

- During the **phased return of secondary school** pupils in early 2021, we provided both a full menu selection in schools as well as the £20 shopping voucher to all eligible for free school meals.

### Forthcoming Changes for School Meals

- We will now be working towards the extension of universal free school meals (**UFSM**) to primary 4 children in August 2021 and the future provision for primaries 5 to 7. This will have a huge impact on uptake. Currently the UFSM for primary 1 to 3 is around 80%, if this is replicated across the other year groups, this represents a significant increase in children accessing healthy and nutritious food during the school day. This will also have an impact on local employment by increasing the number of jobs and on local suppliers.
- Legislation relating to food made available during the whole school day, will change on 8th April 2021. This will mean that food made available via the catering teams, tuck shops and

Education led projects will comply with new legislation. The changes are designed to ensure our children and young people have access to **the healthiest and most nutritious food** throughout the school day. The new legislation increases the amount of fruit and vegetable available each day to pupils as well as increasing fibre, reducing sugar, salt and harmful fats.

- During the new school year (2021/22), we will be introducing a new **pre-order system for school meals** across primary and secondary schools. This will have a home order facility and for primaries, it will also have an in-classroom ordering system. This will encourage conversations with pupils on food, how it is sourced and hopefully encourage children to try new menu items to widen their palates.
- We will be reviewing our **holiday meals programme** in the future to see if and when we can return to providing our Wrap, Run and Fun programme in partnership with Connected Communities.
- We are actively working across other Services to analyse debt accruing from **non-payment of school meals**. The objective is to introduce support interventions where required to assist families in the provision of school meals e.g. assisting them to apply for free school meals or information regarding other benefits or financial support available.





Take forward the Cost of the School Day actions with schools, services and partners.'



## Section 3 – Reducing household costs

### Our Priorities and continuing work

#### Our Priorities for 2020/21 – Reducing Household Costs

1. We will progress our Solar PV Farm project
2. We will seek approval of our first EV Strategy with tariff proposal.
3. We will progress the Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) project. The aim is to identify areas suitable for heat networks and to focus on energy efficiency measures.
4. Our housing allocation policy will be reviewed to ensure there are no unintended consequences for child poverty.
5. Continue to address food with dignity opportunities in our localities including launching an interactive map.
7. Take forward the Cost of the School Day actions with schools, services and partners.
8. Explore the use of the new Community Benefits Gateway (Portal).

#### In addition to these priorities, our work will continue in:

- ✓ Affordable Housing programme: Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2020-2025
- ✓ Rent levels – value for money
- ✓ Corporate Sustainability Team – general energy efficiency advice
- ✓ Referrals to Citrus energy for any fuel related issues
- ✓ Referrals to Home Energy Scotland.
- ✓ Wrap, Run and Fun holiday meals initiative
- ✓ Bookbug programme
- ✓ Period Poverty Initiative
- ✓ Travel initiatives





## How we will monitor our progress – Reducing the Cost of Living

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Percentage of lets to homeless	22.38%	29.97%	57.9%
Number of tenants referred for support with energy costs (cumulative for reporting year)	95	96	24
Households in fuel poverty	26%	28%	28%
Number of new build Council housing units reaching completion (cumulative)	296	381	437
Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year	3.34%	3.65%	5.46%
Percentage of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as homeless sustained for more than a year	81.48%	84.07%	92.48%
Number of early learning establishments offering 1,140 hours	2	13	Not available
The % of Peoples Panel respondents who say that food is available but too expensive	Data not available (every two years)	10%	Data not available (every two years)
The % of Peoples Panel respondents who have access to email or internet from home			
Data not available (every two years)	90%	Data not available (every two years)	
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	93.7%	96.8%	Not Available
Out of term school meals – number per annum	21,967	22,914	Not Available

## Increase Availability of Affordable Housing

- Our Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-2026 sets out the priorities for affordable housing investment in North Ayrshire over the next five years including to build **1,732 new homes by March 2024**.
- In the last 6 months we have completed the last 16 units of supported accommodation at Watt Court, Dalry. The £7.66M project supported by a Scottish Government Grant of £2.891M created 49 new units, comprising of a Sheltered Housing Complex (22 homes), amenity bungalows (8 homes), supporting accommodation (15 homes plus one unit staff base) and a new local housing office for Dalry (3 units). The heating for the sheltered housing complex and bungalows is provided by a sustainable Biomass district heating system which also serves Dalry Primary School.

## Rent levels

- Our robust Housing Revenue Account Business Plan results in our **rent levels remaining lower than the national average** and neighbouring authorities and landlords and we continue to invest significantly in our existing stock and new house building programme. We face challenges in for example, changes to welfare reform, demographics and the housing stock profile. We are committed to delivering services in new, improved and more cost-effective ways.

## Energy Costs

- We have installed **Solar Panels** where appropriate to assist with energy costs. The number of PV systems installed on properties is 290 (895kWp) and

165 of these installations (518kWp) were installed before the deadline and successfully registered for the Feed in Tariff (FIT) subsidy. All properties are monitored remotely to ensure that faults are identified and resolved.

- The Sustainability Team also continue to deliver **replacement and top up loft insulation and cavity wall insulation** for council properties, supporting Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) compliance and other housing programmes.
- Our third **Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy** has been developed, detailing actions towards achieving the net-zero carbon emission by 2030 target.
- We received Cabinet approval on 26 January 2021 for the development of a **£6.768m solar PV farm installation** at Nethermain's former landfill site.
- We continue to work with the Energy Systems Research Unit University of Strathclyde to support innovation and climate change action in North Ayrshire for example, Ardrossan Campus project to act as a sustainability engineer and i3 development to input energy master plan.



- During the pandemic vulnerable groups were supported. For example, our Gypsy/Traveller community were supported by the site manager in Irvine. The **electricity tariff for the site was set to zero**, due to the residents being unable to purchase power cards.
- Our Teams work with other Services to plan digital publications sent to tenants via our tenant magazine (**Tenants Chat**) and social media posts will include areas that would help address child poverty. We have been hosting live 'Messenger' sessions where customers can contact services and ask for money advice.
- Area Housing Office staff have maintained **regular telephone contact** with tenants throughout lockdown to offer advice, assistance and reassurance. When required, these tenants have been referred to appropriate specialist teams or agencies.
- Since March 2020, the Council's Housing Officers have continued to review **rent accounts fortnightly**.



Our Teams work with other Services to plan digital publications sent to tenants via our tenant magazine (**Tenants Chat**) and social media posts will include areas that would help address child poverty.

- Area Housing Office staff continue to **prioritise housing allocations** to those with the greatest housing need, working closely with both our Housing Advice Team and Throughcare to ensure the best possible outcomes for applicants.
- A **Housing Youth Matters Group** was set up in conjunction with Youth Services to give an opportunity for young people to get involved in housing and related services. We also deliver homeless prevention and housing advice to all 4th, 5th and 6th year pupils across all our Secondary Schools.
- We provide Housing Support and Housing Options Advice to prevent homelessness, ensuring households are accessing appropriate benefits and any other assistance that can help them sustain their tenancies or access alternative accommodation.
- Our **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan** details our drive to reduce the duration of homelessness, provide self-contained dispersed furnished flats within the community from where a household presents to ensure children can retain their Social Networks and minimise disruption to education.
- We provide **furnished tenancy grants** or assist with access to the Scottish Welfare Fund for homeless households to ensure they have access to furniture on rehousing.
- For **families** experiencing homeless, we provide a package of support to ensure young people have space to do homework, can attend school and are registered with primary health care and a local dentist. We can also arrange free travel to school for a period of 6 weeks while families are living in temporary accommodation.

- Our focus remains on care leavers and vulnerable families and we are committed to reducing the impact of Adverse Childhood Effects (ACES) and disruption to education caused by periods of temporary accommodation.

### North Ayrshire Food System

- During 2020/21, a **Food System** – North Ayrshire Fairer Food – has been established across all localities in a co-production model with our community partners, small community based organisations and community associations, many who have been key partners supporting their local communities throughout the pandemic providing emergency food. The vision that has been agreed is the demand for emergency food provision is reduced as North Ayrshire residents can afford and access good food.
- **Community Support Hubs** act as brokers who can signpost to local food provision. Using a community wealth building approach, local businesses and third sector organisations provide low cost or free food to local people who need it. The current system looks different in all localities and is based on need, resources available and also volunteers. To date community larders, a community shop in a vacant unit and shops in a local community centre has opened. These are all membership based and provide food with dignity and also access to advice services if required.
- A key part of this development has been the **co-production of a toolkit** to support the various organisations, in terms of food supply, risk assessments, and environmental health guidance.

- As part of Challenge Poverty Week, we focused on our work to tackle food poverty and supported Whitlees Community Centre who officially launched their new Pantry. This initiative allows local residents to become members and get access to low cost food. ACES community group opened the Woodwynd Shoap in Kilwinning in Woodwynd Hall. We now have eight Fairer Food locations within North Ayrshire.



As part of Challenge Poverty Week, we focused on our work to tackle food poverty and supported Whitlees Community Centre who officially launched their new Pantry. This initiative allows local residents to become members and get access to low cost food.



# Case Study: Low Cost Food in Irvine



Residents in Irvine with a KA12 postcode can now get local access to a variety of low-cost food produce, ready-made meals and other essential items. We have been supporting community organisations as they co-produce a North Ayrshire community food network known as “North Ayrshire Fairer Food,” following on from the initial coronavirus lockdown.

Choices Community Shop, on Fullarton Street in Irvine, is the newest community food project launched by Fullarton, Castlepark and Vineburgh Community Associations and Fullarton Connexions, with the support of the Council. The facility works on a membership basis and provides a mini supermarket-like environment where residents have the opportunity to choose food specific to their own preferences, and dietary requirements. This is a dignified approach to food insecurity and helps money go further by giving access to quality food at a lower cost.

Residents visiting Choices will be asked to pay an annual membership fee of £1 and a weekly charge of £3 per week for individuals and £5 per week for larger families. Unlike a food bank, Choices is not emergency food provision, and no referral is required to access the community shop.

The volunteers at Choices Community Shop will also be able to signpost individuals and families to other services that can provide support on a range of topics including managing money, budgeting, cooking on a budget, accredited learning, community learning, volunteering opportunities and employability support.



## Health Visiting in North Ayrshire

- In North Ayrshire, the foodbank and the community hubs are encouraged to either **signpost a family to their Health Visitor** where they have requested baby formula or notify the Health Visitor on behalf of the family, where consent to share information has been agreed. Where this happens, and a family is in need of financial support, the Health Visitors can link with the Early Years' Social Workers, who form part of the integrated Universal Early Years' service and who have access to wider funds and grants to support families with cash payments.
- In line with the national financial inclusion pathway for health visiting, and to provide more longer-term support, a Health Visitor or Social Worker can request assistance from North Ayrshire's **Money Matters** service, which can support households to maximise their incomes.
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran Midwives and Health Visitors promote the Best Start Foods scheme, which provides a nutritional safety net for the most vulnerable families.

- Beneficiaries of **the Best Start Foods** scheme can purchase cow's milk, infant formula, fresh, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh or dried pulses and fresh eggs in any supermarket or smaller shop displaying the Mastercard logo. All infants in Scotland up to the age of one are entitled to **free vitamin drops** containing the daily recommended amount of 10 mcg. These are provided to families by NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

## Family Learning Team – Advice and assistance with Costs

- Our Family Learning Team provided **Family Food Programmes** based on the CAN (cheap and nutritious) toolkit training from the NHS as well as some budget busting cooking sessions that include parents shopping with the budget.
- During the Covid-19 Pandemic the Family Learning team helped families to access Food Vouchers, Free School Meals and/or uniform. Approximately 90 families received **regular contact** throughout the school closures which included support with learning, digital advice and help with accessing the Community Hubs and School Hubs.



- Our Family Learning Team worked with a range of organisations to apply for grants to distribute to some of our families. This included over £7000 of Asda schools back on track grants for uniform and food support, Cash for Kids for additional family **grants** and school jackets and with Children 1st to access vouchers for families to spend on clothing, outdoor equipment and two iPad and MiFi. Family passes were also provided for the Heads of Ayr Farm Park for 6 families.

### Providing Advice on how to Minimise Costs for Energy

- Our Corporate Sustainability Team provide general **energy efficiency advice** to the public on a weekly basis, by responding to enquiries and by using our referral process with internal and external agencies (current average three referrals per week).
- The team is also an active member of the Local Energy Advice Forum (LEAF), a partnership which aims to increase **domestic energy efficiency**, and reduce fuel poverty within North and East Ayrshire.
- The Welfare Reform Advice Team visit our tenants and complete a survey offer **referral to Citrus energy** for any fuel related issues such as debt, switching suppliers etc. Warm Homes Discount is also discussed and assistance to apply is provided if applicable.
- As part of the Financial Inclusion Pathway, referrals can be made to Home Energy Scotland.

### Scottish Child Payment

- The new Scottish Child Payment, which is unique to Scotland opened for early applications in November 2020. Eligible families will get £40 every four weeks for each child under six years old.

### Real Nappy Incentive Scheme

- We became the first Council in the UK to **provide free "birth to potty" real nappy packs**. The new enhanced nappy scheme could save families up to £1,300 per child on the cost of disposable nappies, whilst reducing the environmental impact of nappies by 40 per cent. The free trial tester pack of 'Real Nappies' contains; an easy to use, adjustable, one-sized Birth to Potty



nappy, a microfibre nappy (size one or two), and a bamboo nappy (size one or two), two waterproof wraps, one packet of biodegradable liners, and a handy laundry bag.

## Digital Access

As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have supported children and families to have **access to digital devices**. We have purchased over 1200 iPads and 900 Chromebooks as well as connectivity in the form of individual pupil SIMs or MiFi Units for families to share. This amounts to connectivity for 512 pupils. E-Sgoil and remote learning were developed to ensure pupils were able to continue their learning and we put in place other free resources such as books, stationery etc.

- **Virtual Community Centres** were set up on Facebook. There's one for each locality. Sign up has been extensive. Virtual Community Centres were established to replicate the community centre offer on a virtual platform. This included access to on-line learning, signposting to services and specific topic rooms such as mental health support spaces and funding workshops.
- During lockdown all face to face **youthwork activities** were cancelled. Having consulted with our young people and partners we created the live Wednesday online quiz on Facebook. This allowed us to host the quiz and have live chats with the young people by answering their comments and questions. We adapted the format of the quiz to include two British Sign Language interpreters, to support our deaf young people to take part. The Wednesday Quiz has had 46,559 attendees with 4,648 people interacting

with the posts. We have 35 to 40 families regularly taking part in the quiz.

- Our first fully **online Joint Cabinet** took place in November and involved 110 young people from across our secondary schools. They were joined by our Council Cabinet, senior officers, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) and the Youth Council Executive. Our young people shared their views on the issues that really matter to them including their community, digital connectivity, employability and health and wellbeing. The views of our young people will inform our post Covid-19 recovery and renewal.
- We received 639 devices to support families and care leavers in the second phase of the Connecting Scotland initiative. Twenty organisations benefitted from this initiative, including Connected Communities service and the Health and Social Care Partnership. The devices are in the final stages of being delivered to the families and the organisations will be part of a North Ayrshire network to share good practice, an approach already benefitting phase one recipient organisations.



- North Ayrshire Council has provided an additional £250,000 of funding per annum for a **Digital Families Fund** to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.
- Our Public Health Teams continue to recognise that many of our most vulnerable groups experience digital exclusion. We will continue to support and prioritise addressing digital inequalities within public health and we will support partners to utilise digital inequalities impact assessment moving forward to identify where these may exist.

## Reducing the cost of the School Day

- During 2020, a formal **Cost of the School Day (COSD)** working group was established comprising Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers to further drive forward a whole systems approach to reducing the cost associated with education.
- We have previously participated in **pilot work** with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.
- The Working Group agreed a set of **North Ayrshire Commitments**.
- We will hold an annual COSD Conference. In line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas

of focus for the forthcoming year from the draft action plan will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021.

- The **voices** of and the contribution from young people, our school representatives and partners has been extremely valuable in shaping the overall Policy. We have had contributions from national experts and external partners including the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and their support and guidance has been much appreciated.
- As part of the policy development and our budget commitments, it was agreed that there will be a recurring annual investment in a Children and Families Fund of £500,000 which will focus on:
  - **Food:** £150,000 to extend our school and community food network across all schools to support children and families;
  - **Clothing and sustainability:** £100,000 for a School and Family Participatory Budget Investment Fund for educational establishments to respond to local needs in relation to school uniforms, outdoor clothing, sports kit and recycling and reuse equipment; and
  - **Digital inclusion:** £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.
- In relation to the Cost of the School Day, the NHS are exploring the use of the new **Community Benefits Gateway (Portal)** which allows the voluntary sector to draw down community benefits from large national contracts. Voluntary groups may wish to put bids into this portal for school clothing and books.

## Attainment Challenge

- North Ayrshire Council is a Challenge Authority and we have made good progress towards improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap in 2019/20. Improvements can be seen across indicators for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Our Scottish Attainment Challenge workstreams continued to make good progress and we are adapting delivery approaches to continue to meet learner needs across the local authority.

## Pupil Equity Funding

- Every council area benefits from **Pupil Equity Funding** (PEF) and in total, in North Ayrshire, the Pupil Equity Fund in 2017-18 amounted to £4.39m. This rose to £4.41m in 2018-19 and £4.46m in 2019-20.
- Pupil Equity Funding must provide **targeted support** for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential. Although the funding is allocated on the basis of free school meal eligibility, Head Teachers can use their professional judgement to bring additional children into the targeted interventions.
- All schools work with their school community to decide on how to invest PEF in order to impact positively on pupil outcomes. Plans are developed, which are incorporated into the annual School Improvement Plan. Schools are taking a participatory budgeting approach to the allocation of PEF in their school communities.

- Head Teachers have reconsidered budget expenditure due to the Covid-19 pandemic and have realigned budgets to such areas as:
  - Outdoor learning to promote health and wellbeing
  - Providing support to children and young people on remote learning
  - Providing additional resources to support home learning
  - Purchase of digital software and IT equipment
  - Providing online activities and personalised support for the most vulnerable.
  - Targeted interventions for Primary 1-3 in response to poor engagement with remote learning.
  - Practical science resources to enable more focus on health and wellbeing.
  - Purchase of e-Books.



All schools work with their school community to decide on how to invest PEF in order to impact positively on pupil outcomes. Plans are developed, which are incorporated into the annual School Improvement Plan.

# Case Study: Largs Academy

## – Developing the Young Workforce Teacher – Supporting Digital Provision

### Approach and Intended Impact

The objective of the project was to evaluate Lockdown 1 and create the contingency plan for working with pupils, staff and parents –

- To provide support to those young people most in need who are identified through class teachers and pupil support teachers.
- To support parents in their role relating to home learning.
- To support staff within the school to provide devices and assist in the use of digital technology.

We wanted to ensure each young person has the equipment and information they require to participate in digital learning. Some examples of supports provided are:

- Twilight training sessions for staff.
- Parental Help Guides in the use of digital platforms.
- Leaders of Learning – S6 pupils supporting pupils in lunchtime training sessions.
- Working closely with parents/carers to facilitate remote access.
- Working closely with the IT Technician in school to provide digital software and hardware where required.

Our intention was there would be no disadvantage to any young people due to the lack of digital equipment or knowledge and information required to participate in learning. Trackers of engagement are monitored i.e. digital class registers, review of homework being returned to teachers. This allows teachers to target certain groups of young people who may be struggling with technology or another reason and provide appropriate support.

### Evaluation

Feedback from surveys to parent/carers have been much more positive than in the initial lockdown with regard to accessing digital technology and also the structure to teaching and learning. Staff have an increased confidence in the use digital technology for teaching and learning. We plan to carry out further monitoring and engagement with staff, parents/carers and young people and we will be aiming to include digital wellbeing activities for pupils.



## Developing our nurturing approach across all Children's Services

- We continue to work towards our vision of being a nurturing authority through our **"Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery"** approach by building emotional resilience in children and develop stronger relationships. Following lockdown, it was found that children who had experienced nurture approaches coped well with the return to school.
- We aim to establish **emotional resilience** in children and train teachers to foster stronger and productive relationships with children and young people through a nurturing approach and increasing engagement in the learning process. Evidence shows that this is reducing instances of non-engagement with children and young people and is contributing towards raising attainment.

## Childcare Provision

- Throughout 2020-21 the focus for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) has been on managing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on **children's**

learning and development and on the **health and wellbeing** of children and their families.

- All efforts have been focussed on **maintaining provision** where guidance has allowed. During periods of lockdown, service has been maintained for **vulnerable children and the children of key worker families**.
- **Remote learning** has been utilised successfully to support those learners who have not been able to attend. At all other times ELC provision has been maintained for all children with a strong focus on nurture and health and wellbeing. The service has continued to **support ELC funded providers and childminders** through the Scottish Government's Temporary Restrictions Fund.
- We are gearing up to deliver **1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)** to children and families across North Ayrshire from August 2021. A full review of the planned provision has been carried out in light of the Covid-19 related impacts to ensure our delivery is in the right places to meet the needs of our children and their families.





- All our extension and refurbishments projects aim to create **indoor and outdoor learning environments** which are beautiful, calm spaces which inspire curiosity, wonder and excitement for play and learning.
- Our **Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme (ELCEP)** has reached some key milestones. 25 separate projects have now been completed. A contractor has been appointed to carry out the refurbishment of Marress House, the most significant project within the programme.
- The ELCEP has provided a range of **local employment opportunities** and last year fourteen Modern Apprentices completed their training and secured employment from August 2019.

