

EAST AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY PLAN

Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-27

Year Two Annual Performance Update - 2025/26

CASE STUDIES



These are just a few of the case studies that have been captured by our Delivery Plan Working Groups, to give a flavour of the wide range of work that takes place across our CPP, and its impact on local individuals, businesses and communities.

Curtainwise

Cumnock-based Curtainwise, who employ over 40 highly skilled local people, has been manufacturing made-to-measure curtains, blinds, pelmets and soft furnishings since 1988. From humble beginnings, the company has grown from a small home-based business into a well-regarded employer in the region. They hold various contracts across the UK, including large hotel chains, department stores, and collaborate with multiple designers, as well as undertaking one-off projects, offering both commercial and personal services.



Besides production improvements, Curtainwise has embraced sustainability initiatives with backing from East Ayrshire Council's Net Zero Nation Accelerator Programme and the regional Community Wealth Building programme which helped them to secure a hi-tech vertical height measuring machine which dramatically accelerated production output and efficiency without sacrificing their signature handmade quality. They were also able to transition the vehicle fleet to electric and introduce better practices for repurposing fabric offcuts, steering the firm closer to a circular economy model.

Working with a dedicated business adviser, the Cumnock based business has made notable strides in production efficiency, sustainability, and business growth and employees have also received training on Fair Work First principles. They have introduced a four day working week and have invested heavily in employee training programmes.



Lintmill Lodges



Located in the village of Sorn, the luxury adults-only glamping retreat was founded by local owner Nicola Young, alongside her partner Alan Stewart. The tranquil site features three bespoke timber shepherd's huts equipped with private, wood-fired hot tubs and sits right along the scenic River Ayr Way walking path.

Opened for the summer season in 2024, the business received invaluable support from Business Gateway to establish a vital online presence. Developing the branding and logo was the first step, allowing Nicola to share the journey on social media, attract customer interest, and boost the online presence. Nicola attended Business Gateway webinars and courses to enhance her skills in creating engaging social media posts and reels.

Additionally, Business Gateway assisted with updating the business plan, reflecting the latest Visit Scotland statistics, current interest rates, and the economic climate. The business received guidance on financial reviews and secured funding for website development, branding, logo design, and social media communications support.

Two years on, Lintmill Lodges is a testament to the power of well-directed business support combined with the dedication and vision of a young entrepreneur. Nicola's vision, coupled with the expertise and resources from Business Gateway, ensures that Lintmill Lodges not only meets but exceeds guest expectations.

'The support from Business Gateway has been invaluable. They provided advice on choosing between a franchise or our own business model and then helped us develop a comprehensive marketing plan' **Nicola Young, Lintmill Lodges**



Ward Volunteering Pathway

During 2025/26, volunteering placements within NHS Ayrshire & Arran continued to provide valuable opportunities for East Ayrshire residents to develop and contribute to their communities.

One volunteer, after experiencing a prolonged period out of employment, joined the volunteering service as a ward volunteer, at University Hospital Crosshouse. Initially volunteering one afternoon per week, they supported patients through conversation, companionship and recreational activities on the ward.



Through the experience, the volunteer developed increased confidence, communication skills, and an improved understanding of working within a healthcare environment. The role also helped strengthen teamwork, empathy and interpersonal skills.

Feedback from staff highlighted the positive impact volunteers have on patient wellbeing, particularly for individuals experiencing loneliness or extended hospital stays. Patients valued the additional social interaction and reassurance volunteers were able to provide. Following their volunteering experience, the individual progressed into further employability support and began exploring opportunities within the health and social care sector.