### Period Poverty Initiative

- We continue with our **Period Dignity project** to support the dignity and respect of our residents. Initially established in 2017, we were the first local authority in the UK to offer free sanitary provision in its schools, libraries, community centres and public buildings and we continue to lead the way in our fight against period poverty.
- During the Covid-19 response phase **via our food box distributions**, we also took orders for period products which would be added to the delivery for those in need. Alongside this we were supplying local community hubs for their local communities.
- In December we **piloted a bulk home delivery for secondary age pupils**. This was hugely popular. As part of this pilot, we offered access to reusable products which can have long term financial benefits to the user as they no longer need to buy disposable products each month. The reusable products will last around 5-10 years. Reusable products were popular, and we hope that these help to alleviate some financial pressure in households each month.
- The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill was approved in November 2020 and places a duty on local authorities to ensure period products are available to “anyone who needs them”. Facilities Management



## Face to face interventions

continued for our most vulnerable children and young people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.



will be working over the next year to design a service which meets the requirements of the Bill. Our children and young people will be a key part of this service delivery.

## Children and Families

- **Face to face interventions** continued for our most vulnerable children and young people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, many virtual and 'Near Me' digital appointments and visits have, and continue to be undertaken, utilising technology. Since March 2020, Children and Families teams have undertaken an average of 529 home visits per week to offer support, guidance and respond to safeguarding issues and vulnerabilities.
- In addition our teams have contacted children and their families by **phone** (402 per week on average) and virtually (23 per week on average). The number of vulnerable families being identified has steadily grown throughout the periods of lockdown.
- Utilising the **Get Connected Fund** a number of children and families experienced enhanced participation in learning and an ongoing connection with those offering them essential support.
- In order to ensure that young people could be digitally connected especially during the pandemic, 265 devices including 54 Chromebooks, 45 laptops and 25 iPads were distributed to children who are **looked after, as well as care leavers**. The devices were supplied by Who Cares?, our Corporate Parenting Team and Community Development.
- Our staff provided a range of **activities** to our children and families throughout the pandemic, including arts and crafts activities, scavenger hunts and booklets.
- Applications to the Cash For Kids Emergency Grant Fund raised £10,500 for our most vulnerable families **providing essential items** during the lockdown period.
- Donations of bicycles were received and distributed to families, assisting with mobility and **outdoor opportunities** to enhance well-being.
- Donations of children's clothing were collected and distributed to families who required them.
- Money received from the **Winter Care Social Funding** was used in a variety of ways to go directly to vulnerable children and families across North Ayrshire. This included vouchers for local cafes, cinema, supermarkets and gym memberships. All Care Experienced young people were written to with





Funding was also provided for music tuition, horse riding, crisis counselling, dance lessons, football coaching for children and young people in all locality teams,

packs of resources, wellbeing activities and treats. All foster carers were given vouchers at Christmas time. Caravan breaks and treat days are being planned and purchased post Covid.

- The Service Access and Multi Agency Assessment Screening Hub (MAASH) teams recently provided **Hope Bags**, with vouchers for local supermarkets, cafes, mobile phone, as well as other information and support guidance, all packed into the same emergency pack and offer invaluable support at a very worrying time.



Food vouchers, clothing vouchers and electricity cards were distributed, and our very successful Chicken Dinners project and Christmas Toy Appeal took place with £1200 being awarded as a grant from West Sound radio station.

- Food vouchers, clothing vouchers and electricity cards were distributed, and our very successful Chicken Dinners project and Christmas Toy Appeal took place with £1200 being awarded as a grant from West Sound radio station. We received numerous and generous donations of toys and money from far and wide to ensure all our families in need had a full Christmas dinner delivered to them before Christmas day.
- Funding was also provided for music tuition, horse riding, crisis counselling, dance lessons, football coaching for children and young people in all locality teams, as well as two extensions for family homes to support kinship placements (placements at risk of breaking down).
- All Care Experienced young people have a **KA Leisure card** that they can use when the gyms open up again.
- A joint funding submission with the National Portrait Gallery, North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and North Ayrshire Youth Services was successful in securing £60,000 from the **Youth Recovery Fund**. The Youth Recovery Fund has been set up to support the wellbeing of all children and young people impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular those young people from disadvantaged



The Innovative Employment Programme will create an opportunity for parents and carers involved with the Rosemount Project.



backgrounds and will enable the youth work sector across Scotland to support educational recovery in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. This funding will support an exciting range of art programmes, initiatives and exhibitions that will have a choose life message and encourage positive mental health and wellbeing amongst our children and young people. This involved art packs being posted out to over 200 children and young people across North Ayrshire.

- A **Care Experienced Quality Improvement Officer** was appointed on 1st March 2021 whose sole role will be to focus on the attainment and achievement of care experienced young people.
- During the Pandemic our **Service Access Team** realigned their service within a week linking Health and Social Care Partnership staff to all Community Hubs to work in collaboration with Community Development, the Third Sector and volunteers to support vulnerable families at risk of isolation in our communities. This responsive and collaborative approach enabled staff to deliver individualised support, meet food and health needs with dignity, tackle loneliness and support families with managing finances. Over 600 additional families who contacted the Community

Hubs were supported by the Service Access team during the first month of the pandemic.

- This co-location and joint working initiative has developed a strong partnership across services and is a model which we continue to build on to improve local health and wellbeing and to ensure that the services provided in each locality are meeting the specific needs of families and communities.
- Following the legacy and learning that was developed from the partnership work with our Community Development colleagues in the Community Hubs an exciting opportunity to support parents and carers into employment, training and further education post pandemic has arisen. The **Innovative Employment Programme** will create an opportunity for parents and carers involved with the Rosemount Project who are on low income and who have lost employment and training opportunities due to the pandemic to participate in person centred employment and training programmes. These programmes will enhance parents' and carers' experience of training and employment and provide them with a variety of bespoke learning programmes, that are interactive, confidence building and which cover a vast range of topics. Furthermore, this innovative programme will take parents





Our Throughcare Team fund accommodation costs for young people who are undertaking education courses at HNC level and above.

and carers on their own learning journey with each programme incorporating literacy and skills development, health and well-being and support to work towards adult learning awards and volunteering opportunities.

- Additional benefits from this creative intervention will be an introduction to **what's on at a local level** to encourage and increase the circle of support that parents and carers have in their local area and opportunities for delivery of intergenerational and joint family learning programmes, initiatives and events. It is anticipated that these programmes will commence in July/August 2021.
- Our Throughcare Team fund **accommodation costs for young people who are undertaking education courses at HNC level and above**. This allows the young person to use their care experienced bursary to cover all their other costs. This allows young people to concentrate on the course without necessarily looking for part time employment to meet their basic needs. One young man who went on to study for a PhD said that providing finances to give him the space to concentrate on his coursework was the best thing we did.
- In line with the increase in Universal Credit payments during the pandemic, **Throughcare raised the weekly Care Leaver Payment by £20**. Along with the regular distribution of vouchers for supermarkets and clothing suppliers as well as crediting power supplies, this was a way to try to ensure that care leavers were able to maintain their homes and meet their basic needs. Although the Care Leaver Payment increase was a direct response to the pandemic, the offering of vouchers and financing power supplies are a frequent, long standing practice of the team to alleviate some of the financial hardships suffered by care leavers. In addition, the council tax exemption for care leavers until their 26th birthday, is another financial pressure that young people don't need to worry about.

# Case Study: Qualitative Research undertaken (September 2020) into the cost of pregnancy in Ayrshire and Arran

The relationship between lack of material resources and poor health, including during pregnancy, is well established, and the birth of a new baby can result in those close to the poverty line falling below it. Evidence shows that there can be cost-related barriers to accessing universally provided, and free at the point of access services

In Ayrshire and Arran a qualitative study (jointly commissioned with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Health Scotland) to explore the financial impact of pregnancy on low-income families was undertaken. This was with a view to establishing any cost-related barriers to accessing antenatal healthcare and to explore what health services can do to support the financial wellbeing of expectant parents and their families. An important aspect of the study involved capturing the real voices of lived experience from participants.

## Findings

Financial pressures of pregnancy for expectant and new families caused cost-related barriers in accessing antenatal and postnatal care. The impact was apparent on families who were both in employment and out of work. Many families relied on the welfare system and family support. Issues were identified in the way in which Universal Credit operates, understanding entitlement and applying for support.

***"My husband's not well and he's not able to work. Suddenly we had zero income (just applied for Universal Credit). All we***

***had were a couple of beds and someone had given us a sofa. We literally had to rely on the kindness of other people to get us through that – it restores your faith in humanity!"***

***New mum, experienced, A&A***

Some groups found specific barriers e.g. asylum seeking families who were ineligible for welfare system payments found that their support parents were insufficient, meaning they relied on charity. A range of factors contributed to the financial pressures experienced by expectant and new families in receipt of low income, the most significant of which were:

- an increased burden on overall household income levels, particularly for asylum seekers, single parent families, and those in receipt of Universal Credit
- additional costs associated with preparing for the arrival of a new baby and ensuring the child's wellbeing once born
- the social pressure to 'buy the best' for the baby.

***"H- was working at the time and I was pregnant, but we found out we weren't entitled to anything until she was here. So that was like a kick to the teeth actually. We were kind of struggling then to make ends meet, just with bills and things... Getting everything ready for her coming was a problem – we had to borrow money off H-'s cousin because we were in dire straits really."***



#### New mum, first time, A&A

***"I buy for the baby when I have money... when I got the Baby Start Grant I just went out and got loads – I buy when I see them on offer. Some things are hard to buy on a budget... Mum's buying the pram for me – £100 off Amazon – but you see people spending like £800 – it's mad!"***

#### Pregnant, first time, A&A

While families experienced a sudden and intense financial pressure during pregnancy, varying degrees of financial support were accessed for 'baby-focused' spending such as clothes and equipment. This support was provided primarily by close family, and (for those eligible) by the availability of the Scottish Government Baby Box and the Best Start Grant.

Antenatal (and to a lesser extent postnatal) healthcare needs added a further layer of financial pressure on the income of these families, particularly those living in rural locations. The key impacts of accessing this care related to:

- travel costs for attendance at centralised venue appointments, whether for antenatal clinics or for scans/specific monitoring – again a particular issue for those in rural areas
- loss of earnings due to partners attending antenatal appointments
- cost, or lack of availability of free, childcare to address the restrictions on having children present at assessment centres or to facilitate travel to appointments
- additional costs incurred as a result of the ineffective or uncoordinated scheduling and running of appointments (parking, travel costs, food)

***"It's three buses to get to Crosshouse... Nine pounds eighty single all the way. So nearly £20 return – £40 for us both – just to get a scan!"***

#### Pregnant, experienced, A&A

***"Getting appointments closer. I think for anybody in Girvan who would be travelling to Crosshouse it's a nightmare."***

#### New mum, Experienced, A&A

***"He works set hours so trying to get a babysitter was difficult... for scans you're allowed to go to two but his boss didn't allow him more time off... so I had to take her (toddler) too."***

#### New mum, experienced, A&A

***"No one asks you if you can get to appointments – they just send out details and expect you to work it out! It's not good... it's not easy."***





### Pregnant, experienced, A&A

These findings supported several recommendations for action, as summarised below, and will contribute to future Child Poverty action planning:

- Greater opportunities for meaningful engagement with midwives at the antenatal stage will provide for continuity of care and time to build relationships of trust and provision of financial advice.
- The provision of clearer awareness-raising and signposting of specialist money advice/welfare rights services is needed. This includes staff training.
- Proactive discussion of the financial support that is available must take place early in the antenatal care process.
- The provision of vouchers or passes ante-natal care.
- Greater ease of accessibility to welfare foods and tackling of associated stigma
- Local second-hand buying options, third sector services, and online platforms which provide equipment for new parents should be promoted.
- Access to childcare facilities, specifically for those attending more frequently for additional care appointments.
- Greater flexibility to accommodate individual circumstances when arranging appointments.
- A more decentralised service delivery model, for example, a hub-and-spoke model, particularly in rural areas.





## Travel Initiatives

- We secured £400,000 of funding from the **Spaces for People** programme managed by Sustrans to enable temporary infrastructure projects to reallocate road space to facilitate **safe walking, wheeling and cycling** during the Covid-19 emergency. The funding will enable the following works to be undertaken by the end of May 2021:
  - Creation of new cycle parking at strategic locations.
  - Delivery of a range of behaviour change activities including school travel materials and maps.
  - Path works to reclaim full path widths on existing routes and remedial surfacing works on key active travel routes.
- We have developed a partnership project with Sustrans Scotland to deliver a street design project in Ardrossan which will design and implement **high-quality public space in the town centre and upgrade the National Cycle Network (NCN)**. The Ardrossan Connections project will be delivered over three years, with construction planned in 2022/23. This will focus on:
  - Providing safe, accessible and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling route for residents and visitors and improve the attractiveness of the NCN between the Three Towns.
  - Creating a sense of place in Ardrossan that celebrates heritage and encourages more visits.
  - Improving awareness of the NCN and the benefits of active and sustainable travel
  - Alleviating transport poverty and allow more people to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of travelling actively and sustainably.
- We have secured £1.31M for 2021/22 from the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) Capital Programme towards the delivery of **active travel and public transport improvements** across North Ayrshire

## Covid-19 Vaccination Travel Vouchers

- In response to the challenges faced accessing clinic appointments for Covid-19 vaccination we implemented a 'travel voucher' that provided the financial assistance for citizens to travel to their clinic appointment. Although children and young people are not currently receiving the vaccine their health and wellbeing is inextricably linked to their family and carers and this helped to reduce barriers to accessing protection from the virus via vaccination and the financial burden of cost of travel. This is being considered nationally as an exemplar of good practice.

# Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

## Increasing Income from Employment

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Support the creation of new jobs in North Ayrshire through business development and the Inward Investment Strategy and Ayrshire Growth Deal.	NAC Team North Ayrshire working with local and regional partners	Universal	Percentage of working age population in employment – 69% (2020/21)  Number of jobs created by businesses in North Ayrshire supported by Business Development – 163 (2020/21)	All Residents
Encourage and support local businesses to pay the Living Wage	NAC Economic Development	Universal	Percentage of people earning less than the living wage – 16.0% (2019/20)	Employed residents
Increase participation and positive outcomes across a range of employment programmes including: • Skills for Life Programme • Family Futures • We Work for Families	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes and number of participants entering employment	Lone parents, unemployed parents
Provide In-work Support Programmes	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants	In work parents
Employability Support Services will continue to target parents, young people and people with disabilities and work in partnership with other services to identify and target possible clients.	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes	Unemployed people, people with disabilities
We will deliver our Disability Employment Support Service: Equal	NAC Employability services	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes	Unemployed people, people with disabilities
Continue to use procurement powers and increased quick quote thresholds to help more local suppliers win contracts. Our activities aim to stimulate the local economy, by securing jobs or generating community benefits.	NAC Procurement Business Development Team	Targeted	N/A	Local businesses and residents
Develop employability skills through adult and community learning opportunities.	NAC Employability services and Connected Communities	Targeted	Number of participants in programmes	Unemployed people
Support care leavers with employment and training opportunities	NAC Throughcare support team	Targeted	Care leavers in positive destinations	Care leavers
Modern Apprenticeships for young people leaving care or have disabilities	NAC	Targeted	Number of Modern Apprentices	Care leavers of young people with disabilities
Maintain a specific focus on reducing the poverty related attainment gap and maximise the learning potential of specific groups of learners, including Looked After Children.	NAC Education Services	Universal	Average total tariff score of pupils living in SIMD 30% most deprived areas Average tariff score: All Leavers	Looked after children, children in poverty
Childcare/ Out of School Care Roll out of 1140 Early Years Expansion to aid Covid-19 recovery and enable parents to work	NAC Education Services, HSCP, partner providers	Universal	Centres providing 1140 hours provision	All parents
Work in partnership with Ayrshire College a range of vocational programmes are on offer to pupils in the Senior Phase.	NAC Education Services, Ayrshire College	Universal	Numbers attending vocational programmes	Senior pupils
Activity Agreements - Activity agreements provide 1:1 support to help young people overcome barriers they may face when taking the next step to employment, training or further education.	NAC Education Services, NACHSCP	Universal	Number of activity agreements	Senior pupils
Develop the Young Workforce (DYW) - All North Ayrshire schools are broadening the range of wider qualifications and experiences available in secondary schools.	NAC Education Services and Partners	Universal	N/A	Senior pupils
Strengthen the links between schools and partnership organisations and employers	NAC Education Services and Partners	Universal	Participation rate of 16-19 year olds (90.56% in 2019/20)	Senior pupils

# Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

## Maximising Benefits

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Undertake income maximisation by Money Matters Team to assist clients to receive their full legal entitlement to benefits	NAC Money Matters Team and referring services	Targeted	Income generation for service users – Over £15m in 2020/21 Success rate for appeals – 76% in 2020/21	Parents
Welfare Rights Officers based within GP surgeries.	NAC Money Matters Team and referring services	Universal	N/A	All families
Hold further sessions with senior managers to encourage poverty impact assessment approaches in our work.	NAC, NHS Ayrshire and Arran	Targeted	N/A	Raise awareness for Staff
Process Free School Meals and School Clothing and Footwear Grant – continue to automate annual process	NAC Customer Services	Targeted	N/A	Families entitled to free school meals and clothing grants
Continue to encourage uptake of Free School Meals in Primary and Secondary Schools including planning for additional provision	NAC FM Team and Education	Targeted	% uptake of free school meals (Primary) – 63.79% in 2020/21 % uptake of free school meals (Secondary) – 44.87% in 2020/21	Families entitled to free school meals
Ensure that our Customer Services Team are prepared to deal with any increase in demand for Benefits, Council Tax Reductions, EMA, FSM/ SCGs and Scottish Welfare Fund applications.	NAC Customer Services	Universal	Speed of processing Housing Benefits and Council Tax reductions	All residents entitled
Transformation Project, to assess the possibility of a “Single Shared Assessment”.	NAC Customer Services and Transformation Team	Universal	N/A	All residents
Digital support to residents – • Assisting with benefits claims • Assisting with digital upskilling	NAC Tenant Welfare Team	Universal	Number of residents assisted with digital skills Number of tenants provided with face to face UC digital support (cumulative for reporting year)	All residents
Roll out of training in financial inclusion direct referral pathways for maternity services in the first instance.	NHS Maternity Services and Money Matters	Targeted	Referrals to Money Matters from Maternity Services	Pregnant women and families
Provision of information relating to financial inclusion via the Better Health Hub	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Families
Provide access to free quality assured health information materials on financial matters via the Health Information & Resources Service including continued provision of access to non-digital versions (and free print and post service).	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Vulnerable families
Provide training and capacity building for staff on the most effective ways to have conversations with residents about financial matters.	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Vulnerable families
Monitor and support benefit automation and portal, being implemented by the end of 2022 by Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland.	NHS Teams	Universal	N/A	Vulnerable families



# Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

## Reducing the cost of living

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Implement the Local Housing Strategy including – • alleviating fuel poverty through our new build Council housing programme (latest insulation standards, use of renewable and energy efficiency technologies)	NAC Housing Services	Targeted	Number of households in fuel poverty (28% in 2020/21) % of council dwellings that are energy efficient	Vulnerable families
Focus on keeping our Council housing rent levels affordable	NAC Housing Services	Universal	Weekly rent rates compared to Scottish average	Council residents
Homelessness Prevention – Rapid re-housing Transition Plan.	NAC Housing Services	Universal	Number/ % of presentation that did not make a homeless application and were able to sustain current accommodation or secure alternative	Vulnerable families
Review our housing allocation policy to ensure no unintended consequences for child poverty	NAC Housing Services	Targeted	N/A	Vulnerable families
Energy advice – • Corporate Sustainability Team - general energy efficiency advice • Referrals to Home Energy Scotland.	NAC various teams	Universal	N/A	All residents
Progress the Solar PV Farm Project	NAC Sustainability Teams	Universal	N/A	All Residents
Seek approval for our first EV Strategy	NAC Sustainability Teams	Universal	N/A	All Residents
School holiday meals programme	NAC Facilities Management, KA Leisure, Community Partners	Universal	Number of young people accessing holiday meals programme	Vulnerable families
We will further work on our food waste project which makes surplus food available for children.	NAC Facilities Management	Universal	Uptake figures	Vulnerable families
Period Poverty initiative – providing free access to sanitary products at secondary schools and in all council buildings.	NAC Facilities Management	Universal	Provision figures	Vulnerable families/ young people
Welfare Reform Advice Team offer debt services to NAC Tenants	NAC Welfare Reform Advice Team	Targeted	Tenants engaging with service	
Reduce transport poverty by ensuring that local communities and families have sustainable and active travel opportunities to enable them to easily access services, facilities, employment and school.	NAC Travel and Transport with Partners	Universal	Measures for Transport usage	All residents
Travel Smart project aims to promote sustainable and active travel and reduce transport poverty in local communities.	NAC Travel and Transport with Partners	Universal	Measures for Transport usage	All residents
Family Learning Team funded to work in partnership with schools and the extended community – including food and budgeting support	NAC Education Services, Family Learning Team	Universal	Numbers of families engaged in programmes	Vulnerable families and all families
Continue to support digital learning with access and devices in Education.	NAC Education Services and partners	Universal	N/A	All children and young people
We will continue to build on the Participatory Budgeting approach to Pupil Equity Funding.	NAC Connected Communities Team and partners	Universal	N/A	Children and young people
We will raise awareness of the North Ayrshire Community Book(s).	NAC CPP Team	Universal	N/A	All residents
Continue to address food with dignity opportunities in our localities including launching an interactive map.	NAC Connected Communities Team and partners	Universal	N/A	All residents



# Appendix 1 – Actions to Reduce Child Poverty

## Reducing the cost of living (cont.)

Action	Who action is carried out by (all those partners involved in action)	Level of Intervention	How impact has / will be assessed	Targeted Group
Explore the use of the new Community Benefits Gateway (Portal).	NAC Procurement Teams	Universal	N/A	All residents
Support development of early literacy through management of Bookbug in libraries and communities, provision of training for partners and staff and provision of four Scottish Book Trust story bags each year from birth to Primary 1 for all children	NAC Connected Communities Team	Universal	Number of bags distributed to areas of deprivation	All families
Take forward the Cost of the School Day actions with schools, services and partners.	NAC Education Services and Partners	Universal	TBC	Vulnerable families
We will take forward the Action Plan from the Cost Of Pregnancy Pathway research programme	NHS Teams	Targeted	TBC	Pregnant women

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# North Ayrshire Children Services Plan

Performance Report

2020/21









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The 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic has had a major impact on all of our lives. The pandemic and associated lockdowns will have a lasting impact on our children and families.



## Foreword

Welcome to our Children's Services Performance Report. This is our first performance report since we launched our Children's Services Plan 2020-23 in October 2020. The report covers activity during 2020/21.

The 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic has had a major impact on all of our lives. The pandemic and associated lockdowns will have a lasting impact on our children and families, in terms of their financial situation as well as the impact on mental health and other aspects of everyday life. The impact of Covid-19 will be vast and is already being evidenced in relation to children and young people. We want to make sure that we are able to support all of our Children and Young People as we move into a recovery phase.

We have already had to adapt our services rapidly to provide alternative arrangements for learning and other supports. We will continue to adapt as we learn more about the longer-term impact of the pandemic. We will continue to listen to children, young people and families and use the best data available to inform the strong local partnership working which underpins our new Children's Services Plan. We are confident that we will continue to give children and young people the best possible start in life in North Ayrshire.



A key focus for all Children's Services partnerships will be the continued impact of living with the Covid-19 pandemic and all of the associated challenges.

# Introduction

Our Children's Services Plan 2020-23 was approved and published in October 2020 and set out our key priorities for the next three years to achieve our vision in North Ayrshire – **for all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up.**

Our Plan identified five key priorities that will be taken forward over the timescales of the Plan.

A key focus for all Children's Services partnerships will be the continued impact of living with the Covid-19 pandemic and all of the associated challenges with recovery and renewal phases from this. Our key priorities will be even more important in this new context.

## Children's Services Planning Context

During 2020/21 we have been reviewing our Children's Services Planning and conducting self-evaluation activity. This has led to the creation of a new group, the Children's Services Executive Group to deal with operational governance and

decision making. The self-evaluation activity identified various areas where we wanted to commence short term improvement Workstreams. The details of the Workstreams are included in the main report below.

We will have an ongoing rolling programme of improvement Workstreams that will be implemented within our annual planning cycles.

Our Children's Services Executive Group maintains strong links to our Children's Services Strategic Partnership, which has the main strategic oversight of our Children's Services Planning agenda. During 2021/22 we will be reviewing our key Performance Measures with the Children's Services Strategic Partnership to ensure they reflect our renewed areas of focus and Workstream improvement activity.





# Children's Services Performance 2020/21

What have we been doing over the last 12 months?



Our performance report includes some of our key highlight from the last 12 months. We have included case studies where possible and a summary of our Performance Measures is included at Appendix 1. Our high-level actions as agreed in our Children's Services Plan 2020-23 are included as Appendix 2.

Our report has been split into five sections to cover our five key priorities. We have a focus on Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and practice.

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is based on children's rights and its principles reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is for all children and young people because it is impossible to predict if or when they





might need support. GIRFEC also respects parents' rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

To ensure we demonstrate our GIRFEC approach, our report is: **child-focused, based on an understanding of the wellbeing of a child in their current, based on tackling needs early and demonstrates joined-up, partnership working.**

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

These eight factors are often referred to by their initial letters – SHANARRI. We have included a relevant case study linking to each of the SHANARRI wellbeing factors throughout our report.



The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential.



We published our North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report in October 2020 and this provided details of the areas of focus for the next three years.



## Priority 1: Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.

Ensuring the rights, views and aspirations of children and young people are at the centre of everything we do

### Children's and Young People's Rights

We published our North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report in October 2020 and this provided details of the areas of focus for the next three years.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (**UNCRC**) sets out the human rights of every person under the age of 18 and is the most complete statement on children's rights treaty in history. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and is the most widely adopted international human rights treaty in history.

The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out

the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It makes clear how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status. The Convention must be understood as a whole: all rights are linked, and no right is more important than another.

### The UNCRC in Scotland

The UK ratified the UNCRC in 1991, but it has not been incorporated into domestic law, meaning that many of the protections





RRS educates about children's rights, but also models rights and respect in all relationships, whether they be between teachers or other adults and pupils, between adults and between pupils.

contained within it are not accessible to children and young people in the UK.

In September 2020, as part of the Programme for Government, the Scottish Government agreed to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law in Scotland. The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill will make it unlawful for public authorities to act incompatibly with the incorporated UNCRC requirements, giving children, young people and their representatives the power to go to court to enforce their rights.

### North Ayrshire UNCRC Working Group

We have established a UNCRC implementation Working Group including representative from Council and HSCP services to ensure we are ready to embrace the changes from the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. We already ensure that Children's Rights are fully considered as part of our Equality Impact Assessments and Children's Rights continue to be at the heart of everything we do.

### Rights Respecting Schools

All schools promote children's rights and the Rights Respecting Schools programme (RRS) has been promoted and introduced into almost all schools in North Ayrshire.

The **Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA)** recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos.

RRS educates about children's rights, but also models rights and respect in all relationships, whether they be between teachers or other adults and pupils, between adults and between pupils. RRS underpins our Integrated Children's Service Plan; Promoting Positive Relationships anti-bullying, Additional Support needs and Child Protection policies. The UNCRC provides a clear link for pupils between building up rights-respecting approach in our schools understanding their rights and for children's rights to be realised everywhere.

All of our schools have undertaken this type of learning and moving forward this approach will be essential in light of the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scot's domestic law and into revised CP and ASN practices.

#### As of January 2021, we have:

- 4 Gold fully Rights Respecting Schools – with a Children's Rights Ambassador status.
- 23 Silver awards who are rights aware.
- 26 Bronze who are Children's Rights Committed.





Increasingly, there are groups for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) children where they can meet up for mutual support.



**LGBT education** forms part of the learning (primarily in the secondary schools) focussing not only on the sexual health aspects for children and young people, but also on social and emotional resilience, including supporting mental health in relation to relationships, sexuality and sexual behaviour. Our revised Health and Wellbeing curriculum pathway takes full cognisance of this. The use of curriculum benchmarks ensures that progress of young people is measured throughout this key area of education.

A number of programmes and approaches continue to be used in schools including:

- SHARE (Sexual health and relationships education) – NHS resource
- Fit (Stonewall resource)
- See Me! resources
- Stonewall information/resource
- LGBT Scotland
- Bespoke programmes of study which include discussions on sexuality and sexual behaviour
- Risky behaviours.
- Expect Respect
- Mentors in Violence Project (MVP)
- Digital support groups are offered in partnership with Youth Services,

Youth Services and Education have been successful in gaining funding through the Youth Work education fund to deliver

targeted sessions through the mobile youth centre. This work will include a focus on our hard to reach groups including the LGBT community. They will be offered support with MHWB and Employability through a variety of measures to including outdoor learning opportunities

Increasingly, there are groups for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) children where they can meet up for mutual support. They are supported to represent themselves at national events and marches. Even in lockdown, highlights from the recent LGBT History Month held in February featured:

- Bake days.
- A casual dress day when pupils and staff were encouraged to wear something purple and donate towards LGBT Youth Scotland.
- North Ayrshire Youth services provided opportunities to virtually attend evening support groups.

### Children's Hearings

Any child or young person attending a children's hearing will be offered the services of an advocacy worker to help them have their voice or views heard. It is their right to have this and the Chair of the hearing must make them aware if this has not already been done.

# Case Study: Respected

Having the opportunity, along with parents and carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them

## Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy

We launched our North Ayrshire Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-2025. It complements the Children's Services Plan 2020-23, the Children's Rights Report and our Child Poverty Action Plan Report. Young people have been at the heart of the consultation, planning, delivery and providing feedback during the development of the new Strategy. Our Connected Communities Team engaged with young people, youth workers and stakeholders on the key themes affecting young people. This involved continuous consultation with young people through a variety of events and platforms. This engagement will continue throughout the life of the new Strategy.

Our first fully online Joint Cabinet took place in November and involved 110 young people from across our secondary schools. They were joined by our Council Cabinet, senior officers, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) and the Youth Council Executive. Our young people shared their views on the issues that really matter to them including their community, digital connectivity, employability and health and wellbeing. The views of our young people will inform our post Covid-19 recovery and renewal.

The online digital Joint Cabinet session announced two successful funding bids totalling £120,000 from the Youth Work

Education Recovery Fund for youth projects in North Ayrshire. A joint funding submission with the National Portrait Gallery, North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, our Health and Social Care Partnership and our Youth Services team was successful in securing £60,000 from the Youth Recovery Fund. This will explore artist interventions that could be used in local communities to improve mental health and wellbeing.







## Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next

Focussing on early intervention and prevention

### Child protection

We were aware that the impact of the Covid-19 may have heightened the risk of child abuse in our communities. During the Lockdown periods, the Child Protection Committee urged staff to help protect children in our communities. There was also continued engagement with the public.

The Child Protection Committee offered a range of e-learning modules for employees and partners to ensure all our teams are confident in recognising the signs of a child or young person at risk of harm and how to report this. Childcare Hubs were established during the first lockdown period to offer support to children identified as being more vulnerable and requiring supported time.

Over the summer period a blended model of support was offered focusing on play opportunity and resilience building activities as well as more one to one support ensuring children's inclusion in group activities, but recognising and individualised support needs provided by consistent adults.

Children and families continued to undertake face to face work alongside families who were identified as being more vulnerable during the lockdown period. The focus of this work was to support families with areas of risk and need and build effective responses to these. A range of practical and emotional supports were offered.





## **North Ayrshire Child Sexual Abuse Strategy**

Our Child Protection Committee ratified the first localised Child Sexual Abuse Strategy in Scotland in 2020. Child sexual abuse is preventable. It is our belief that an overarching strategy that addresses all forms of child sexual abuse is needed if we are to adequately challenge, and ultimately prevent, these behaviours in all their forms.

The strategy is available here:

<http://childprotectionnorthayrshire.info/cpc/media/2014/04/North-Ayrshire-Child-Sexual-Abuse-Strategy.pdf>

The strategy was formally launched in April 2021 and a 3-year implementation plan will be developed to take forward prevention, protection and support and recovery work.

## **Child Protection Public Information and Engagement:**

Our Child Protection Committee has strengthened its social media presence to promote child protection awareness and has supported national Child Protection

Committee Scotland campaigns throughout 2020. These include the Keeping Kids Safe and Keeping Kids Safe Online campaigns. In addition, Child Protection awareness raising resources have been distributed via food parcels, community hubs, pharmacies and vaccinations centres across North Ayrshire.



It is our belief that an overarching strategy that addresses all forms of child sexual abuse is needed if we are to adequately challenge, and ultimately prevent, these behaviours in all their forms.

## Suicide Support Pathway

We implemented the Young Person's Suicide Support Pathway as a preventative and early intervention approach to supporting vulnerable young people who have made a significant attempt to take their own life

The Pathway is intended for young people up to the age of 18 years who are not known to any other Social Work Services who have made a significant attempt at taking their own life i.e. non-fatal overdose, act of self-harm significant enough to require treatment and intervention, or a deliberate act of a suicidal nature.

As the first responders to all concerns about the welfare of children and adults the Service Access/MAASH Team are well placed and equipped with all the necessary skills to ensure follow up support is actioned (**unless the young person is open to another Social Services team**) – be it by them or another trusted agency.

Outcomes from the introduction of this pathway include the following:

- A whole systems and partnership approach to prevent escalation to more statutory services.
- Provide interventions that draw on expertise and engagement from key agencies.
- Improved mental health and wellbeing, increased resilience with young people feeling safe and supported.
- Increased access to follow up services for young people who might otherwise fail to be identified.

- Reduction in repeat Emergency Department presentations.
- An opportunity for young people to engage with someone out with the family unit.

## Education and Childcare Hubs

In the summer of 2020, in a short period of time a range of colleagues worked together to create hubs in the community to support children of key workers and vulnerable children. We also set up Early Years hubs as a joint partnership between Education and Health and Social Care Partnership.

This required planning for accommodation, transportation, staffing, food and resources. It was important to create an environment where children could thrive, promoting resilience at a time of national anxiety through positive play and inclusion. Fundamental to this was collaborative working and professional respect. The impact of this is shown in the case study below.



The Pathway is intended for young people up to the age of 18 years who are not known to any other Social Work Services who have made a significant attempt at taking their own life.

# Case Study: Safe

Protected from abuse neglect or harm at home, early learning and childcare settings, in school and in the community



## Education and Childcare Hubs

James is five, and lives with his mum, dad and four siblings – who are all aged under five. Mum and Dad are both care experienced, Dad works, he often has to come home from work to support Mum. There is no extended family support nearby.

James is a lively wee boy, but he struggles with sleep and during lockdown his routine was seriously disrupted. The disruption had a serious, negative affect and, as a result of his behaviour, neighbours called the Police. James is supported by a Social Worker who asked for support from the Childcare Hub. The Childcare Hub provided 4 days a week in an attempt to prevent family breakdown and to protect James's relationship with his siblings. In the hub James would be able to engage in positive play experiences, be nurtured and best of all –supported during a challenging time in his life. To do so, we needed to consider staffing. Following the can do approach, Chris was identified as a good skill match and was redeployed from another team to help.

James thrived in the Childcare Hub! Sometimes he needed time out with Chris, after that they would come back in and enjoy time with the others. James generally mixed in well with the other children and Chris took time and helped out others who needed some extra time and care. James's time in the hub allowed the rest of the family to heal and repair connections.





Our Health and Social Care Partnership is implementing Safer and Together Model of domestically informed practice.



A number of major national reviews have taken place since our Children's Services Plan 2016-20, including the Care Review, the review of Additional Support Needs and the Scottish Attainment Challenge evaluation.

### Domestic Violence

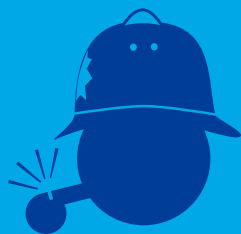
We supported the White Ribbon 16 Days of Action campaign online with our partners by showcasing a series of films, books, television programmes and podcasts, addressing issues of violence against women.

Our Health and Social Care Partnership is implementing Safer and Together Model of domestically informed practice. To build on the effectiveness of this approach a Pan Ayrshire Approach has been taken on establishing a core group of trainers in each Local Authority area. These trainers will have a multi-agency skill set and this approach involves partnership with our third sector colleagues from Women's Aid. Currently an application for an Implementation lead is being made to the Equally Safe Fund which if successful would enable a 3-year post to focus and ensure effective multi-agency implementation of this approach across the three local authorities within Ayrshire.

Police Officers have attended training on the new Domestic Abuse legislation to improve their understanding on domestic abuse, its impact on victims and improve their ability to deal with reported incidents and to work with partners in safeguarding.

# Case Study:

## Campus Police Officers



In line with the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, residents and young people are valued and should have the best opportunities to live their life to their full potential. As a priority and ambition, a variety of pledges are agreed in the Plan to tackle and mitigate problems in order to create a better life for residents within the North Ayrshire area.

Through the CPP structure, a joint approach has been developed to prevent crime and disorder and to collectively provide support to those most vulnerable and at greatest risk of harm within our communities.

Recently, a Campus Officer from Irvine Royal Academy identified the need for collaborative working with pastoral teams, school management, parents, carers and partner agencies to assist and educate young people about the dangers of being involved in criminality through the use of restorative programs. The Officer has delivered a number of presentations within PSE classes on a wide range of topics including internet safety, bullying and hate crime and to raise a general awareness of national campaigns including Mental Health Awareness week.

The officer was instrumental in working with Active Schools colleagues and started 'Walk & Talk' during the recent lockdown period which was a local hub for young people to attend. This included a variety of networks to support mental health needs and help build better local relationships with the police.

This partnership working has been instrumental in engaging hard to reach children and young people who are not participating within the education curriculum and the assistance and activities have been co-designed to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour, violence and potential exploitation.



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated.



### **Named Person Service Evaluation Workstream**

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated, focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing. It aims to ensure that any action to meet need is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, this is taken to prevent need arising.

Part 4 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which was revoked in September 2019, required local authorities and the relevant health board, to put in place arrangements for the provision of a 'Named Person' for each young person from birth to 18. The legislation indicated each Named Person would act as a single point of contact for each child with responsibility for providing advice, information and support where required.

While it is no longer a statutory requirement to provide a Named Person for each young person, GIRFEC policy continues to describe the benefits of a service supporting Named Persons, Lead Professionals and wider integrated, multi-agency working, in order to

meet the needs of all children, young people and their families through early intervention and preventative action. North Ayrshire's NPS adopts an approach that compliments North Ayrshire's Child Protection processes and procedures to safeguard vulnerable children by supporting families through early intervention and preventative non-statutory measures.

The Review of the Named Person Services Workstream will review the processes and procedures and identify improvements where applicable, to ensure Named Persons and Lead Professionals are provided with effective and efficient early intervention and preventative support in meeting the needs of children, young people and their families. This will be aligned to, and measured against, aspects of best practice outlined in Additional Support Needs and Getting it Right for Every Child legislation.





## Champions Board

During the past year, we had planned to deliver a number of innovative programmes including a Peer Mentoring Scheme, looked after and kinship care groups operating in all secondary schools and to grow the membership of our Champions Board. This work has been paused at the present time however we will restart when it is safe to do so and in conjunction with the national route map out of the pandemic.

Our Champions Board has designed, published and launched a Care Experienced Mental Health Toolkit called 'Care4Yourself' for all Care experienced young people and staff. Over 80 of these have been distributed.

They have also created a 'What is Care Experience' animated video to raise awareness for all Corporate Parents; launched a Stigma Policy and are at the heart of consultations and policy changes.

Our Champions Board continues to meet, albeit virtually, and we are exploring their own role as advocates for the care experienced community.

## Universal Early Years' Service

Throughout the pandemic, our Universal Early Years' service, which includes health visiting and Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) staff, continued to provide support to children under the age of 5 and their families. The service adapted in line with pandemic restrictions to offer video and phone contact with families, as well as continuing to offer home visits as required.

Many services, which ordinarily would be available to support children and families, were suspended during 2020/21 to support Covid-19 efforts. Despite this:

- **825 Requests for Assistance (RfA)** were made by Health Visitors and Family Nurses for early intervention and prevention support from the wider integrated UEY service (Health Visiting Support Workers, Healthcare Support Workers/Family Nurturers, Perinatal Mental Health Nurse, Early Years' Speech and Language Therapist and Early Years' Social Workers).
- **841 Requests for Assistance** were also made to wider local authority, NHS and third sector services such as audiology, speech and language therapy, Paediatrics, We Work for Families and day care provision.

# Case Study:

## We Work For Families



We Work For Families offers tailored support to meet the individual needs of parents/carers with children under 5 years of age, who may be finding it difficult to take the next step to realising their potential, and can assist with areas including employability skills, self-confidence and motivation, housing support and benefits and debt advice.

The programme's support workers provide employability advice and support to parents and carers in North Ayrshire and is accessed by referral from Health Visitors, Family Nurses or Early Years Social Workers for those most in need. This support has recently been extended to Children and Families Localities teams being able to make requests on behalf of families. It is an assets best approach enabling parents and carers to receive support to achieve personal aspirations around employment and training assisting them to overcome barriers in this area.

A family had been supported intensively by their Health Visitor over a period of time. The Health Visitor had requested support from We Work For Families, the employability support programme for families with children under the age of 5, to support mum to gain employment. With their support, mum applied for a number of jobs and has secured employment in a care home. This has impacted positively on mum as she now feels she is doing something for herself.

"You really are the best and I don't even think you realise what a difference you've done for my life. You've done more for me and looked out for me more than any of my family have ever done. Your [sic] an amazing wee woman and I'll always be thankful. If it wasn't for you fighting and getting me all that help in the beginning, I don't think I would even be here... look at me now."



### Perinatal Mental Health Nurse

Universal Early Years' benefits from a specialist Perinatal Mental Health Nurse (PMHN), integrated within the Irvine and Kilwinning locality Health Visiting teams. The role of the PMHN is to support mums experiencing low to moderate mental health difficulties, such as low mood or anxiety, in the ante-natal period and up to a child is 1 year of age. GPs, Mental Health Practitioners, community midwives, health visitors and Family Nurses can all request support from the PMHN. By supporting maternal mental health, we in turn support the overall wellbeing of the family unit.

**During 2020/21, 76 mums were referred to the PMHN for support.**

### Early Years' Social Workers

Another part of our integrated Universal Early Years' service is our Early Years' Social Workers (EYSW) who are co-located with health visiting teams across North Ayrshire. EYSW have a pivotal role in supporting children and their families (by intervening in their lives at an early stage before circumstances or behaviours result in the need for statutory intervention).

**82 referrals for support were received from Health Visitors and Family Nurses during 2020/21.**

Many of these requests were highly complex and a direct result of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. Working alongside families to identify areas of vulnerability and assist to reduce these prevents escalation of safeguarding issues. We work in collaboration with families where we seek to understand their challenges at an early point and support them to tackle these to ensure the families overall wellbeing, keeping the child's experiences at the centre of this.



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## Early Learning and Childcare

We are gearing up to deliver 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to children and families across North Ayrshire from August 2021. A full review of the planned provision has been carried out in light of the Covid-19 related impacts to ensure our delivery is in the right places to meet the needs of our children and their families. All of our extension and refurbishments projects aim to create indoor and outdoor learning environments which are beautiful, calm spaces which inspire curiosity, wonder and excitement for play and learning.