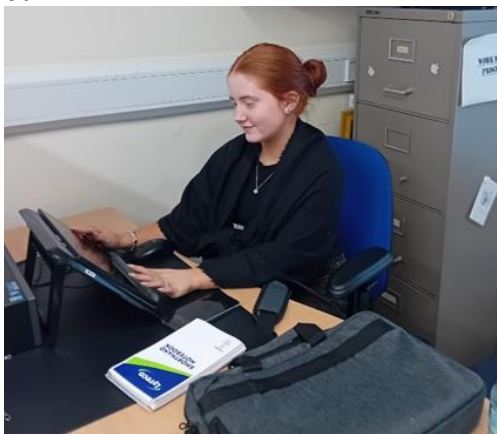
This example demonstrates how volunteering can deliver both social value and employability outcomes, while also enhancing patient experience and strengthening community connections across East Ayrshire.



Leigha's story

Leigha Phillips undertook a 2 year Modern Apprenticeship with East Ayrshire Council. Here is her story in her own words:

'Before my apprenticeship I left at school at 15 to go to college to study childcare. However, I found it hard to settle in. I never really enjoyed school and I realised that sitting in a classroom wasn't for me because I prefer hands on learning. After I left college, I started looking for jobs, a family member showed me an advertisement for an apprenticeship in health and social care and pushed me to apply as they thought this type of career is what suited me as a person and that I could really make a change. The idea of learning, getting qualifications whilst also making an income was very appealing to me.'



Working within the care sector has always been something I've been drawn to do as a career, I want to be able to help and care for the people who need it most, as my whole life I have always cared for loved ones and helped people in need, and I hope to make a positive change that makes the care sector better for everyone.

Starting my apprenticeship, I was 16 years old and going into something new brought up many different feelings for me including excitement, doubt, nervousness however I was ready to learn and make a difference. Stepping into the world of working with older adults was like entering a maze of human experiences. Each day brought new challenges, new stories and new opportunities to learn and grow. I quickly realised that working with older adults isn't just a job; it's a calling.

Throughout my apprenticeship it was not without its challenges. There were moments of doubt, moments of frustration and moments I questioned whether I was truly making a difference, but it was during these times I learned most about myself - I discovered the value of seeking support from colleagues, reflecting on my experiences and maintaining a healthy work life balance. The apprenticeship didn't just help me in work life but also helped in my social and personal life making me more independent.

Working through my apprenticeship whilst completing my SVQ 2 has come with its challenges but for me this was the best way to gain qualifications. The reason this path works so well is that you are doing the work you are learning about every single day. I am now 18 years old and starting my SVQ 3 on my last year of my apprenticeship. What a journey it has been. Instead of learning about care in a book, I am out in the field putting those new skills into practice, every day brings something new to learn and I can immediately use that knowledge to improve my skills and help the people I care for. For anyone who prefers "learning by doing" I believe this is the most effective way to build a career and get the qualifications you need'.



Yipworld

Through their Families First Initiative, Yipworld has provided housing advocacy, emotional support, access to employability services, and essential household items for lone parent Katie and her two children.

Katie's children are Martha, aged eight, who has Additional Support Needs; and Beth, aged sixteen, a school leaver with persistent non-attendance and no qualifications. The family rely on social security, and their income reduced when Beth left education, increasing pressure on an already strained household.



The family's housing application progressed in September 2025. With support from Yipworld, Katie moved in on 8 October. Immediate practical help was provided, including bedding, household essentials, and kitchen items.

Ongoing support included successful applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund for flooring and a cooker, Christmas food parcels and gifts, benefits advice, and help setting up utilities. The family were also linked into employability services.

This holistic, person-centred approach reduced duplication across agencies, prevented rent arrears, and minimised reliance on public funds. Beth is now engaging with employability support and Katie

feels more settled.



Pitchin' In

The 'Pitchin In' programme is designed to engage students with low school attendance and behavioural challenges by using the power of football as a tool for personal development and re-engagement with education. The programme has been co-designed with pupils, setting their own ground rules in their own shared, safe space, before taking in an hour of educational input, and following positive engagement and behaviour, an hour of exercise.

One participant in particular, H, stood out due to their remarkable transformation during and after the 8-week programme. H's family situation was unsettled; she had been living with her grandmother, but sadly, after her grandmother passed away, this had a significant emotional impact on her. Following this loss, she was placed back in the care of her father and stepmother—a transition she found difficult. This change negatively affected both her school attendance and her social interactions.