**Our Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme (ELCEP) has reached some key milestones. 25 separate projects have now been completed.** A contractor has been appointed to carry out the refurbishment of Marress House, the most significant project within the programme.

The ELCEP has provided a range of local employment opportunities and last year fourteen Modern Apprentices completed their training and secured employment from August 2019.

The new Scottish Child Payment, which is unique to Scotland opened for early applications in November. The new benefit, which is a payment for families on certain benefits, will be introduced on Monday 15 February 2021. Eligible families will get £40 every four weeks for each child under six years old.

We commenced the statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new Primary School at Montgomerie Park, Irvine with the inclusion of early learning and childcare (ELC) provision as part of the new school proposal. We have secured funding up to a 50% contribution towards the £14.5 million project.



**Our Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme (ELCEP) has reached some key milestones.**



We Work for Families is an employability programme delivered in partnership with the Lennox Partnership, Economy and Communities and Universal Early Years.

## Priority 3: Making things fairer and better

### Reducing inequalities and improving outcomes

#### We Work for Families

We Work for Families is an employability programme delivered in partnership with the Lennox Partnership, Economy and Communities and Universal Early Years. The programme supports parents and carers with children under the age of 5 to seek out training, education and employment opportunities in order to improve outcomes for them and their families. They work with individuals to overcome any barriers they may have to their own development, including supporting with confidence and self-esteem issues and childcare difficulties. In 2020/21, We Work for Families extended provision to include families on low incomes, and not just those not in employment. **110 individuals were referred onto the programme between April 2020 and March 2021.** It continues to be a valuable part of early years' provision in North Ayrshire.

#### Early Years' Financial Inclusion Pathway

Health Visitors and Family Nurses continue to utilise the financial inclusion pathway which facilitates families to access Money Matters and also Home Energy Scotland.

#### Cost of the School Day Policy 2021

Our 2019/20 Child Poverty Action Plan and Report was published in October 2020. This identified The Cost of the School Day as a key area of focus for 2020/21. A formal Cost of the School Day (COSD) Working Group was established comprising Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers.

The objective of the COSD working group was to produce a policy that could be used by all schools, services and partners to embed the agreed principles





The Working Group agreed that a set of North Ayrshire Commitments would be launched with schools and partners to set out the overall objectives.



and to develop a high-level action plan to be taken forward in 2021. The policy and action plan encompasses the work of all educational establishments and of community planning partners, communities and local businesses.

The Working Group agreed that a set of North Ayrshire Commitments would be launched with schools and partners to set out the overall objectives. A high-level action plan was developed that included a wide variety of suggested actions that can be taken forward by education establishments, council services and partners.

We have committed to hold a launch event in the form of a COSD Conference. In line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas of focus for the forthcoming year from the draft action plan will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021.

The conference will become an annual event where the action plans can be reviewed, and good practice can be shared. We hope that all education establishments will nominate a COSD Champion who will attend the conference as well as other key staff and partners.



We have committed to hold a launch event in the form of a COSD Conference. In line with our co-design and co-production approach, key areas of focus for the forthcoming year from the draft action plan will be agreed at a launch conference in June 2021.







We will take a sustainable, whole systems approach to reduce and poverty proof costs relating to the school day.

Our **North Ayrshire Commitments** have been agreed as:

The intention of the COSD policy and action plan in North Ayrshire is to:	Our North Ayrshire Cost of the School Day Commitments are:
Reduce costs related to going to school.	We will take a sustainable, whole systems approach to reduce and poverty proof costs relating to the school day
Increase participation by children, young people and families.	Children, young people and their families will be at the heart of making decisions and designing policies that affect the cost of the school day.
Minimise income stigma and increase inclusive approaches.	Our schools, services and partners will take a reflective, poverty aware and inclusive approach to making decisions that affect the cost of the school day.
Support families.	We will support families to maximise their income and participate in the life of their school.
This will be underpinned by the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We will commit to adopting the Cost of the School Day Toolkit in every educational establishment, supported by partners.</li> <li>2. We will commit to co-designing actions in relation to the COSD with young people, families and partners.</li> </ol>	



For children and young people returning to school in August 2020, we ensured a good selection of hot meals were available from the first day.



As part of the policy development and our budget commitments, it was agreed that there will be a recurring annual investment of £500,000 which will focus on:

- Food: £150,000 to extend our school and community food network across all schools to support children and families;
- Clothing and sustainability: £100,000 for a School and Family Participatory Budget Investment Fund for educational establishments to respond to local needs in relation to school uniforms, outdoor clothing, sports kit and recycling and reuse equipment; and
- Digital inclusion: £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.

We now look forward to our first conference, which will be organised and led by our Youth Services team and the young people who have been involved in the development of the COSD policy and action plan.

## Better Off Hub

Our new Better Off Hub will deliver vital financial advice services in a new holistic way, focused on the whole person with the objective to build capacity and reduce future demand on services.

Employees and volunteers have been supporting residents to use digital devices and, where there are barriers to access, we have secured devices and Wi-Fi access for our residents from the Connecting Scotland Project.

## Food Provision

In addition to Community Hubs our Food Hubs led by our Facilities Management team have provided **60,000 shopping vouchers for children eligible for school meals since July 2020, worth £1.7 million**. Prior to this our Food Hubs had delivered the equivalent of 1.26 million meals.

For children and young people returning to school in August 2020, we ensured a good selection of hot meals were available from the first day to encourage pupils back into the dining halls. We recognise the importance of primary school children enjoying the social benefits of their dining hall as it supports their wellbeing. We introduced staggered lunch breaks to manage bubbles safely and to ensure children felt safe in their environment.



Our Holiday Hunger initiative continued to help feed families during the October and Christmas school holidays by providing weekly vouchers worth £20 per week for each child. We also provided £100 payments for each child in receipt of free school meals in December to help support them over the Christmas holidays. This was followed in March by £100 Spring Hardship Fund payments to eligible families including those with pre-school children.

During the phased return of secondary school pupils in early 2021, we provided a full menu selection in schools as well as a £20 shopping voucher to all pupils eligible for free school meals.

Our North Ayrshire Fairer Food Approach helps give our residents better access to good quality affordable food. The Whitlees Quaint Larder, Cranberry's Community Larder and Woodwynd's Wee Shoap introduced their Pantry initiatives. This uses a membership system to provide a mini supermarket-like environment where residents have the opportunity to choose their own food. This dignified approach to food insecurity helps make

our residents' money go further by giving them access to good food at a lower cost. We now have eight Fairer Food locations in North Ayrshire and this network will increase over coming months.

### Period Poverty

During the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns, our pupils were offered a subscription service for two or three months' supply of free period products. This allowed primary and secondary school pupils to register for products which would be delivered to their home address. Pupils also had the option of trying out more sustainable products.



Our North Ayrshire Food System helps give our residents better access to good quality affordable food.



# Case Study: Included

Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they love and learn



To ensure our pupils could access online learning we provided:

**1217 wifi iPads**

**189 Cellular iPads**

**306 Wifi units**

**900 Chrome books**

**582 anywhere SIMS**

## Digital Learning

As part of the response we the Covid-19 pandemic, we have supported children and families to have access to digital devices. We have purchased over **1200 iPads and 900 Chromebooks as well as connectivity in the form of individual pupil SIMs or MiFi Units for families to share. This amounts to connectivity for 512 pupils.** E-Sgoil and remote learning were developed to ensure pupils were able to continue their learning and we put in place other free resources such as books, stationery etc. Virtual Community Centres were set up on Facebook. There's one for each locality. Sign up has been extensive.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there has been issues with the supply chain for obtaining more devices that have been ordered (an additional 600 iPads and 400 Chromebooks). £250,000 of funding has been approved for a Digital Families Fund to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.

We received 639 devices to support families and care leavers in the second phase of the Connecting Scotland initiative. Twenty organisations benefitted from this initiative, including Connected Communities service and the Health and Social Care Partnership. The devices are in the final stages of being delivered to the families and the organisations will be part of a North Ayrshire network to share good practice, an approach already benefitting phase 1 recipient organisations.



## Attainment

In 2021 our senior pupils' final grades for SQA qualifications will be estimated grades based on pupil class work and tests. Each grade will be quality checked in school and through Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) sampling. Estimated grades will be submitted to the SQA in June 2021 and pupils will receive their awards in August 2021.

The Professional Learning and Leadership Development initiative within the Communities Directorate launched a new podcast 'Let's Chat Leadership'. In each episode, they discuss current issues influencing educational leadership including the power of facilitation and coaching.

## Attainment Challenge

North Ayrshire Council is a Challenge Authority and we have made good progress towards improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap in 2019/20. Improvements can be seen across indicators for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Our Scottish

Attainment Challenge workstreams continued to make good progress and we are adapting delivery approaches to continue to meet learner needs across the local authority.

The South West Educational Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC) Annual Plan 2020 progress was approved. The Plan supports local authorities through the recovery phase with key emphasis on recovery, reconnect and renew. The Plan aligns with the National Improvement Framework and focuses on three key areas:

- Broad General Education.
- Closing the poverty-related attainment gap
- Enhancing leadership capacity and collaboration

Our schools have received in the region of £4.4m for each of the last three financial years as Pupil Equity Funding to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. Plans were created in every school to outline how PEF was spent by focussing on improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Good progress has been made towards planned outcomes and



good practice is being shared through case studies. Head Teachers have re-evaluated and realigned resources and budgets to help support children and young people throughout the pandemic.

### **Supporting Care Experienced Attainment**

During the second period of lockdown, Children and Families Localities Teams worked in partnership with families to offer one off spends to promote any care experienced child or young person's attainment. This was a one off spend of up to £250 where the child and family could identify an area of interest or passion for the child or young person to promote their attainment in some way. This allowed for creative thinking and flexibility and a range of opportunities were identified for children young people and their families. This ranged from a National Trust subscription promoting the child's interest in history alongside family activity offering the whole family an opportunity to spend time supporting this interest. Equally we have had young people being included in equine activities and other sporting opportunities. In turn these opportunities

have often benefitted the young person's overall health and wellbeing.

### **Raising Attainment**

Covid-19 impacted on the ability for teacher judgement assessment of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels to be completed. As a result of Covid-19, data was not collected in term 4 of the 2019-20 academic year for literacy, numeracy or health and wellbeing measures. The most current data available on key measures is provided below which was reported in the 2018-19 academic year report. Data for attendance and exclusion data is not directly comparable to previous years due to the closure of schools in March 2020.

### **Key progress in reducing attainment gaps in literacy**

In 2018/19 academic year, we have continued to make progress in reducing identified literacy attainment gaps, most notably recording a reduction in literacy attainment gaps at P4 and S3 pupils achieving level 4 or above. We able to report very good progress has been made



in reducing the early years milestone literacy attainment gap and a slight increase in literacy attainment gaps at P1 and S3 pupils achieving level 3 or above.

Further activity will be undertaken to better understand and implement strategies where appropriate to address these identified gaps.

### **Key progress in reducing attainment gaps in numeracy**

We have also continued to make progress in reducing identified numeracy attainment gaps in the 2018/19 academic year. There has been a further reduction in the numeracy attainment gap at P4 and we are able to report very good progress in reducing the early years milestone numeracy attainment gap. There has been a slight increase recorded in numeracy attainment gaps at P1 and S3 pupils achieving level 3 or above. We will undertake work to better understand and implement strategies where appropriate to address identified gaps.

### **Key progress in reducing gaps in health and wellbeing**

We have continued to make good progress in reducing identified attainment gaps in health and wellbeing and developing children and young people's wellbeing and resilience.

#### **The Compassionate and Connected Classroom**

The Compassionate and Connected Classroom curricular resource was received positively by several schools.

#### **Kit Bag**

Mental Health and Wellbeing staff worked alongside the Family Learning Team to deliver training on use of the Kit Bag.

This is a curricular resource to support learners with their emotional wellbeing.

#### **The Wellbeing Hub**

The Wellbeing Hub pilot in Kilwinning Academy has shown some early success. The Wellbeing Hub has provided an area of the school where professionals have space to support young people as individuals and in a group setting. The room also provides a safe space for senior pupils (SeeMe/Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) trained to provide peer to peer support. In addition, Education staff trained in "Reflections", a bespoke North Ayrshire resource – see further detail below.)

#### **Barnardo's**

Barnardo's delivered group work to help introduce young people to the concept of mental health and wellbeing; look at barriers and challenges to wellbeing; discuss supports and how to access these and look at how to support others

#### **See Me Peer to Peer Support**

28 young people were trained in SeeMe (SMHFA) volunteer peer support in the Wellbeing Hub. The supporters report they have gained confidence from working with others and have been able to use their skills within the community library to encourage more young people to make use of the library as a safe space. The young people supported by their peers report they feel happier speaking to someone their own age who may be experiencing similar feelings to themselves.

## Key progress in reducing gaps in attendance and exclusion levels

We have seen a reduction in identified gaps in secondary pupil attendance and exclusions rates. We will continue to monitor and implement strategies to address increasing gaps in primary pupil attendance and exclusions rates.

Employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Percentage of school leavers entering initial positive destinations	96%	94.8%	93.4%	95.6%	94%	92.5%
Percentage of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment or training	-	89.9%	90.3%	91.1%	90.5%	90.6%

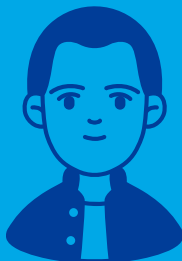
School leaver attainment in SCQF literacy & numeracy levels

Area of focus	Performance Measure	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Literacy</b>	% of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 in literacy	96%	95%	96%	95%
	% of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 in literacy	79%	81%	84%	84%
<b>Numeracy</b>	% of school leavers attaining SCQF level 4 in numeracy	89%	88%	88%	90%
	% of school leavers attaining SCQF level 5 in numeracy	68%	67%	70%	69%

The challenge school leavers faced in June 2020 continues to be assessed and we continue to work with internal and external partners to ensure that appropriate support and provisions are in place. School staff are working with careers officers, maintaining contact with leavers and monitoring impact and changes in plans.

# Case Study: Achieving

Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, in school and in the community



A Foundation Apprenticeship course in Social Services and Healthcare was established through partnership working with the Health and Social Care Partnership's Learning and Development team. This enables pupils to combine classroom-based activity with a one day per week work placement. A class of 16 learners from across Ayrshire were fully engaged in their learning and this is the first step on a progression pathway for careers in Social Services, Health, Social Care and related sectors. There was a slight decrease in the number of pupils participating in the programme down from 16 to 11. This is not unusual and pupils who participated in the programme have made very good progress in their work-based placement in health and social care settings.



Last year sixteen funded provider nurseries and 79 childminders were successfully awarded contracts to work in partnership with us to support delivery of 1140 of free childcare to all eligible early year's children. Strong partnership working with funded providers also led to the development of a new professional learning programme which is centred on the four Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) quality principles.

The ELC expansion programme has provided a range of local employment opportunities and last year fourteen Modern Apprentices completed their training and secured employment from August 2019.

### Getting it Right for Every Child

Staff understanding of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) continues to be a focus within all aspects for our practice and professional learning, the principles underpin all of the processes within the council in support of children and young people, including Education.

Through GIRFEC, staff will be able to determine proportionate, timely and appropriate help for young people improving each child's situation and reducing risk. The approach supports the achievement and attainment of best outcomes for all children, demonstrated through the review and impact of personalised targets in Children's Plans. All children have the entitlement to support which is appropriately developed and monitored using the GIRFEC practice model.

The GIRFEC model is used within our Additional Support Needs (ASN) planning with children and young people. Information from Quality improvement

visits reveal that most children and young people (over 75%) with ASN plans are making good progress.

### Lockhart Campus

The pupils who would move to the new £30m development Lockhart Campus in Stevenston in 2021 were able to see photographs of the construction progress in 360 degrees with the use of virtual 3D headsets allowing them to navigate through the facility and to become familiar with the Campus before it opens. The Campus, a first of its kind in Scotland, will provide a unique learning and living environment for 200 young people with a range of additional needs. The school logo and uniforms have been are now in place following consultation with parents and pupils. Our Family Learning Team are facilitating an Equity and Equality project to support families with the transition into Lockhart Campus from the 4 ASN schools.

To provide parents with the knowledge and understanding to support their child, a range of online parent workshops have been facilitated focusing on a range of topics relevant to families within the Lockhart community. This has included Supporting Siblings, Q&A with an Autism specialist, Communication, Supporting Wellbeing and Sexual health and relationships.

A Transition document has been prepared with tools and resources for parents/ carers to use at home with their child to promote positive communication around transition. Each child received a personalised transition kit to help support their understanding of the transition journey onto the new Campus.



## Family Learning Team

Over the last year our Family Learning Team has provided a range of supports and activities for children young people and families.

**196 children and their families were gifted a wellbeing packs and involved in a digital Wellbeing Wednesday** online programme which provided weekly 'how to videos' and social media interaction. 100% of families who responded felt that it had given the family time to interact positively.

**26 families took part in Virtual Family Cooking and Craft programmes.** 100% felt included in their community as part of transition.

The Family Learning Team adapted their delivery model to provide a range of family learning opportunities during periods of government restrictions and school closures, this included:

- **286 Learning at Home packs were provided to identified primary and secondary families.** Packs were designed to support learning at home during school closures and supported

through the Family Learning Website and social media platforms.

- A family learning website was created to provide ideas around supporting learning at home. Parents/carers can access local and national resources to support their child learn at home and support wellbeing.
- A range of informal and formal family learning programmes were offered **with 40 families achieving the Family John Muir Award and 50 children achieving their Young STEM leader 2 award.**



'We are very grateful for the resources in the box. The booklet is full of fun ideas and we as a family are enjoying engaging in home learning activities. Thank you so much!'

# Case Study: Nurtured

Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or where not possible, in a suitable care setting.

## Ghillie Dhu Crew

The Ghillie Dhu Crew is a group set up in 2017 for children permanently fostered in care in North Ayrshire, to provide an alternative to organisations such as Brownies or Scouts which can sometimes feel challenging to young people with care experience. The Ghillie Dhu Crew is a safe space for children aged 5-9 and 10-14 to attend a club once a week where their needs are understood. When Scotland went into lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic, those who run the Ghillie Dhu Crew were seriously concerned that the connections and relationships made through the group could be lost during lockdown and this would be detrimental to some of the children.

Within a week of the lockdown being announced, the Ghillie Dhu Crew moved online by using an app to connect both adults and the children they care for. A programme of themes was established, chosen by the facilitators and based on suggestions from the children. Every day the Chief Ghillie Dhu, Katie (one of the young people who has been volunteering with the group since pre-lockdown), provides a short video of herself setting different challenges and arts and crafts projects for the children to do at home. The challenges use everyday household objects so no shopping is required. This way of working has been so popular that adopted parents and children in the area, who heard about the group through word of mouth, have also been invited to take part.

One of the challenges set by the facilitators and presented by the Chief Ghillie Dhu,

was something to lift spirits in the local community. The children were given a card that they wrote a personal message on and produced Hug Bugs – a small wooden heart with “hug” on it that could be hung up – and together with a poem and a handwritten note, these were distributed to elderly or isolating and shielding people in North Ayrshire. To date 94 Hug Bugs have cheered up local residents, while the children had great fun focusing on the task and talking about what lockdown meant for other people.

This has helped to engage, entertain and distract children during lockdown, with them learning, connecting and taking on new challenges. The children look forward to the daily challenges along with regular video summaries and updates on the week’s activities, which go online on Saturday mornings – and if this is ever late, the children start to message asking where the next instalment is! Parents and carers also enjoy spending time on these projects with the children, and they have created a separate online group where they can share achievements, worries and concerns during these unprecedented times. The Hug Bugs project has also helped the children to connect with others in the community and many recipients wrote back to the children for example, – “Just to let you know, I received my card with message – sending you a hug, from a little bug – I was quite impressed. When you stay by yourself (especially during lockdown) you do feel lonely at times but knowing that someone or ones are thinking of you, makes a big difference. So thank you, keep up the good work.”





Children and Families staff worked throughout the pandemic to support children and young people within our communities.

### Children and Families Teams

Children and Families staff worked throughout the pandemic to support children and young people within our communities. Between 21st of March and 26th of June covering the period of lockdown 5969 children were visited. Within this there were 991 visits made to families identified as particularly vulnerable. Over 5,000 telephone calls were made to support families within the same period. Many staff were redeployed into critical areas for example, Child Protection, Children's houses and Summer Hub, their flexibility and willingness to do so enable vital support to be provided at the right time to children who required it. Support offered has been incredibly creative with arts and crafts packs made up and delivered to families, activity booklets developed offering low cost or free activity ideas for families at home, ceramic painting kits provided. In addition, leading up to Christmas each Locality Area supported vulnerable families with dinner hampers and vouchers for fuel ensuring families adversely impacted by poverty were supported to enjoy a family Christmas. Staff worked in partnership to organise the Christmas Toy Appeal ensuring these were distributed to children and families within North Ayrshire.

The facilitation of face-to-face family time for Looked After and Accommodated

children and their parents has been a critical area of practice to ensure the needs of these children and the impact of separation from their family has been lessened. Staff across Children and Families have been engaged to ensure this face-to-face family time is promoted positively and there has been incredible creativity shown in providing disposal arts and crafts activities, games etc for family units to enjoy within these supervised visits.

Very recently a partnership working audit was completed for The Meadows residential house. The audit highlighted how the care team have been tremendous throughout the pandemic in supporting young people and retaining a nurturing environment despite the difficult times we are in. The team regularly organised activities for the young people from campfires, swimming pool and gardening to completing Joe Wicks fitness classes. They have managed to entertain the young people despite having sporadic Wi-Fi. They ensured birthdays were celebrated with slight changes so that young people had fun and had events to look forward to.

Throughout this difficult time, The Meadows care team have continued to create a safe mental and physical space for young people reassuring them that they view The Meadows as home.



In February 2017, the Scottish Government commissioned an Independent Care Review (ICR) which concluded in February 2020.



### The Promise Workstream

In February 2017, the Scottish Government commissioned an Independent Care Review (ICR) which concluded in February 2020. A suite of reports was published that provide the ICR's findings, financial implications and a 10-year plan. The overall finding was that the care system is broken and requires a radical change to make sure our care experienced children and young people enjoy the same opportunities and rights as every other child.

One of the reports the ICR produced is titled 'The Promise' and sets out an overall view of a new approach based on five foundations. The five foundations are:

- **Voice:** When children speak, adults must really listen to them. Adults must make sure that children are included in decisions about their lives.
- **Family:** If children are living with their family and are safe and feel loved, they should stay there. Their family should be given all the help they need to stay together. If they need extra help when things get difficult, they should get it.
- **Care:** If children cannot stay with the adults in their family, they will stay with their brothers and sisters. The home they live in together will be a place where they feel safe and loved. It should be their home for as long as they want and need it to be.
- **People:** Relationships are important. Adults must make sure children are able to stay close to the people they want to and keep in contact with them. Adults must also help children make new

relationships as they grow up. Sometimes adults need some help too. The adults who are close to children must get the help they need to make sure they can do their best for children.

- **Scaffolding:** Help and support must be there for children and families whenever they need it. It must also be there for the adults who are close to children and families. It is important everyone knows where to go for help and that it is ready when it is asked for.

The review identified over 80 specific changes related to the five foundations that must be made to transform how Scotland cares for children and families as well as the unpaid and paid workforce. North Ayrshire Council and the Community Planning Partnership have been asked to sign up to 'The Promise' and respond locally to IRC's findings. Consequently, it has been proposed these foundations and changes are at the heart of any reorganisation of how we think, plan and our priorities for our care experienced children and their families.

The Promise Workstream has been established to take a co-ordinated approach to our reorganisation. The workstream will seek to build upon the existing practice across the authority to support care experienced young people and oversee a coordinated whole system review that is centred on improving children and young people's experiences of the care system. This will be founded on the Getting It Right For Every Child principles and wellbeing indicators.





## Rosemount Whole Family Approach

To build on the work we are taking forward across our services with young people and in terms of service development, Whole Family Approach and “scaffolding of support” work is taking place with Community Education to involve Adult Tutors to provide bespoke support to our parents and carers who are involved with the Rosemount project. The intention is to boost confidence and self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing amongst parents/carers with regards to further education and employability. At the moment we can commence this virtually however post-COVID we plan to use the IT room at Meadowcroft and local community education locations i.e. Caley Centre to encourage and support community involvement and increase the circle of support that parents/carers have in their local area.

We are also looking at volunteering and work experience for parents/carers with regards to the Quaint Larders etc. (another shop has opened in Kilwinning and one proposed for Irvine) where parents/

carers can gain a wealth of experiences. There is also potential for work experience for parents. This will also promote the “customer to citizen” journey as the community is the sustainability factor for families once they move on from HSCP services.

We hope this initiative will have a positive impact on the family as a whole, particularly when we move into a recovery phase from lockdown as we provide hope and opportunities for vulnerable parents/carers/families.

We are also looking at wider family events within the local communities, again to support our families as we move out of lockdown

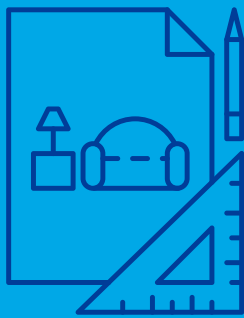


The intention is to boost confidence and self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing amongst parents/carers.



# Case Study: Responsible

Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decision that affect them.



## Make it Your Own Project

The Impact Arts' 'Make It Your Own' project offered interior design skills to care experienced young people aged 16 to 26. As part of the project, they received £150 home improvement budget, gained creative and practical skills to help sustain your tenancy, and received support to create or update CVs, help to apply for college or job opportunities and interview advice.



This transition to adulthood is a crucial life transition for a young disabled person.

## Transitions to Adult Services Workstream

On the 30th of September 2020, a Private Member's Bill was introduced at Scottish Parliament titled the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill. While still at the early stages of consultation this Bill, which is still subject to parliamentary approval, seeks to improve opportunities for disabled children and young people as they grow up and would legislate a requirement for local authorities to have plans for each disabled child and young person as they move into adulthood. In practice this would mean a statutory plan to be put in place up until a young person is 26 years old and a need for a whole systems approach to supporting young people with a disability.

This transition to adulthood is a crucial life transition for a young disabled person. Transition in this context encompasses the move from school into the adult world of work, and/or further or higher education. However, the move between being a child at school and an adult participating in economic life, and associated transitions, simply never occur for far too many disabled children and young people. This Bill seeks to address that issue.

Our practices are focused on ensuring where it is in the best interest of a child a multi-agency Team around the Child is established and if applicable a Coordinated Support Plan is put in place. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic North Ayrshire had a Transition Pathways Group established. This is a multi-agency team with representatives from Education, Children with Disabilities and Adult Services to oversee and plan the effective transition from education to adult services.

The Transitions to Adult Services Workstream aims to ensure that young people with additional support needs and their families, will be provided with a more effective transition into adulthood, which delivers greater access to a range of provisions and supports in the local community. This will be achieved through reviewing current policies, procedures and practices and to enhance collaborative working across agencies to proactively plan person-centred transitions into adulthood.



The value of empowered communities and citizens is also recognised in the Learning Together National Action Plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021.



### **Multi Agency and Locality Working Workstream**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 outlines a statutory duty for local authorities to engage in community planning at a locality level in order to enable local communities to become more actively involved in decision making. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Equality Act (Scotland) 2010 also emphasise the importance in ensuring equity and equality are at the centre of developing and delivering effective services.

The value of empowered communities and citizens is also recognised in the Learning Together National Action Plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021. This plan set a vision for improving the education and life chances of children and young people by recognising that parents/carers are often a child's primary education. This workstream seeks to align to this vision by further enhancing approaches to parental involvement and engagement in a child's learning journey.

Following the success of the locality model adopted during the initial stage of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Connected Communities service has embarked on an exciting transformation project to reshape the relationship the Council has

with residents with shift from 'customers to citizens'. This will involve developing services and systems to provide a single point of contact within the locality to coordinate services. This will enhance partnership working across agencies and promote a move away from siloed working in their locality.

A key part of this group's approach requires a mapping exercise of supports available in localities in order to identify gaps and how these can be fulfilled in a holistic way. This will be a key component of this workstream.



**This plan set a vision for improving the education and life chances of children and young people by recognising that parents/carers are often a child's primary education.**



# Priority 4: Supporting mental health

## Supporting social, emotional and mental wellbeing

### Developing our nurturing approach across all Children's Services

We continue to work towards our vision of being a nurturing authority through our "Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery" approach by building emotional resilience in children and develop stronger relationships. Following lockdown, it was found that children who had experienced nurture approaches coped well with the return to school.

We aim to establish emotional resilience in children and train teachers to foster stronger and productive relationships with children and young people through a nurturing approach, increasing engagement in the learning process. Evidence shows that this is reducing instances of non-engagement with children and young people and is contributing towards raising attainment. During and post lockdown and we asked the following question that identified the effectiveness of nurture in supporting the wellbeing of our staff and pupils.

#### Q13. During lockdown are there any aspects of a nurturing approach that have been helpful in terms of supporting yourself and your practice?

Main Themes Identified (In order of most mentioned)		
Importance of Communication	Supporting Children and Young People	Supporting Staff
Adopting Nurture Techniques and Qualities	Focus has been on Health and Wellbeing	Supporting Families
Whole School and Community Approach	Using Nurture Resources and Continuing Professional Development	Adopting Nurturing Approaches in Personal Life
Awareness of Individual Circumstances and Flexible Approach	Importance of Positivity	Continuing to Improve Nurture Practice
Importance of Relationships	Working Together	Importance of Transitions

Emerging from lockdown it was found that children who had experienced nurture approaches coped well with the return to school. Nurture had significantly improved their resilience to adversity.

Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery, a programme of professional learning has also provided staff with effective techniques to respond to children and young people and their own health and wellbeing needs. This programme was based on the following needs emerging from the nurture questionnaire

### Q16. What aspects of implementing Promoting Positive Relationship policy and North Ayrshire Nurturing Approach might help you address these barriers?

Main Themes Identified (In order of most mentioned)

Guiding Principles	Relational Approaches	Practical Application	Staff Wellbeing	Implementation
Relationships	Importance of Communication	Consistency	Revisit Policy	Clear Guidance
Positivity	Environment Offers a Safe Base	Nurturing Environment	Collaboration/ Team Work	Continue Good Practice
HWB Priority	Routine	Emotion Coaching	More Training Required	Trust
Whole School Approach	Listening	Calm Approach	Support for Staff Wellbeing	Reassurance
Nurturing Approach	Restorative	6 Principles of Nurture	Clear Communication	Promote Positive Behaviour
Positive Ethos	Communicating with Family/Carers	Regular Check-Ins	Support from NAC	Child Centred Approach
Community Approach	All Behaviour is Communication	Positive Role Model	Mindfulness	Change and Loss

### Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery – levels of engagement

This shows that Nurture approaches are considered to be essential by education staff in meeting the health and wellbeing needs of our children and young people.

	Number of views (Audio Version)	Number of views (No audio)	Total Number of Views
Unit 1 – Trauma, Stress, Resilience	3,785	809	4,594
Unit 2 – Learning is Understood Developmentally	2,128	1,507	3,635
Unit 3 – Environment Offers a Safe Base	670	517	1,187
Unit 4 – Nurture is Important for Wellbeing	1,252	2,588	3,840
Unit 5 – Language is a Vital Means of Communication	4,002	-	4,002
Unit 6 – All Behaviour is Communication	5,451	2,282	7,733
Unit 7 – Transitions are Important in the Lives of Children	1,043	-	1,043





## Improving mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social participation

### DigiDream Digital Quiz

During lockdown all face to face youthwork activities were cancelled. Having consulted with our young people and partners we created the live Wednesday online quiz on Facebook. This allowed us to host the quiz and have live chats with the young people by answering their comments and questions.

We adapted the format of the quiz to include two British Sign Language interpreters, to support our deaf young people to take part.

The Wednesday Quiz has had 46,559 attendees with 4,648 people interacting with the posts. We have 35 to 40 families regularly taking part in the quiz.

### Youth Work Education Recovery Fund

£60,000 was awarded by the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund which will see young people partner up with the

Council's Youth Services team, the Health and Social Care Partnership and National Galleries to explore artist interventions that could be used in local communities to improve mental health and wellbeing. This was identified by young people themselves who feel pressure on mental wellbeing has been heightened by the current pandemic and lockdown.

The Youth Work Education Recovery Fund and has been targeted towards a number of smaller initiatives benefitting young people in North Ayrshire including:

- community-led learning programmes through the Beith Trust
- supportive outdoor learning experiences with the Arran Outdoor Centre
- sustainable food provision via Dalry Community Garden
- environmental projects with Barnardos and the Green Health Partnership
- mental health and wellbeing work in partnership with SeeMe
- enhanced family learning opportunities
- update Mobile Youth Centre for use as youth work hub across North Ayrshire





## Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework Workstream

In June 2019, the Scottish Government and COSLA commissioned a Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Board. The purpose of this Board is to oversee reforms to ensure children, young people and their families receive the support they need, when they need it, underpinned by the values, principles and components of GIRFEC while remaining responsive to local needs and systems. The Programme Board works to ensure the development of a coherent, whole system approach with a focus on putting the voices and experiences of children, young people and their families at the centre.

Additional funding has been provided from the Scottish Government that will be used to strengthen existing integrated working between Services and partners to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and will look to enhance existing supports as well as identifying the need for additional or new supports. A range of multi-agency and partnership initiatives and supports are

already coordinated by North Ayrshire's Mental Health Operational Group which will be taken into account as part of this work. Representatives from Education, Connected Communities, HSCP, CAMHS and the third sector partners will all collaborate to deliver effective services and support.

Our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework Workstream will provide formalised governance arrangements for the coordination of our Community Mental Health Framework allocation and to build upon existing practice to embed early intervention and preventative supports as well as promote positive mental health and wellbeing.



**The purpose of this Board is to oversee reforms to ensure children, young people and their families receive the support they need, when they need it.**



## Supporting children, young people and their families to build resilience

The Young People's Mental Health Project – Arran Youth Foundations and Arran High School Parent Council were awarded £45,226 from the Community Investment Fund (CIF) to provide innovative projects that contribute to the wellbeing of all children and young people on Arran, specifically looking at improving mental health and wellbeing services.

The Family Learning Team worked in partnership with Mental Health services to develop programmes that support parents and carers around Mental Health Improvement and supporting their child's wellbeing.

**76 parents attended a wellbeing programme with 97 % of those who completed an evaluation know how to support their child's developing needs.**

Positive feedback was received from parents, for example:



"I actually looked forward to the course every week. It was nice to talk to others who are having similar issues and to know that we are not alone and also getting ideas of things other people find helpful. I have really enjoyed the course and taken so much away from it and feel like there's a lot of information I can share with other people who may also be able to use it."





## **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Extreme Team**

The CAMHS Extreme Team is delivering a whole Ayrshire approach to delivering excellent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to the children and young people of Ayrshire And Arran, in the right place at the right time and from the right person.

An analysis of the current actual and potential service capacity within CAMHS is now fully underway. Initial focus has been on cleansing already existing databases and datasets to ensure uniformity across the three CAMHS locality teams and the discipline groups. The successful completion of this will provide key information to inform workforce and pathway development plans which will lead to a reduction of waiting times for children and young people and their families, and improved access to CAMHS.

A shared understanding has been created between CAMHS and Educational Psychology of the necessity of this work in order to meet the demands of children

and young people and how it might best be taken forward. This ensures that children and young people are directed to the most appropriate supports at an earlier stage, and will not 'fall between the cracks' of agencies and going forward, gaps in provision can be met by targeted service development and/or direct commissioning.

Transition planning is being reviewed. There is a commitment to work towards 'seamless standardised (transition, which is) aligned with the Scottish Government Transition Planning Guidance'. The successful completion of this will lead to seamless, timeous transitions for young people and their families into and out of CAMHS. There will be a shared ownership and understanding between agencies of the importance of transitions with the young person's experience being central to gauge success of the process.

The Outcome Measures for CAMHS have been agreed and these will enable effective measurement to demonstrate the impact on children and young people.



# Case Study: Aberlour Sustain North Ayrshire Project

Aberlour offer support to Kilwinning and Auchenharvie cluster families with children aged 5-12 years experiencing a range of challenges, including poverty, isolation, mental health and wellbeing, self-esteem, and anxiety.



The project provides relationship-based support to the whole family, focusing on strengths and a commitment to making community connections. Support is offered when families need it, including evenings and weekends. Aberlour collaborate with schools and other community partners to help provide a scaffold around families during difficult times. Working individually and in groups, each family member can develop practical skills and strategies for life: at home, school, and in the community. Families are empowered to lead positive change in their lives. Following the national practice model (GIRFEC), personalised support is offered, informed by understanding trauma and child development. The team works with children and families to identify wellbeing needs and agree on personal goals which build on their strengths and interests – avoiding a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

The team aim to establish trust with families, build confidence, learn new skills, connect to their local community, and achieve sustainable change.

Reasons for referral were related to the pandemic and associated periods of lockdown, such as, disruption to routines, feelings of anxiety and worry, social impact and overall, most families struggling with home learning. The return to school has also seen difficulties for families in re-establishing routines and poorer concentration in children.

# Case Study: Aberlour Sustain North Ayrshire Project (cont.)



## Feedback:

"Feedback from our families has been excellent. They are delighted with the speed of contact and the levels of engagement have been high."

"Delighted the needs of the family were considered so carefully and thoughtfully during the referral"

"I feel that our worker has been outstanding and has gone over and above to offer our families support."

"I feel that our worker has been outstanding and has gone over and above to offer our families support."

## Examples of Successes:

Child/family have been supported to maintain consistent bedtime and structures and as a result, David\* is now sleeping through the night and the overall mood of the home has improved. David is now rested and able to manage daily challenges constructively. Parents are also feeling the benefit of improved sleep and feel better prepared to cope. The family have identified areas of improvement and through advice and guidance have been better able to communicate with one another. The family is happier, parents communicating positively and sharing tasks, overall wellbeing of the family has improved. David's behaviour, mood and wellbeing have improved along with increased capacity to learn as he is no longer exhausted in school.

Outdoor activities continued to facilitate six children at a time, for fun and structured activities. Parents have been keen to get involved and support this. Children have the opportunity to socialise, play, explore the local area and participate in activities that promote confidence building. Parents are provided with time alone to get tasks done at home or shopping etc.

After being invited to lead a remote activity via Teams, Angela\* led a fortune teller making activity. She explained each step clearly and concisely, offering reassurance throughout the task. The task was broken down into manageable chunks and praise was given throughout. Angela increased in confidence and responsibility – taking pride in the activity and a sense of inclusion.

\*Names have been changed.



Breastfeeding remains a public health priority due to the important role it has on the health and development of babies and on longer term health outcomes for both mum and child.

## Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy

Helping children and young people to be physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle

### Infant feeding

Breastfeeding remains a public health priority due to the important role it has on the health and development of babies and on longer term health outcomes for both mum and child. As such, it continued to be prioritised throughout 2020/21, with support to breastfeeding mums offered by community midwives, Health Visitors and Family Nurses and also by support workers within the Universal Early Years' service.

Where mums had more complex feeding problems, they were offered support by our Community Infant Feeding Team. Between January and December 2020, **200 mums were supported** with more complex feeding issues, almost twice as many than during the same time period in 2019. **Following support, 92.1% of mums continued to breastfeed at 6-8 weeks and 75.5% were breastfeeding at 6 months.**

### JumpStart Tots

Early in 2021, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, working alongside all three Health Visiting services, commenced the Jumpstart Tots programme. An extension to the long-running Jumpstart child healthy weight programme. Jumpstart Tots will now support families with children 2 years and above to improve their diet and physical activity levels in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

### Drop Everything and Move – DrEAM

During 2020 our DrEAM (Drop everything and move) campaign moved digitally and was rebranded DigiDrEAM. We developed specific weekly themes such as Monday Minds, Tuesday Tik Tok, and Friday Fitness. This approach allowed us to be flexible and still reach our





Active Schools launched their 'Ultimate Step Challenge' targeting teachers, pupils, parents, clubs and community members.



schools, pupils, parents and community residents with our key messaging. This new way of digital working enabled us to support our communities and engage with a wider audience. A feature of the Active Schools work at this time involved both Active Highlights and Adapted Highlights – this allowed our families to participate in a range of activities and challenges to encourage an active lifestyle during lockdown. The main platforms were – Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok and North Ayrshire Council YouTube channel. Support was also provided to the Community Childcare Hubs.

Active Schools launched their 'Ultimate Step Challenge' targeting teachers, pupils, parents, clubs and community members. Numbers that took part were: **933 pupils, 718 school staff, 348 parents, 51 Council Employees, 115 club members and partners – a total of 2107** people. Across the 5 weeks 204.7 million steps were completed by all participants. Feedback was gathered and some examples are shown:



"This has been a great fun challenge for the kids to do. It's been lovely for them to feel part of their school team even when they can't be together and good for making us get out to increase the step count."

– (Parent)

"It was good for getting me motivated to do more steps, encouraged me to run a wee bit further and more often."

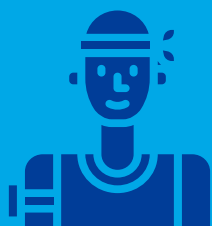
– (Pupil)

"The DrEAM Step Challenge has encouraged me to walk at least ten thousand steps every day and I feel so much better for it – thank you!"

– (Head Teacher)

# Case Study: Active

Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community



## North Ayrshire Sports Academy

North Ayrshire Sports Academy (NASA) is a sports coach education and training programme in sport and physical activity run by our Active Schools team. It provides an opportunity for up to 54 young people across North Ayrshire to become qualified leaders in Sport (6 per secondary school). The course provides training, mentoring, qualifications and awards to all participants. This allows participants to boost their CV and gain valuable experience as well as developing life skills such as confidence, communication, leadership, time management and organisation skills.

In addition to the training all students are required to attend regular mentoring sessions with their Active Schools Coordinator and undertake an agreed number of voluntary hours within their school and local primary schools and community. Students are required to gain experience in delivering sport and physical activity sessions to fulfil the voluntary requirement of the course. This achieves a voluntary recognition certificate known as The Saltire Award – a Scottish Government initiative to recognise volunteering by young people. Students help raise the profile of sport and physical activity as part of North Ayrshire Council's Sport Strategy.

Our 60 North Ayrshire Sports Academy cohort 20/21 who represents all 9 secondary schools have completed the following:

- ETC – conflict resolution
- Basketball – make it happen
- Athletics – Run, Jump and throw
- Weekly catch up sessions

Due to current circumstances regarding Covid-19 all the above were delivered virtually across a variety of our digital platforms.

## Active Schools

Our Active Schools team have continued their work in schools. They have worked across 29 primary schools and all nine secondary schools. We have had 129 different inputs in our primary schools and 46 in our secondary setting. We have reached 3871 primary pupils and 469 secondary pupils during quarter 4 of 2020/21.

Four key of work included areas below –

- Delivery of Curriculum activities/events
- Secondary Leadership
- Primary Leadership
- Consultation

## Young Ambassadors

The Young Ambassadors programme is funded by the National Lottery and is a key element of sportscotland's contribution to developing young people as leaders in sport. We believe that young people make a meaningful and important contribution as leaders in sport, and that young people should have access to a range of opportunities of leadership roles which reflect their interests and abilities.

The team have continued to support and mentor our 100 young ambassadors through weekly or biweekly catch ups.