Before joining the programme, H had a very low school attendance rate of just 67.5%. She demonstrated little interest in school, and her overall attitude and behaviour were causing concern. The incentive structure of the programme—attending school in order to earn a place at the weekly sessions—was introduced to encourage responsibility and foster a positive relationship with education.

Over the 8 week period, H's school attendance rose dramatically to 87.9%, with no absences recorded during the duration of the programme. Each week, she attended school consistently to ensure she could participate in 'Pitchin In'. As the weeks progressed, staff observed significant changes in her demeanour. She began to engage more openly, displaying greater confidence and a noticeable shift in attitude and perspective. The programme not only gave her a reason to come to school but also created a safe and enjoyable space where she could express herself and feel part of a team.

'She has really improved with her attendance at school and has stated she has only been coming to school so she can come to the programme' **PC O'Donnell, Campus Police Officer**

'I wouldn't go to school before. I only now go to school so I can come to 'Pitchin In' each week. I enjoy the different topics and getting to play football. Girls have many barriers within football, especially when mixed with boys, but this group is fun'.

H



Fossilfield Training Centre, Auchinleck

Fossilfield supports young people to realise their full potential via a unique equine enabled learning programme. Awarded funding via the East Ayrshire Anti-Poverty and Inequality Strategy Grants Programme, the Centre supports young people aged 14-24 who are not in employment, education or training, delivering a structured programme that intervenes at critical moments to create lasting opportunities.

‘Dee’ had become a persistent non-attender at school. Her disengagement stemmed from low confidence in her learning ability linked to dyslexia, peer pressure, negative social influences and a breakdown in relationships with school staff. These factors combined to create a cycle of avoidance, low self-esteem, and limited belief in her future prospects. Without targeted intervention, ‘Dee’ was at significant risk of long-term educational disengagement and reduced employability.



Staff at ‘Dee’s’ school recognised that she had previous experience with ponies and responded positively to practical, hands-on learning. They identified her as an ideal candidate for the Fossilfield Equine-Focused Personal Development Programme, designed to support young people facing barriers to education by:

- Building confidence via meaningful activity.
- Developing employability skills.
- Providing a nurturing, trauma-informed environment.
- Offering alternative pathways aligned with young people’s interests.

From the start, ‘Dee’ demonstrated enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. She successfully completed the Horse Care with Equitation Level 4 Course, showing growing confidence, improved concentration and a positive attitude to feedback. Her progress was further strengthened through the Level 3 Personal

Development Award, where she took on a mentoring role with a group of P7 pupils. She planned and delivered simple activities such as grooming and stable care. Inspired by her progress, ‘Dee’ began exploring equine careers and training opportunities. She became interested in the National Horseracing College and is now completing her Level 5 Introduction to Racehorse Care.

With renewed confidence and purpose, she has now returned to school with a commitment to improving her Maths and English. Her attendance, engagement, and attitude have significantly improved, demonstrating the long-term impact of early, personalised intervention.



DH Eco Solutions Ltd

Founded by Darren Hicks in 2022, DH Eco Solutions is a dynamic start up dedicated to addressing domestic and commercial waste management challenges through innovative solutions including its flagship product, the EcoStamp Waste Compactor. This product is designed to address the pressing issue of waste overflow in domestic and commercial settings.



With a focus on ease of use and accessibility, the product is portable, lightweight, and electronically operated. It is capable of compressing waste in standard 190-240 litre wheelie bins, reducing waste volume by up to two-thirds and is an innovative approach that offers a practical solution to the challenges posed by infrequent waste collection schedules.

The journey of DH Eco Solutions from concept to a high-growth start up business has been significantly bolstered by the Business Gateway team. From the outset, Business Gateway provided comprehensive support, aiding in the development of a robust business plan and aligning the company's operations with net zero objectives.

DH Eco Solutions exemplifies how innovative start ups can contribute to environmental sustainability while addressing practical waste management challenges. With the support of Business Gateway, Darren Hicks has not only developed a viable business model but also created a product that supports East Ayrshire Council's net zero objectives.

The EcoStamp waste compactor stands as a testament to the positive impact of entrepreneurial spirit combined with strategic business support.



Hugh Mulgrew

A property developer who has helped bring about 100 jobs into Kilmarnock town centre has been named as the High Street Hero for South Scotland in the Scotland Loves Local Awards, which took place in October 2025. Hugh Mulgrew opened Corespace on Portland Street last year, transforming a building which had long sat empty into serviced office accommodation.



It is now home to 11 organisations, ranging from local enterprises to national organisations and charities - each of them bringing staff and trade into the town centre. Barclays Eagle Labs is among the tenants at Corespace, deepening the support available to start-up businesses and entrepreneurs and fostering a spirit of innovation and enterprise. Another is Cadence, which moved its contact centre from out-of-town to the town centre, bringing their 80 staff with them.

He has also brought the former Civic Centre North building on John Dickie Street back into use, supporting local charity EACHa (East Ayrshire Churches' Homelessness action) to create a new base and community hub - Recovery Matters. Building on the success of Corespace, he is redeveloping another long-vacant property, the White Tile Building, as well. It is fully let ahead of its completion.

Scotland's Town Partnership Chief Officer Kimberley Guthrie said: *'Repurposing and revitalising existing buildings is a key part of town centre regeneration - as is proven by the impact of Hugh's work in Kilmarnock, providing an environment where our entrepreneurs and business start-ups can grow, develop and create success. Corespace flies the flag for the art of the possible, attracting businesses into the town centre, bringing staff with them and driving further footfall which supports other businesses. It's fantastic to see its success, meeting real local demand'*.



CentreStage Village

The CentreStage Village is an integrated, community-led model of early intervention, tackling the drivers of child poverty by connecting families to opportunity, wellbeing, skills and support in one accessible, place-based setting, seven days a week. Tina's experience of CentreStage shows how this Social Innovation Partnership has helped young people develop.

Tina had struggled with attending school and left with few qualifications. At home, pressures were high as her mum was also a foster carer supporting a child with autism, Ashley. Tina had a wellbeing score aligned with clinical depression, and her responses to assessment showed low energy, poor confidence and limited connection with others.



CentreStage had already been working with Ashley through its Rising Stars activities, and a conversation with the family led to them connecting Tina with Skills Development Scotland. This was significant – it was the first time in weeks she had left the house. Tina, who has a strong creative talent, was directed toward a creative industries course. Although initially very quiet and withdrawn, she attended consistently and gradually built trust with staff.

After a couple of months, Tina's confidence had noticeably improved, and she felt motivated to apply for college and was accepted onto a social science course for 2026. Leading up to college enrolment, Tina is volunteering with Little Arts School and CentreStage to continue to build skills for the future.

This early intervention has improved Tina's wellbeing, strengthened family relationships and supported Tina to engage in further education, strengthening her future employment options. CentreStage estimates that this support could result in a public financial saving of up to £35,000 over five years.



Risk Management Centre

In May 2026, East Ayrshire Council's Risk Management Centre and Police Scotland identified an escalation in anti-social behaviour patterns involving e-bikes and e-scooters across the Kilmarnock area. A key risk of these incidents involved the reckless use of high-powered e-bikes and e-scooters on roads and pavements with total disregard to pedestrians or vehicles. Intelligence suggested these vehicles were being utilised to facilitate wider illicit activities.

Following the appointment of Interim Team Manager of Community Safety, a collaborative channel was established and for the first time the Community Safety team was invited to participate in Police Scotlands Weekly Tasking Briefings. During the briefings, the e-bikes and e-scooters issue was raised and appropriate actions discussed, resulting in a joint operational strategy being created.