## S3 – S4 Young Leader

We have delivered 2 of 4 Mental health awareness sessions to our S3/4 young leaders with all others to follow later in the year. We have continued to support and mentor these young people across this time.

## Active Schools and Communities Partnership Officer

The Active Schools and Communities Partnership Officer post was co-funded and developed with sportscotland and commenced in early February. A three-month work plan has been established for this innovative role and has already gained momentum. The post holders target localities have been identified as the Three Towns, Irvine and Kilwinning.

Key priorities for this time are:

- Engage with hard to reach groups
- Supporting families and young people to live a healthier life
- Partnership planning – whole systems approach
- Profile – establish and manage a profile around success stories
- Monitoring and evaluation to evidence impact

Since starting the post the officer has focused on building relationships and meeting with relevant partners. Having met with 25 stakeholders to date, this has allowed positive foundations to be built and will create future programmes, initiatives and learning to inform national sportscotland approaches.

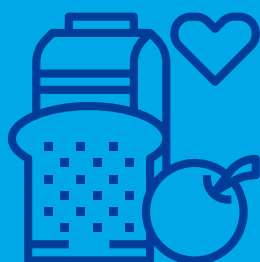


The team have continued to support and mentor our 100 young ambassadors through weekly or biweekly catch ups.



# Case Study: Healthy

Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices.



## Healthy and Nutritious School Meals

Providing food to so many people with varying dietary requirements is no mean feat for our catering teams but we all understand the importance of providing healthy, nutritious food and the impact it can have on health and well-being.

In a normal year we will prepare and serve around 1.5 million meals across all educational setting. We are very proud that we hold the gold standard for the Soil Associations Food for Life scheme and we are actually the highest ranked award holder in Scotland due to the number of schools we have accredited at this level. (All primary schools, Arran High and all Early Years settings)



## Healthy Food Served Here

Food provenance is important to us and the Food for Life scheme means we are serving locally sourced, sustainable fresh food, free from trans fats, undesirable additives, complies with national nutritional standards and UK welfare standards. In order to achieve gold standard we also need 15% of our ingredients to be organic, free range products are used where possible, all whilst buying locally and reducing food miles.

Food served in schools plays an important part in the school day. The social aspect of lunch time is very important for the mental well-being of children where they come together and can chat over a healthy meal. We make sure that the we offer the best nutritional food we can. As a key contributor to tackling health inequality we offer fresh fruit, vegetables and wholegrains every day to every child. We also vary menus as our food is seasonal and we encourage children to explore new food types. We also hold tasting sessions for pupils and parents to encourage pupils to try new items

and have conversations at home about different foods.

Having a full tummy has so many benefits for the child not just for their health and energy levels for physical exercise but also their ability to concentrate and learn in the classrooms will certainly be enhanced. No-one learns when they have an empty tummy and are lethargic from hunger.

We track the uptake of school meals both paid and free school meals and monitor this monthly to look for any dips or increases to allow us to analyse this and understand what the root of the change is and use this in future service provision or for interventions as required.

## Emergency Food Response

When schools closed during the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns, our Facilities Management Team led the food response for children entitled to free school meals with weekly food packs being issued. Rather than simply providing for the children of the household, we recognised that there was likely to be a need for food support within the entire household, therefore a household food



So many children are reliant on school meals for their main meal of the day or their only healthy balanced meal of the day.

pack was delivered. We recognise the importance of fresh food, so the majority of the food pack was fresh produce from local suppliers.

In July as the normal Summer term arrived, we moved to shopping vouchers. This approach allowed households to provide for the family in a dignified way via their weekly shop. The vouchers are restricted to use for food products only. On the islands, a bespoke voucher scheme was set up due to the lack of mainstream supermarkets available.

### **Holiday Meals Programme**

So many children are reliant on school meals for their main meal of the day or their only healthy balanced meal of the day. The need for food does not stop just because the school is on holiday and many children will not have access to hot and healthy food during this time. Prior to the pandemic we catered for a very successful holiday meals programme called Wrap, Run & Fun. In 2019 we served around 22,000 meals to children attending our holiday meals programme. A 3-course hot meal was provided for every child who attended, and still followed our health and nutritional standards, and ensured the children had access to fruit and vegetables.

Due to the pandemic we have been unable to run this programme however

we have been providing the shopping vouchers over holiday periods since their inception in July and we will continue to do so. These vouchers have also been used for school closures due to lockdown.

During the pandemic we saw an increase of around 20% in the application for free school meals. Some of this can be attributed to the change in income for some households due to the pandemic but a significant proportion was actually households who were eligible already but who had not applied for free school meals. The food packs and subsequent voucher scheme has encouraged uptake. Working with colleagues in Customer Services and Education we have had unprecedented communication with parents and families to assist them in accessing this support and it has had real benefits for the entire family.

### **Increasing Uptake & Awareness of Food Choices**

Our Teams are working closely to continue to encourage registration for free school meals and discretely working to identify those who may be encountering hurdles in the process. We are also putting steps in place to identify those families who are not entitled to free school meals but cannot afford to pay for a school meal.





The School Immunisation team have worked creatively in partnership with education staff in delivering the flu programme this year.



Going forward, we will be purchasing a new catering system which will focus on pupils pre-ordering their lunch. This will hopefully allow this to be done at home so a family can order the child's meal for the next day or the week from the menu choices. This allows conversations to take place about food and what is available and will hopefully let parents see the variety available and encourage uptake. There will also be a facility to order in school and introduces the opportunity for teaching staff to discuss food with their pupils, and reinforcing that food is an integral part of the school day.

We already work closely with Head Teachers to develop bespoke service as required in each school and we will continue to encourage healthy food choices for our children and young people by making school lunches an easy and attractive option.

### Outdoor learning

As schools returned after the period of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, an increased acknowledgment of the value and benefits of outdoor learning became evident. This is both in terms of using the environment as a learning resource and as an effective tool to enhance learning and teaching across the curriculum. Schools and Early Years Centres have been extending outdoor activity and there is

an increased awareness of the impact the natural world can have on learning and mental health and wellbeing.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we had to think differently. For example, schools were not able to offer residential learning trips. As a result, the Arran Outdoor Education Centre promptly adapted their offer and provided high quality outdoor learning on the mainland to the benefit of a significant number of our children and young people.

Outdoor learning continued when pupils returned to school, with young people embracing the responsibility of working outdoors during lesson time. There was increased participation by pupils and the flexibility to move around between peers enabled greater peer teaching and initiative to seek support.

The breadth of experience of outdoor learning extends across all Schools and Early Years. For example, Beith and Woodlands Primary Schools are currently trialling a Junior Forester's Award, promoted by the John Muir Trust. Lamlash Primary 7 children have transformed a small area into a wildlife garden which is now a habitat for local wildlife including hedgehogs and foxes. During the day, children enjoy sitting in this relaxing area, ideal for practising mindfulness. In West Kilbride Primary



A North Ayrshire Strategic Group for Outdoor Learning has recently been formed to bring outdoor learning and learning for sustainability to the fore.

School, the P1 children have been observed leading learning, working more effectively together and learning productively through the provision of a range of quality experiences, for example, natural, transient art, den building and outdoor maths. In Irvine Royal Academy, S3 chemistry pupils were encouraged to take their lockdown learning outdoors by searching their local area for examples of corrosion and physical and chemical methods to prevent corrosion.

A North Ayrshire Strategic Group for Outdoor Learning has recently been formed to bring outdoor learning and learning for sustainability to the fore. The group includes internal colleagues alongside external providers. This will ensure that a shared strategic vision will be established and collaborative working will enable us to build on the current momentum for outdoor learning in schools and in our local communities. Currently, plans are in progress to enhance outdoor learning in order that a breadth of rich experiences promote effective learning, mental health and wellbeing and active lifestyles for all children and young people.

The Council and KA Leisure will work in partnership in 2021/22 with the focus on reshaping the business in line with the Recovery and Renewal Plan; managing the financial recovery, including working closely with Council Finance Officers; by rebuilding the customer base; and re-opening venues and restarting activities in line with the Scottish Government Route Map.

We will invest £350,000 in a Covid-19 Intervention Fund to support Outdoor and Residential Learning

### **School Immunisations**

The School Immunisation team have worked creatively in partnership with education staff in delivering the flu programme this year. Usual practice is for Primary Care to “mop up” the children who were absent from school when the school immunisation team attended. However, for this year where there have been large absenteeism rates due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we will revisit these schools. This will result in the School Flu Programme running for an additional week but is a good example of partnership working.

# Case Study: Outdoor Learning at Beith Primary School

Since returning to school in August 2020 the focus has been on learning outdoors and health and wellbeing.

## Some comments from Primary 2 pupils:

"I like the tyres because I can jump off of them and now I'm not scared. I pretend I'm a pirate in the boat."

– *Crystal*

"I really love the tractor." Emmett

"I like making dens with my friends."

– *Ollie*

"I like jumping on the tyres." Emily "I love mucky Mondays and playing with my friends in the tunnel."

– *Sean*

Current pupils of Primary 7 took a small area at the back of the school and turned it into a wonderful wildlife garden. Led by their teacher, the pupils were involved in the planning, digging and planting of the garden. With the generous donations and support of local businesses and charities, plants, trees, woodchips, logs, and even tyres were donated. The area is now a full habitat for local wildlife. The pupils have installed a wildlife camera and have been fortunate enough to capture evening visits of hedgehogs and foxes. During the day, the Primary 7s enjoy sitting in the chill out area which is perfect for practising mindfulness.

Every stage in the school has also embraced outdoor learning by using Loose Parts Play. This has allowed for creativity where pupils have made giant marble runs to pirate ships. Teamwork, problem solving, communication and resilience are only a few of the skills that pupils have put into practice using Loose Parts Play. There is also a 'Nessy' path of tyres which allow the children to climb and jump over.



**North Ayrshire Community  
Planning Partnership**

Cunninghame House  
Friars Croft  
Irvine KA12 8EE

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## Children's Services Plan 2020-23 – How we will measure our success

*Please note: these Performance Measures will be reviewed during 2021/22 and may change.*

**May 2021**

### Priority 1. Young People's rights and views are respected and listened to

Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Value	Value	Value	Status
Number of schools with a "Rights Respecting School" award	54	Not available	53	✓
Total attendance by young people at activities, programmes and learning events that support participation in democracy	9,515	10,228	TBC	✓
Children with Direct Payments	41	45	37	✗
The number of care experienced children and young people receiving advocacy support as at the end of the period	Not available		76	Data only
The number of Child Protection referrals received from people in the community in the period	Not available		78	Data Only

### Priority 2. Acting early to improve what happens next

Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Value	Value	Value	Status
Referrals to SCRA (Alcohol misuse)	4	0	Not available yet	Data only
Referrals to SCRA (Drug misuse)	7	0		Data only
No. children presenting to ED due to alcohol misuse	34	22	10	✓
No. children presenting to ED due to drug misuse/overdose	43	27	29	✓
Number of secure remands for under 18s	1	4	Not available yet	Data only
Number of families graduating through the Family Nurse Partnership programme in the period	Not available	13	14	Data only
The number of children reported missing in the period	Not available		201	Data only
The number of children and young people on a compulsory supervision order away from home as at the of the period	236	221	217	Data only
The percentage of children removed from the child protection register removed due to 'improved home situation'	Not available		66.8%	Data only
The percentage of children looked after at the end of the period who are placed within North Ayrshire	Not available		77.03%	Data only
The percentage of youth diversions in the period which were successfully completed	Not available	100%	95.83%	✓
Percentage of Child Protection Re-Registrations within 18 months	7.17%	15.04%	Not available	Data only
Percentage of Looked after children in a "community" placement	88.19%	90.16%	88.24%	✓
Percentage of Looked After Children with more than one placement within the last year	21.82%	18.26%	Not available	Data only
Number of moves before permanent placement	3.6	6.5	2.5	Data only

Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Value	Value	Value	Status
Sibling groups with multiple moves into care	Not available	3	1	✓
Percentage of formerly looked after young people receiving aftercare in employment, education or training	57.78%	Not available	50%	✓
The percentage of formerly looked after children in receipt of aftercare services who have experienced a period of homelessness in the last 6 months	0%	0%	Not available	Data only
Percentage of children meeting developmental milestones	80.82%	83.27%	Not available	Data only
Percentage of funded Early Years Provision which is graded good or better	93.22%	96.50%	Not available	Data only

### Priority 3. Making things fairer and better

Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Value	Value	Value	Status
Percentage of Children living in Poverty (after housing costs) (updated method)	27.1%	27.9%	Not available	Data only
Average total tariff score of pupils living in SIMD 30% most deprived data zones in Scotland	638.1	685.8	Not available	
Average tariff score: All Leavers	780.7	857.4	Not available	
Percentage gap in average total tariff score of school leavers resident in SIMD 20% most deprived and those from the 80% least SIMD deprived North Ayrshire areas. <sup>1</sup>	41.3%	44.4%	Not available	Data only
Participation Rate for 16-19 year olds (per 100)	90.53%	90.56%	Not available	Data only

### Priority 4. Supporting mental health

Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Value	Value	Value	Status
No. children (aged 9-16yrs) presenting to ED due to self-harm	17	22	22	⬮
Number of children referred to EEI (Youth Justice)	187	230	200	✓
CAMHS – Percentage of patients seen within 18 weeks (Pan-Ayrshire)	80.21%	71.4%	98.37%	✓
The percentage of young people who worked with Rosemount during the period who were enabled to stay at home following interventions progressed by Rosemount Services	Not available	94%	TBC	

<sup>1</sup> 2020 results are not comparable with any of the previous years, as SQA has implemented an Alternative Certification Model due to the extraordinary conditions dictated by the COVID19 pandemic



## Priority 5. Helping children and young people to be active and healthy

Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Value	Value	Value	Status
Percentage of children with BMI centile >91 at 27 month review	9.98%	13.19%	Not available yet	
Percentage of children with a healthy weight in Primary 1	72.8%	Not available yet		
Drop-off exclusively breastfeeding between initiation and 6-8 week review (Birth to 6-8 week Review)/babies that are no longer breastfeeding - North Ayrshire	51.4%	48.2%	Not available yet	
Exclusively Breastfed at 6-8 Week Review - North Ayrshire	19.2%	16.6%	Not available yet	
Pregnant Women who are Obese at antenatal booking - North Ayrshire	28.1%	31.6%	Not available yet	
The percentage uptake of the HPV immunisation	83.69%	81.53%	Not available yet	
Percentage of children in Primary 1 with no obvious dental decay experience	72.9%	Not available yet		
The percentage of children in primary 7 with no obvious dental decay experience	74.78%	Not available yet		

## Children's Services Plan 2020-23

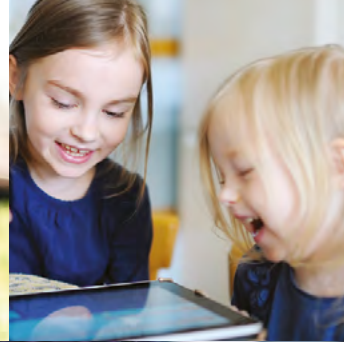
**Performance Framework – May 2021** *Please note- actions will be reviewed during 2021/22 and may change.*

<b>Priority 1: Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.</b> <i>Ensuring the rights, views and aspirations of children and young people are at the centre of everything we do</i> <b>We will:</b>	Wellbeing Indicators
Implement the North Ayrshire UNCRC plan actions	Respected
Ensure the rights of all children and young people are protected	Respected
Ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the work of the Community Planning Partnership	Respected/ Responsible
Ensure children and young people have the opportunity to develop their citizenship skills, including active democratic participation opportunities	Responsible
<b>Priority 2: Acting early to improve what happens next</b> <i>Focussing on early intervention and prevention</i> <b>We will:</b>	Wellbeing Indicators
Work with our partners to keep all children and young people safe	Safe
Continue to support families with children age 0-5 through our integrated universal early years' service	Safe
Increase access to early learning and childcare	Achieving
Work together with parents or carers to provide support to their children	Nurtured
Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people	Nurtured/ Achieving
<b>Priority 3: Making things fairer and better</b> <i>Reducing inequalities and improving outcomes</i> <b>We will:</b>	Wellbeing Indicators
Implement the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan	Included
Improve attainment and achievement for all	Achieving
Close the poverty related attainment gap	Achieving/ Included
Implement the recommendations from the Independent Care Review (Scotland).	Included/ Nurtured
Implement the recommendations from the Additional Support for Learning Review (Scotland)	Included/ Nurtured
Build strong collaborative partnerships in local areas to ensure we deliver high-quality services for all of our children, young people and families	Included
<b>Priority 4: Supporting mental health</b> <i>Supporting social, emotional and mental wellbeing</i> <b>We will:</b>	Wellbeing Indicators
Develop our nurturing approach across all Children's Services	Nurtured
Work with children young people, families and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social participation	Active/ Healthy
Continue to have appropriate pathways in place for supporting mental wellbeing	Healthy
Work together with children, young people and their families to help build resilience	Healthy
<b>Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy</b> <i>Helping children and young people to be physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle</i> <b>We will:</b>	Wellbeing Indicators
Create innovative physical activity and sports opportunities with communities and partners	Active
Adopt a whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight	Active/ Healthy
Design opportunities into the whole system to enable children, young people and their families to have a healthy lifestyle	Active/ Healthy
Ensure all our early years indoor and outdoor learning environments and activities enable children to be physically active	Active/ Healthy

# North Ayrshire Children Services Plan 2020/2023







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It is inescapable that the Covid-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on our children and families, in terms of their financial situations as well as the impact on mental health and other aspects of everyday life.



## Foreword

Welcome to our updated North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan 2020-23.

This is our second Children's Services Plan and we are aiming to build on the progress that has been made to date. We have set out our key priorities for the next three years to achieve our vision in North Ayrshire – for all our children and young people to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow

We continue to listen to and engage with children, young people and families and use the best data available to strengthen the strong local partnership working we have in place. Children and Young People's rights are at the heart of all we do as a Child Centred Council, and the implications of Scottish Parliament Bill to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the law in Scotland will be a key development of our approach.

We support and build on the strengths of our families, schools and communities to ensure that capacity building,

collaboration and radical kindness underpin all our work together.

During 2020/21 we have been reviewing our Children's Services Planning and conducting self-evaluation activity. This led to the creation of a new group, the Children's Services Executive Group, to deal with operational governance and decision making. The self-evaluation identified various areas where we wanted to make improvements and we have initiated some short term workstreams, the details of which are included in the main report below.





One of our main concerns is tackling Child Poverty and this can be seen in our ambitious Child Poverty Action Plan. We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty,

We will have an ongoing rolling programme of improvement workstreams that will be implemented within our annual planning cycles.

Our Children's Services Executive Group maintains strong strategic links to our Children's Services Strategic Partnership, which has the main strategic oversight of our Children's Services Planning suite. During 2021/22 we will be reviewing our Key Performance Measures with the Children's Services Strategic Partnership to ensure they reflect our renewed areas of focus and workstream improvement activity.

As part of our ongoing self-evaluation we will be reviewing our Children's Services Plan Performance Framework during 2021/22.

One of our main areas of focus is tackling child poverty and this can be seen in our ambitious Child Poverty Action Plan. We are determined to tackle inequalities and create a society where no one lives in poverty, where the economy is inclusive and where everyone has the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives.



**Councillor  
Joe Cullinane**  
Leader of North  
Ayrshire Council



**Audrey Sutton**  
(Education and  
Communities)  
and Chair of the  
Children's Services  
Strategic Partnership



# Introduction:

## Local Context and key facts

In North Ayrshire we understand that all of our children and young people are unique individuals and should be able to feel confident and happy with themselves and the place where they live.

Currently, we have 135,000 people living in North Ayrshire. 16.7% of our population are children and young people under 16 (17% national average).

The infographic below provides a snapshot of some of the key statistics about children and young people across North Ayrshire. Throughout this document we outline how we plan to tackle these issues and improve outcomes for our children, young people and families.



Child protection Registrations  
(Rate per 1000 0-15 year olds):  
The number of children on the  
Child Protection Register in 2019

North Ayrshire

**6.7**

in 2018

4.6 in 2019

Scotland

**2.8**

in 2019

Teenage Pregnancies  
per 1000 15-19 year olds  
in the period 2015 to 2017

North Ayrshire

**35.6**

Scotland

**31.42**

Childhood Obesity:  
Percentage of Children with a healthy  
weight in Primary 1 in 2018/19



North Ayrshire

**72.26%**

Scotland

**76.58%**

Breastfeeding Rates:  
Babies exclusively breastfed  
at 6-8 weeks in 2019

North Ayrshire

**19.2%**

in 2019,  
improvement from  
17% in 2018

Scotland

**32%**

in 2019

## Rates of looked After Children age 0-17 in 2019

North Ayrshire

**2.1%**

Scotland

**1.4%**



## 2018/19 Attainment of all School Leavers

% Attaining  
Literacy at SCQF  
level 5 or above

North Ayrshire

**84%**

Scotland 82%

% Attaining  
Numeracy at  
SCQF level 5  
or above

North Ayrshire

**69%**

Scotland 69%

## 2018/19 Attainment of Looked After Children

% Attaining  
Literacy at SCQF  
level 5 or above

North Ayrshire

**39%**

% Attaining  
Numeracy at  
SCQF level 5  
or above

North Ayrshire

**25%**

Scotland 22%

## School leavers destinations 2018/19

All leavers:

North Ayrshire

**94%**

Scotland  
95%

Looked After  
school leavers:

North Ayrshire

**83%**

Scotland  
82%



## Children living in Poverty 2018/19 (Before Housing costs)



North Ayrshire

**27.9%**

National

**24.3%**

## Domestic abuse incidents recorded per 10,000 total population, 2018/19



North Ayrshire

**123.5**

Nationally

**111.5**

## As at July 2020, the Unemployment Claimant Count for 18-24 year olds

North Ayrshire

**14.6%**

Scotland

**9.6%**







We have created a profile of our area based on the latest information and data available. You can view our full data profile dashboard at [Appendix 1](#).



We use a range of information from consulting and speaking to our children and young people such as the Youth Forum, Joint Cabinet and via our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy.

## Strategic Needs Assessment

In 2014/15, in partnership with the Dartington Service Design Lab, we carried out a ChildrenCount Wellbeing Survey of almost 8000 young people aged between nine and 16 years old and more than 600 families of younger children. This rich range of information was used to inform our priorities for the 2016-20 Children's Services Plan.

We continue to use a range of data, including further focussed work with Dartington, to build our understanding of the needs in our area in partnership with our Community Planning Partners. Our data sources include:

### School Census data

This includes information collected in schools such as the numbers of pupils by age, additional support needs and other information.

### Child Protection data

This includes the number of children who are looked after by the Council and the reasons for this.

### Health data

This includes information on birth weight and breast-feeding rates, dental health information, immunisation rates and levels of smoking, alcohol and drug use in young people as well as the population as a whole.

### Children and young people's views and experiences

We use a range of information from consulting and speaking to our children and young people such as the Youth Forum, Joint Cabinet and via our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy. We ask for the views of children and young people in schools using the How Good is Our School pupil questionnaires.

# Our Priorities for 2020 to 2023

A key focus for all Children's Services partnerships will now be recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and all of the associated challenges this brings. Our key priorities will be even more important in this new context.

We have a good understanding of the needs of our children and young people and their families and we are determined to ensure that a whole systems approach delivers the best results.

Our Plan is a living document that will be updated and adapted based on the changing needs of our area, especially as the effects of Covid-19 become more apparent. We will be developing detailed action plan and performance framework which will show the actions we will take and how we will measure our progress.

We have ensured that as many children and young people as possible in North Ayrshire are involved in making decisions about what is important to them. We have identified our key priorities by listening to what our children and young people have told us.



**Priority 1:** Young people's rights and views are respected and listened to.

**Ensuring the rights, views and aspirations of children and young people are at the centre of everything we do**

## **We will:**

- Implement the North Ayrshire UNCRC plan actions
- Ensure the rights of all children and young people are protected
- Ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and influence the work of the Community Planning Partnership
- Ensure children and young people have the opportunity to develop their citizenship skills, including active democratic participation opportunities



**Priority 2:** Acting early to improve what happens next  
**Focussing on early intervention and prevention**

## **We will:**

- Work with our partners to keep all children and young people safe
- Continue to support families with children age 0-5 through our integrated universal early years' service
- Increase access to early learning and childcare
- Work together with parents or carers to provide support to their children
- Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people





### **Priority 3: Making things fairer and better** **Reducing inequalities and improving outcomes**

#### **We will:**

- Implement the North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan
- Improve attainment and achievement for all
- Close the poverty related attainment gap
- Implement the recommendations from the Independent Care Review (Scotland).
- Implement the recommendations from the Additional Support for Learning Review (Scotland)
- Build strong collaborative partnerships in local areas to ensure we deliver high-quality services for all of our children, young people and families



### **Priority 4: Supporting mental health** **Supporting social, emotional and mental wellbeing**

#### **We will:**

- Develop our nurturing approach across all Children's Services
- Work with children young people, families and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social participation
- Continue to have appropriate pathways in place for supporting mental wellbeing
- Work together with children, young people and their families to help build resilience



### **Priority 5: Helping children and young people to be active and healthy** **Helping children and young people to be physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle**

#### **We will:**

- Create innovative physical activity and sports opportunities with communities and partners
- Adopt a whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight
- Design opportunities into the whole system to enable children, young people and their families to have a healthy lifestyle
- Ensure all our early years indoor and outdoor learning environments and activities enable children to be physically active



# What our Plan means for you: Our Children and Young People

We want you to know what this plan means for you and your family



At the heart of all of our work with you, your families and our partners, are the principles and values called 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC). This way of working is designed to support you and your family by making sure you can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help you to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that you can realise your full potential.



There are a range of ways that you can get involved and make your voices heard.



If you feel like you need help or advice, then you should speak to your class teacher in primary schools. In secondary schools you can speak to your pastoral care teachers or any other adult in your school that you feel comfortable with. They will be able to help or direct you to the right place or person. There are a range of ways that you can get involved and make your voices heard. This could be through your pupil council, or taking part in focus groups, questionnaires, class surveys and discussions. Or you might want to get involved with clubs, organisations or youth groups. Lots of information is available online in our **Youth Participation Strategy**.

Some of you have helped us to develop this Plan and choose the most important areas for us to work on – and we want to say thank you for this.

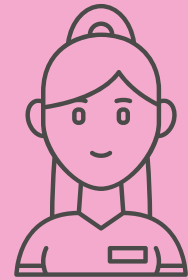




# What our Plan means for you: Our Children and Young People

## 1. Your Rights and Views

- We have worked with you to develop a new **Citizenship and Participation Strategy** that will focus on your rights
- If you have been or are being cared for, you can take part in or be represented by our **Champions Board**
- Our **Rights Respecting Schools** and rights awareness in schools make sure that your rights are at the heart of everything we do
- Your views are gathered regularly in your schools. What you tell us is used to make improvements



## 2. Act early to improve what happens next

- **Healthy food** options are available and promoted in our schools
- Our **Active Schools** programmes provide activities in school, after school or in local clubs through KA Leisure
- Our schools and early years centres are working to develop outdoor areas for learning and activity



## 3. Make things fairer and better

- We support families when they have a new baby. This includes **helping** with feeding babies, family money advice, and supporting healthy choices
- We encourage you and your family to get **immunisations** to help protect against diseases
- Our **Family Learning Team** supports you and your family to learn and play together
- We work together to make sure that we give help and support as early as possible if you have challenges or something goes wrong
- We provide support for you to enjoy and benefit from using the internet and social media safely





#### 4. Support mental health

- We work with you to achieve your full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors
- We make sure that there are lots of options in our **schools** for your learning.
- When you leave school, we support you to take the **next steps** into college, university, training or work
- We provide healthy lunches and activities during the school holidays



#### 5. Help you be active and have healthy lives

- There are people and programmes to support your mental health. We have **Counsellors** in each of our secondary schools and all of our schools and early years centres work to remove stigma about mental health
- We use **nurture approaches** throughout all of our Children's Services to make sure that you are supported with your social, emotional and behavioural needs
- For more serious and complex issues, you may be referred to the **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service** (CAMHS). If this happens we work with you to assess your needs and wishes to best support you and help you recover



# Partnership Approach to Children's Services Planning

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership is a strong and effective partnership of a wide range of organisations. We value the benefits of sharing our resources, knowledge and skills to improve the lives of our children and young people. All partners have a shared commitment and partnership vision – ***North Ayrshire – A Better Life.***

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership is made up of the following organisations:



Our work fully supports the purpose, values and national outcomes as set out by the Scottish Government. Our vision demonstrates our link to the National Performance Framework.

The public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities, known as the Fairer Scotland Duty, requires that when taking strategic decisions, particular public bodies, including local authorities and health boards, must have due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage in the exercise of their functions.

We have a clear focus on inequalities. In [our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(LOIP\) 2017-2022](#), we have increased our focus on children and child poverty.


Underpinning this we have four priority areas:

- A Working North Ayrshire
- A Healthier North Ayrshire
- A Safer North Ayrshire
- A Thriving North Ayrshire – Children and Young People

Our cross-cutting themes are building stronger communities and prevention, and these underpin our approach to these priorities.

Our work to improve Children's Services also directly links to the mission, vision and priorities set out in the [North Ayrshire Council Plan](#). This is the key strategic plan for the Council, which is focused on making North Ayrshire a fairer and more equal society.





We have assessed the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Funding. We have also reviewed our school counselling service.

The Children's Services Plan directly links to the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2018-21 – [Lets Deliver Care Together](#).

Our Children's Services Planning includes our **Children's Rights Report** and our **Child Poverty Action Plan**. Our new **Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy**, 'Step up Speak Out' was launched in March 2020 and ensures the voice of children and young people is at the centre of all we do. Together they form our approach to giving children and young people in North Ayrshire the best start in life.

Our Children's Services Planning approach links all relevant plans and strategies together as described above. These can be seen in the diagram below.

The Children's Services Plan links with, and feeds into, a range of other strategic plans including:

- [North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Business Plan](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan](#)
- [Early Learning and Childcare Strategy](#)
- [Out of School Care Plan](#)
- [Community Learning and](#)

#### Development Plan

- [North Ayrshire Carers Strategy](#)
- [Ayrshire and Arran Child Transformation Plan](#)
- [Ayrshire and Arran Oral Health Strategy](#)

A number of major national reviews have taken place since our Children's Services Plan 2016-20, including the Care Review, the review of Additional Support Needs and the Scottish Attainment Challenge evaluation.



At a local level, Audit Scotland carried out a [Best Value Audit](#) the end of 2019. We have had many of our schools inspected by [Education Scotland](#) over the last three years as well as an assessment of the impact of the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#). We have reviewed the effectiveness of the Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Funding. We have also reviewed our school counselling service.

All of these reviews and assessments at national and local level are considered in the ongoing development of this plan and inform our improvement planning activities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for our children, young people and their families. The economic impact is considerable for many of our families and the associated

impacts such as mental and physical health, well-being and educational outcomes will be vitally important in shaping our work over the next three years of this plan.

The Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) have developed a [community vulnerability measure](#) to help guide the social mitigation response to the effects of Covid-19. North Ayrshire is identified as being at high risk to Covid-19. This is in common with Inverclyde, Dundee City, West Dunbartonshire, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Dumfries and Galloway and Glasgow City.

We are committed to using all of the information available to us to ensure that we continue to take steps to ensure that the impact of Covid-19 is addressed in a manner that reduces the risk of causing long term damage to children.

**Figure 1: Children's Services Planning Dashboard**





The GIRFEC approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential.

## Our Children's Services Plan Development

Our Plan takes a rights-based approach. We are committed to promoting and protecting children and young people's rights. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 strengthens children's rights and places duties on local authorities, health boards and partner agencies. Our first North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020-23 is a core aspect of our approach to Children's Services Planning.

Our plan has been written based on the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and values. GIRFEC is based on children's rights and its principles reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). GIRFEC also respects parents' rights.

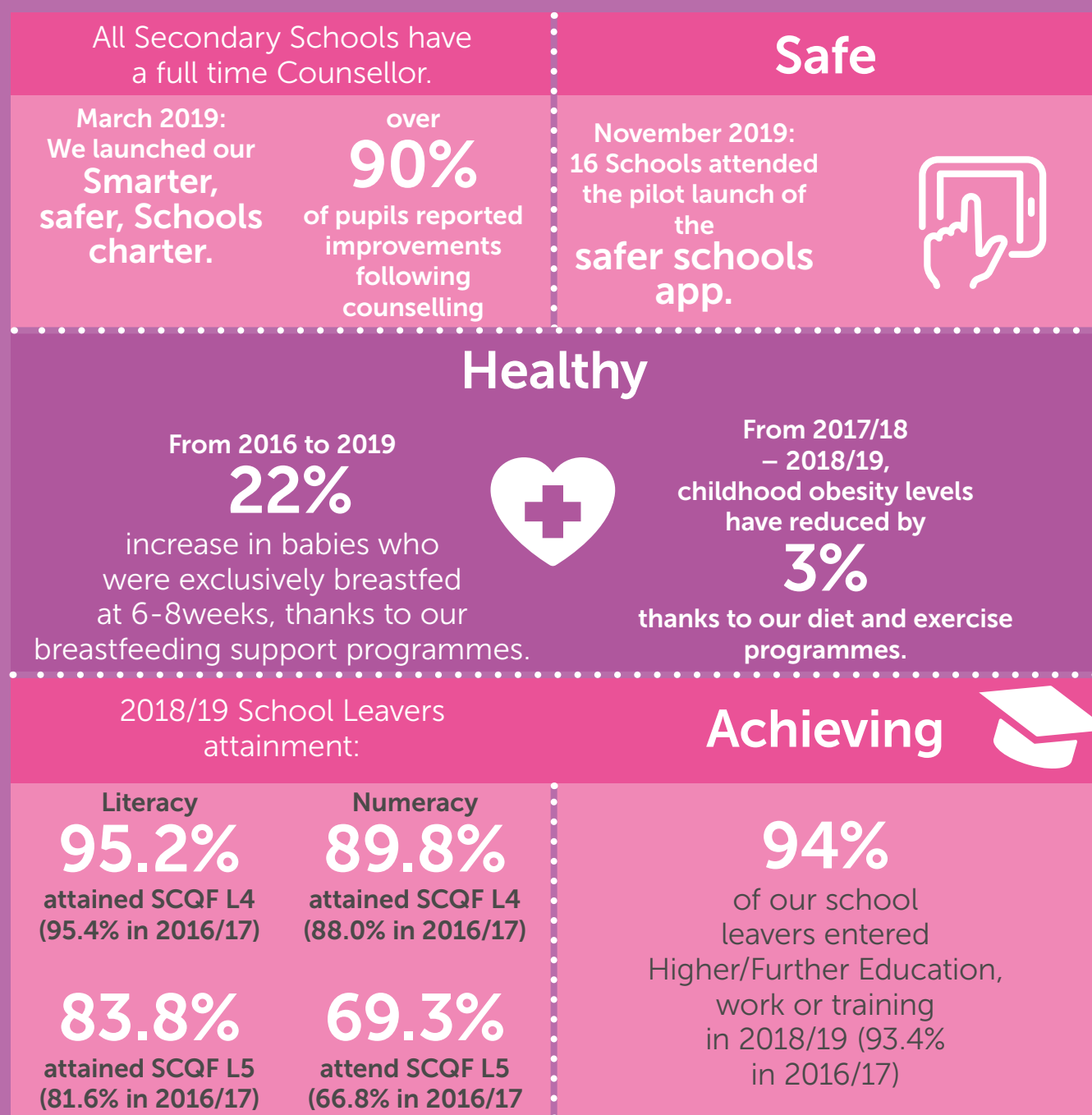
The GIRFEC approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included



# Progress since previous plan

Since the introduction of the 2016-20 North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan we have made significant progress in a number of key areas. These can be viewed in detail in our Children's Services Plan Performance Reports [here](#).





## Nurtured

Our real nappy incentive scheme was launched in October 2019.



It can save families

**£1,300**

per child and reduce environmental impact by 40%.

Family Nurses support young mums (19 and under) until children are 2 years old.

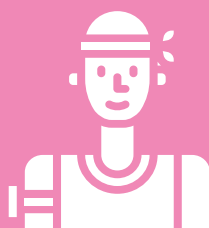
From Jan 2017-Jan 2020 we supported 98 young parents and currently have 78 parents enrolled.

Our Active Schools Team provide opportunities in sport, activity and leadership development.

## Active

**7,748**

children and young people participated in ActiveSchools activities in 2019/20.



Our Early Years centres are creating outdoor learning environments.

## Respected

We are changing how we support children, young people and families by bringing teams together in local areas.

**Over 90%**

of our schools are rights respecting schools (RRS) accredited to Bronze level – RSS committed.

## Responsible

**5,583**

children and young people voted in the latest Youth Participatory Budgeting event (Nov2019)



In 2018/19 our activities supporting participation in democracy had a total of 9,515 attendances

## Included

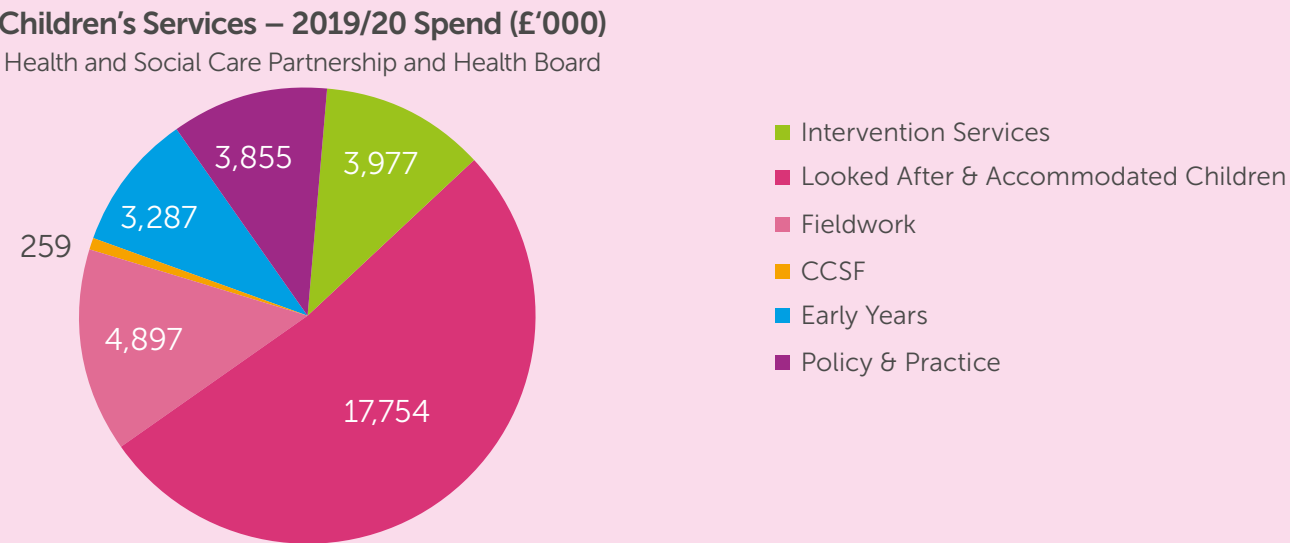
A new £20m Additional Supports Needs Campus is being built in Stevenston including an Adult Respite House.

Our champions board engaged with over 60 professions and Care Experienced young people to research language and stigma associated with the care system.

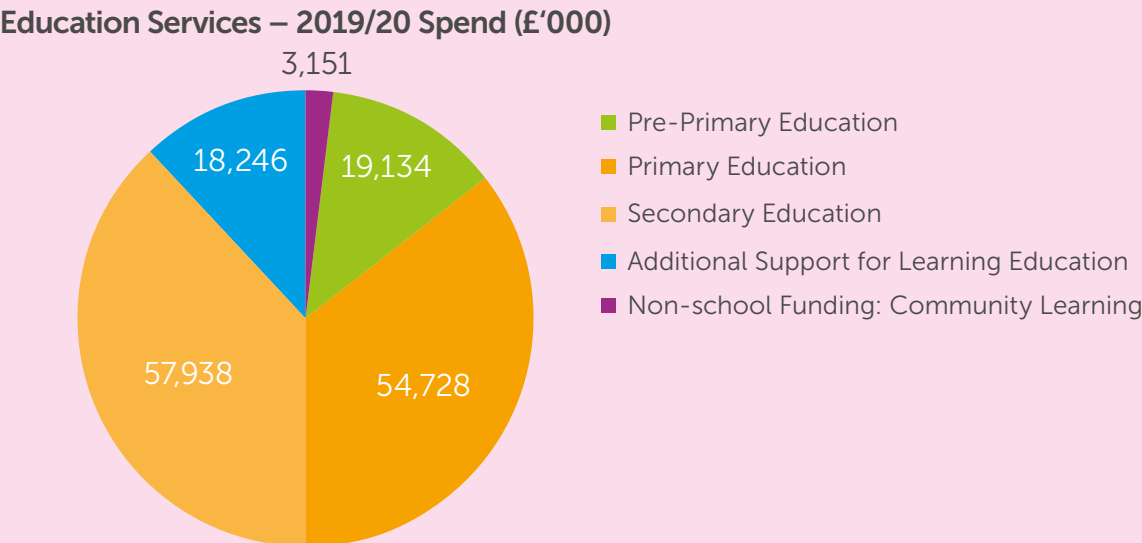
# Resources

In 2019/20 we spent more than £180 million in Education and Health and Social Care, on services to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people living in North Ayrshire. A breakdown can be seen below, in Figures 2 and 3.

**Figure 2:** Spend breakdown in Children’s Services (NHS and HSCP)



**Figure 3:** Spend breakdown in Education Services







# Strategic Themes

The following key themes are strategically important in our work.

## Child Poverty

In North Ayrshire we are committed to reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty. We know that 27.9% of children in North Ayrshire are living in poverty and this can affect children's health and wellbeing, as well as school attainment and achievement. Covid-19 has exacerbated this situation and the evidence of this and the related actions are detailed in our Child Poverty Action Plan 2019/20. Covid-19 has exacerbated this situation and the evidence of this and the related actions are detailed in our [Child Poverty Action Plan](#).

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, almost one in four children in Scotland (24%, just less than 225,000) were living in relative poverty in Scotland in 2019/20<sup>1</sup>.

New data on child poverty was released in May 2021. This new estimate is based

on Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data, but is based on family income levels, after housing costs. The new data shows that over 6,200 children (27.9%) age 0-16 could be living in poverty in North Ayrshire. This is higher than the national estimate of 24% for the same measure. These calculations are estimates but support our experience and knowledge of our local areas.

There is increasing evidence that households with children, which were already at greater risk of poverty, have been disproportionately affected by the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is too early to know the impact that Covid-19 will have on levels of child poverty in Scotland but an analysis by the Institute for Public Policy Research

<sup>1</sup> Child poverty in your area 2014/15 – 2019/20 – End Child Poverty



We are clear about the value of employment for our residents and want to attract the best jobs and employers possible.



(IPPR) Scotland finds that since lockdown almost half (49 per cent) of households with dependent children in Scotland find themselves in the two most serious categories of financial stress – ‘in serious financial difficulty’ or ‘struggling to make ends meet’. This is compared to 30 per cent of all households in Scotland reporting the same levels of financial stress.

Our Child Poverty Action Plan and Report sets out our commitment to Economic Growth in our area through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and Community Wealth Building. We are clear about the value of employment for our residents and want to attract the best jobs and employers possible. We also work to reduce the cost of living for our residents and are committed to develop 1,575 new build Council homes by March 2025.

### **Cost of the School Day**

Our 2019/20 Child Poverty Action Plan and Report was published in October 2020. This identified The Cost of the School Day as a key area of focus for 2020/21. The theme of reducing the Cost of the School Day was also identified as a priority by our Fair for All Poverty Truth Commission work and in the Year of Young People legacy action plan recommendations, both of which are our mechanisms for taking account of our residents’ lived experience.

A formal Cost of the School Day (COSD) Working Group was established comprising Elected Members, young people, parents, head teachers and staff of educational establishments, senior officers from the Council and HSCP, CPP partners and officers.

We have previously participated in work with Public Health and Young Scot to develop local approaches to Cost of the School Day, providing a sound basis for the current work, with excellent practice in schools being contributed to the working group deliberations.

The aim of the COSD Working Group was to further drive forward a whole systems approach to reducing the cost associated with education. We already have strong approaches to this across our area and we continue to look for new whole-system commitments from the Council and its community planning, wider community, and business partners.

The objective of the COSD working group was to produce a policy that could be used by all schools, services and partners to embed the agreed principles and to develop a high-level action plan to be taken forward in 2021. The policy and action plan encompasses the work of all educational establishments and of community planning partners, communities and local businesses. The working group have also developed



We protect, support and provide a loving and nurturing environment for those who have either been in care or have experienced it.

a set of North Ayrshire Commitments, which will be launched with schools and partners to set out the overall objectives.

The COSD Policy was agreed by Cabinet in March 2021 and will be formally launched at our first annual COSD Conference which will take place in June 2021.

More details are available in our [Child Poverty Action Plan 2020/21](#).

### Children and Families Investment Fund

As part of our determination to address poverty and particularly child poverty we aim to give everyone the same life chances to live fulfilling and healthy lives. In June 2021 we will be launching our £500,000 Children and Families Investment Fund programme. The fund will focus on:

- **Food:** £150,000 to extend our school and community food network across all schools to support children and families;
- **Clothing and sustainability:** £100,000 for a School and Family Participatory Budget Investment Fund for educational establishments to respond to local needs in relation to school uniforms, outdoor clothing, sports kit and recycling and reuse equipment; and

- **Digital inclusion:** £250,000 in a Digital Families Fund to digitally include 1,000 families each year, providing access to devices and connectivity for online learning and activities, enhancing and guaranteeing sustainability of current investment in devices for home use.

This is a recurring annual investment and the launch planned for June 2021 will ensure families will be supported ahead of the return to schools for the new term in August.







## Wellbeing

In January 2018, the Ayrshire and Arran Wellness Model looked to test a whole system model of mental health support by developing a fully integrated approach, aligning specialist child and adolescent mental health teams with developing initiatives in partnership with North Ayrshire schools and other parts of the community. The aim of the model is that there will be clear evidence of a shift in the emotional wellbeing of children and young people within one locality (Kilwinning) evidenced by more appropriate requests for assistance being made to CAMHS.

The Kilwinning Wellness model has reduced the routine referrals from 68 days in August 2018 to less than 2 weeks consistently from September 2019.

The Wellness Model has significantly influenced, managed and changed the demand pressures placed on specialist mental health services for children and young people in a locality, ensuring those individuals with serious mental health concerns are seen timeously and appropriately.

This model fits around children and young people's needs using a broader lens for mental health services, and one that incorporates the wider system, supporting young people wherever they are.

The Wellness Model has also been rolled out in Largs and the scoping work has already started for the Garnock Valley and will spread to the rest of North Ayrshire.



The Kilwinning Wellness model has reduced the routine referrals from 68 days in August 2018 to less than 2 weeks consistently from September 2019.



## Love and Support for Care-experienced Young People

The national Independent Care Review was published in February 2020. The review of Scotland's Care system has far reaching recommendations. We will continue to reflect on how best we can 'Keep the Promise', take the recommendations of the review forward in North Ayrshire and embed in our local plans.

We protect, support and provide a loving and nurturing environment for those who have either been in care or have experienced it.

We have a Champions Board constituted from a range of young people who are all care experienced aged between 15 and 22 who come together weekly and look for ways to change the care system as well as producing tools and advice for their care experienced community. The Board is supported by the North Ayrshire Corporate Parenting Team.

## Throughcare and Aftercare Services

The Throughcare and Aftercare teams support young people moving on from being accommodated away from home to

the next stage of their lives. They are there to listen and respond to young people's emerging needs in any way they can.

Support is offered in a variety of ways, for example, the team has a dedicated Employability Advisor who supports young people to explore pathways into employment, training or education. Advice offered is adaptable to suit individual needs as their employment, education or training journey progresses. In addition, staff can assist young people in finding their own accommodation and provide bespoke emotional and practical support through what can be, for some, challenging and uncertain times, as well as exciting.

Furthermore, the team offers guidance to those who need advice and guidance in applying for DWP benefits, as well as those who are applying for educational bursaries, care leaver's bursaries and financial support. Assistance can also be provided on legal matters, emotional health and wellbeing and life skills.

The teams are dynamic, creative and flexible to meet the emerging and individual needs of care experienced young people.





The Promise Workstream has been established to take a co-ordinated approach to our reorganisation.



# Current Transformation and Improvement Themes

## Our Response to The Promise Workstream

‘The Promise’ sets out an overall view of a new approach based on five foundations.

The five foundations are:

- **Voice:** When children speak, adults must really listen to them. Adults must make sure that children are included in decisions about their lives.
- **Family:** If children are living with their family and are safe and feel loved, they should stay there. Their family should be given all the help they need to stay together. If they need extra help when things get difficult, they should get it.
- **Care:** If children cannot stay with the adults in their family, they will stay with their brothers and sisters. The home they live in together will be a place where they feel safe and loved. It should be their home for as long as they want and need it to be.
- **People:** Relationships are important. Adults must make sure children are

able to stay close to the people they want to and keep in contact with them. Adults must also help children make new relationships as they grow up. Sometimes adults need some help too. The adults who are close to children must get the help they need to make sure they can do their best for children.

- **Scaffolding:** Help and support must be there for children and families whenever they need it. It must also be there for the adults who are close to children and families. It is important everyone knows where to go for help and that it is ready when it is asked for.

The Promise Workstream has been established to take a co-ordinated approach to our reorganisation. The workstream will seek to build upon the existing practice across the authority to support care experienced young people





GIRFEC policy continues to describe the benefits of a service supporting Named Persons, Lead Professionals and wider integrated, multi-agency working.

and oversee a coordinated whole system review that is centred on improving children and young people's experiences of the care system. This will be founded on the Getting It Right For Every Child principles and wellbeing indicators.

### **Named Person Service Evaluation Workstream**

Part 4 of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which was revoked in September 2019, required local authorities and the relevant health board, to put in place arrangements for the provision of a 'Named Person' for each young person from birth to 18. The legislation indicated each Named Person would act as a single point of contact for each child with responsibility for providing advice, information and support where required.

While it is no longer a statutory requirement to provide a Named Person for each young person, GIRFEC policy continues to describe the benefits of a service supporting Named Persons, Lead Professionals and wider integrated, multi-agency working, in order to meet the needs of all children, young people and their families through early intervention and preventative action. North Ayrshire's Named Person Service adopts an approach that complements North Ayrshire's Child Protection processes and procedures to safeguard vulnerable

children by supporting families through early intervention and preventative non-statutory measures.

- The Review of the Named Person Services Workstream will review the processes and procedures and identify improvements where applicable, to ensure Named Persons and Lead Professionals are provided with effective and efficient early intervention and preventative support in meeting the needs of children, young people and their families. This will be aligned to, and measured against, aspects of best practice outlined in Additional Support Needs and Getting it Right for Every Child legislation.

### **Multi Agency and Locality Working Workstream**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 outlines a statutory duty for local authorities to engage in community planning at a locality level in order to enable local communities to become more actively involved in decision making. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Equality Act (Scotland) 2010 also emphasise the importance in ensuring equity and equality are at the centre of developing and delivering effective services.



The work continues to take an asset-based approach, ensuring that building capacity is at the heart of all we do.



The value of empowered communities and citizens is also recognised in the Learning Together National Action Plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021. This plan set a vision for improving the education and life chances of children and young people by recognising that parents / carers are often a child's primary education. This workstream seeks to align to this vision by further enhancing approaches to parental involvement and engagement in a child's learning journey.

Following the success of the locality model adopted during the initial stage of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Connected Communities service has led an exciting transformation project to reshape the relationship the Council has with residents with shift from 'customers to citizens'. This involves developing services and systems to provide a single point of contact within the locality to coordinate services. This will enhance partnership working across agencies and improve outcomes for residents in their locality.

### **Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework Workstream**

In June 2019, the Scottish Government and COSLA commissioned a Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Board. The purpose of this Board is to oversee reforms to

ensure children, young people and their families receive the support they need, when they need it, underpinned by the values, principles and components of GIRFEC while remaining responsive to local needs and systems. The Programme Board works to ensure the development of a coherent, whole system approach with a focus on putting the voices and experiences of children, young people and their families at the centre. The work continues to take an asset-based approach, ensuring that building capacity is at the heart of all we do.

Additional funding has been provided from the Scottish Government that will be used to strengthen existing integrated working between Services and partners to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and will look to enhance existing supports as well as identifying the need for additional or new supports.

Our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework Workstream will provide formalised governance arrangements for the coordination of our Community Mental Health Framework allocation and to build upon existing practice to embed early intervention and preventative supports as well as promote positive mental health and wellbeing.



The move between being a child at school and an adult participating in economic life, and associated transitions, is uncertain for many disabled children and young people.

## Transitions to Adult Services Workstream

On the 30th of September 2020, a Private Member's Bill was introduced at Scottish Parliament titled the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill. While still at the early stages of consultation this Bill, which is still subject to parliamentary approval, seeks to improve opportunities for disabled children and young people as they grow up and would legislate a requirement for local authorities to have plans for each disabled child and young person as they move into adulthood. In practice this would mean a statutory plan would put in place up until a young person is 26 years old and a need for a whole systems approach to supporting young people with a disability.

This transition to adulthood is a crucial life transition for a young disabled person. Transition in this context encompasses the move from school into the adult world of work, and/or further or higher education. However, the move between being a child at school and an adult participating in economic life, and associated transitions, is uncertain for many disabled children and young people. This Bill seeks to address that issue.

Our practices are focused on ensuring that, where it is in the best interests of a child, a multi-agency Team around the

Child is established and if applicable a Coordinated Support Plan is put in place. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic North Ayrshire had established a Transition Pathways Group. This is a multi-agency team with representatives from Education, Children with Disabilities and Adult Services to oversee and plan the effective transition from education to adult services.

The Transitions to Adult Services Workstream aims to ensure that young people with additional support needs and their families, will be provided with a more effective transition into adulthood, which delivers greater access to a range of provisions and supports in the local community. This will be achieved through reviewing current policies, procedures and practices and enhancing collaborative working across agencies to proactively plan person-centred transitions into adulthood.

## Family Support

A cross-cutting theme for all our work is Family and Parental Support. We believe that good partnerships between parents, schools and services are key to getting the best outcomes for our children. As part of our ongoing improvement activity, all our improvement Workstreams are considering their links with family and parental support and we will continue mapping and improving access to services and activities in this area.





Our performance will be driven and monitored by the Children's Services Strategic Partnership.

# Evaluation and reporting on our plan

This Plan provides details of our activities and how this will contribute to the achievement of our priorities and better outcomes for children. Our framework will include a range of performance measures to help us track our progress. All of our Children's Services Strategic Partners are committed to contributing to our success.

Our performance will be driven and monitored by the Children's Services Strategic Partnership. An annual performance report on our progress of this Plan will be published by the Partnership and reported through the Community Planning Partnership governance structures, as well as being submitted to the Scottish Government to meet our legal requirements.

As part of our 2021/22 self-evaluation activity we are planning a review of our Children's Services Performance Framework.

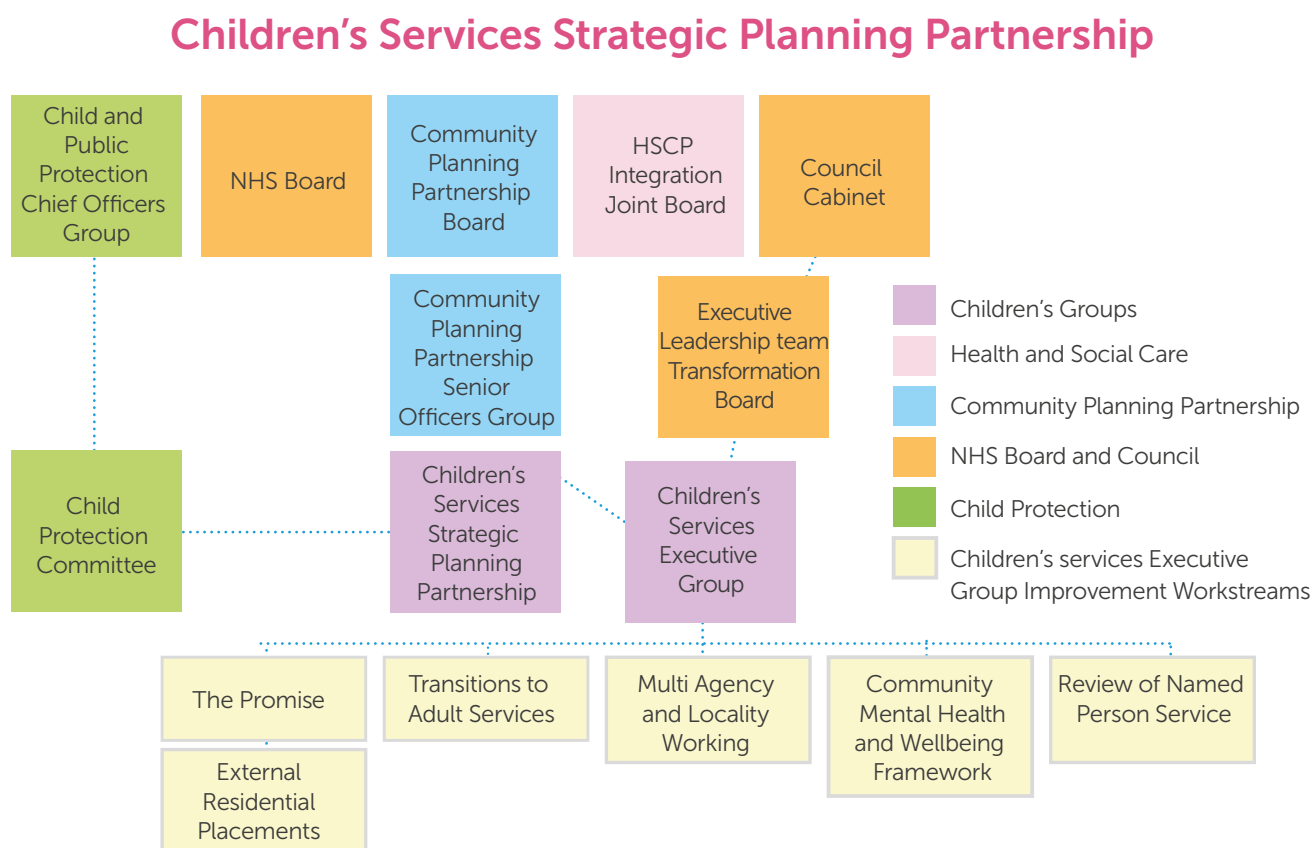


# Who we are and how we work together

This Plan has been written by the North Ayrshire Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP). The structure chart for the CSSP has been included below at Figure 4. Our membership is made up of the following organisations:

- North Ayrshire Council
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- Police Scotland
- KA Leisure
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
- Children's Panel Area Support Team
- Ayrshire College
- Care Inspectorate
- Voluntary Sector

**Figure 4:** Children's Services Strategic Partnership Structure Chart





The CSSP is part of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and reports regularly on our progress. The CPP have overall responsibility for

this plan and works together to improve outcomes for all of our children and young people. The CPP structure diagram has been included below at Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Community Planning Partnership Structure**





Barnardo's run specialist advocacy services across the UK and are there for young people who need someone to support them, protect their rights and help them speak out.



## North Ayrshire Context

### Child Protection

The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (NACPC) is a locally based inter-agency strategic partnership which leads on child protection policy and practice. The Committee has an Independent Chair and is comprised of senior staff from across key services in North Ayrshire, including both statutory services and the third sector.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee adheres to National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) and Protecting Children & Young People: Child Protection Committees and Chief Officer's responsibilities. As such the NACPC has a range of day to day business activities to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities.

### Domestic Violence

We are implementing Safer and Together Model of domestically informed practice. To build on the effectiveness of this approach a pan Ayrshire approach has been taken to establish a core group of trainers in each local authority area. These trainers will have a multiagency skill set and involve partnership with our third sector colleagues from Women's Aid. Currently an application for an Implementation Lead is being made to the Equally Safe Fund which if successful would enable a 3-year post to focus and ensure effective multiagency implementation of this approach across the three local authorities within Ayrshire.

Police Officers have attended training on the new Domestic Abuse legislation to improve their understanding of domestic abuse, its impact on victims and improve their ability to deal with reported incidents and to work with partners in safeguarding.



It is important that all children and young people get the support they need to enable them to reach their full learning potential.



## Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

Our practice is informed by GIRFEC which is fully embedded in all of our roles and systems. Getting it right for every child has a set of values and principles that everyone who comes into contact with children in their work has to take into account when working with others, whether other professionals or children and young people. This is to ensure that all children, young people and families are treated fairly, with respect, and are listened to.

'Getting it Right for every child' provides everyone with a common language to describe wellbeing. It provides values and principles that practitioners and agencies should work towards, common tools and guidance to help practitioners identify the best support for a child, as well as defining roles and processes to help everyone to identify and meet a child's needs.

## Advocacy

The advocacy support that is provided in North Ayrshire is by Barnardo's Hear 4u Advocacy Service. Hear 4u provides advocacy for children and young people aged 5-26 who are looked after and accommodated in residential, foster care, kinship and at home, on the child protection register and those with Additional Support Needs.

Barnardo's run specialist advocacy services across the UK and are there for young people who need someone to support them, protect their rights and help them speak out. Their advocates are independent, and they don't work for local councils, social services or the NHS. They strive to explain the wishes of the young person, represent their case and do not give their personal opinions.

Barnardo's advocates role includes:

- Attending meetings with or on behalf of children/young people where decisions are made – for example, children's hearings, looked after reviews, child protection processes.
- Writing letters on behalf of young persons and assisting them with complaints or appeals.
- Helping children and young people to access information so that they can make informed decisions.
- Helping children and young people understand decision making processes and what their rights are within these.
- Giving children and young people a voice to help them achieve their full potential.
- Empowering children and young people to develop their confidence/skills in self-advocacy
- Listening to young people is at centre to all the work they carry out as advocates.





Once additional support needs are identified, a plan is created – sometimes called the child’s plan – to help overcome barriers to learning.

## Children’s Hearings

The Children’s Hearings System is the care and justice system for children and young people. At the heart of the system are Children’s Reporters. Children and young people are referred to the Reporter from a number of sources, including police, social work, education and health.

Children and young people may be referred because some aspect of life is giving cause for concern. For example, there may be needs for protection, care or guidance due to parent or carer issues. Other causes may be not going to school regularly or being in trouble with the police.

The Reporter can:

- Arrange a Children’s Hearing
- Decide that help is needed from somebody from the local authority
- Decide that there is no need for a Children’s Hearing

## Meeting pupil needs

It is important that all children and young people get the support they need to enable them to reach their full learning potential. Children and young people can require additional support for a short time or for a longer period as a result of challenges presented by their learning environment, family circumstances, health, wellbeing needs or disability.

In North Ayrshire there are well-established processes in place to identify, assess and determine needs which involve the children or young people; their parents/carers and associated professionals (a group known as the Team Around the Child). The voice of the child and parent is recorded, and their views considered when assessing, planning and reviewing support.

Once additional support needs are identified, a plan is created – sometimes called the child’s plan – to help overcome barriers to learning. This plan is regularly reviewed, evaluated and updated ensuring progress, attainments and achievements are recorded.

These processes are in line with and informed by “*Supporting Children’s Learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended) Code of Practice (Third Edition) 2017*”.

Recently, the Scottish Government undertook a review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) in schools. The report’s recommendations have been considered by the Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA and ADES and an action plan was published in October 2020.





## Adverse Childhood Experiences

We are committed to supporting the Pan-Ayrshire work on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in conjunction with Community Justice Ayrshire. ACEs are stressful events that occur in childhood and can have a lifelong adverse impact on sustained health and behaviour. We have held screenings in all our localities of "Resilience – The Biology of Stress and Science of Hope" documentary. Over 65 multi-agency screenings of the documentary took place in 2018, led by colleagues from Public Health and Police Scotland (Ayrshire Division). It is estimated that over 4,500 people across Ayrshire have attended a screening and panel discussion. A follow up to the first Pan-Ayrshire Conference on ACEs and trauma took place on 25 March 2019. The event was entitled "ACEs: Adversity is Not Destiny".

Following a motion to Council for North Ayrshire Council to become 'trauma informed', officers in collaboration with partners across the wider Community Planning Partnership have been working to broaden and embed trauma informed practice in all services.

A targeted approach was taken with Community Development, Housing and Libraries employees to raise awareness. NHS and Health and Social Care have installed a module on their e-learning platform that aims to support employees to know how to adapt the way they work to make a positive difference to children and young people affected by trauma and adversity. We now have Trauma Champions within our services who are able to support colleagues 'on the ground' as they work together to make their area of work more trauma informed.



ACEs are stressful events that occur in childhood and can have a lifelong adverse impact on sustained health and behaviour.

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