It was agreed that Risk Management Centre staff would contact Police Control any time staff observed e-bikes and e-scooters being utilised in a dangerous manner. Intelligence gathered over several weeks pinpointed a property in Kilmarnock believed to be a central storage area for the e-bikes. Police Scotland formulated an enforcement plan alongside specialised units, including the Priority Policing and Ayrshire Road Policing teams.

In June 2026, officers executed a formal search warrant at the identified address. As a result, five illegal e-bikes and an e-scooter were seized and removed from circulation. A variety of additional illicit items that had potential to harm the community were also recovered from the property. Two individuals associated with the property were arrested at the scene.

Antisocial Behaviour Team

In May 2024, the Antisocial Behaviour Team were tasked with looking to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to tackle ongoing and historic issues with camping and general visitors caused increasing environmental damage, overcrowding, littering, fire damage and anti social behaviour linked to irresponsible camping in heavily visited lochshore areas.

Resident engagement sessions were undertaken along with internal and external partner meetings to devise an action plan to try to mitigate the ongoing issues in the rural area.

In June 2026, Members approved the consultation of Byelaw implementation at Loch Doon in an attempt to respond to reports of antisocial behaviour, littering and waste by irresponsible visitors and campers. Two Police liveried quad bikes to enhance the policing presence in the area, often in off-road locations, close to homes and dwellings. The quad bikes have provided an increase police presence in the area to tackle the issues residents were experiencing and the Council and partners will continue to work with local residents over the summer months.



Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership

On the 27th November the 16 days of action conference took place at Take A Bow. The theme was Engaging Boys & Men to Prevent and End Violence against Women and girls. The conference was attended by 91 participants, 40% of whom were male colleagues. The participants heard from speakers:

- Rachel Adamson, Zero Tolerance & Rebekah Cheung, White Ribbon Scotland: What Works? Highlights from Strategic Communication Research;
- Emma Hackney, The STAR Centre: Ayrshire Rape Crisis: Intimate Image Abuse and the Manosphere;
- Linda Thompson, Women's Support Project: The Impact of the Sex Industry; and
- Cllr McMahon provided an input on White Ribbon through the perspective of his lived experience.

The following workshops were offered:

- Zero Tolerance: Many Good Men- cultivating healthy masculinity;
- Star Centre: Ayrshire Rape Crisis: Pornography, Violence, and Young People;
- East Ayrshire Education Services: Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP); and
- STAR Centre: Ayrshire Rape Crisis: Understanding Sexual Violence for Professionals Working with Young People.



The conference and all the workshops were positively evaluated in terms of content, impact, pace and learning. The input from the young people of Stewarton Academy was particularly well received (photo above) and provided an opportunity for young people to show their leadership in this space.

The following themes emerged from the evaluations:

- **Influence of media and external factors**
- **Education prevention and early intervention**
- **Action, responsibility, and men's role**
- **Need for further training and development**

The conference provided a forum for education, exploration and discussion. It supported the ending Violence against Women and Girls Partnership to grow the number of male allies across the workforce with whom we are connected.



East Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership - Joint Overdose Outreach Initiative

East Ayrshire experienced high levels of suspected drug-related deaths (DRDs) and non-fatal overdoses (NFOs) in 2025/26. A driving factor was the evolving composition of illicit drugs, which are increasingly manufactured with unknown, highly potent adulterants like Nitazenes. Because full toxicology and forensic testing can take months, partner agencies faced critical intelligence gaps regarding active drug trends. NHS RADAR outreach workers often spent an excessive amount of time trying to locate individuals due to limited contact details provided by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS).

As a result, in May 2026, £30,000 in ADP funding was made available to set up the Joint Overdose Initiative with the support of Police Scotland and NHS RADAR.

The ADP Joint Overdose Initiative sought to make changes in their processes to improve outcomes for drug users, this included changes to:

- **Shift Structures:** A dedicated police officer works a 4-hour overtime shift (1000–1400 hrs) 3 days/week (typically Mon, Wed, Thu);
- **Joint Outreach:** Officers partner directly with RADAR outreach workers to conduct home visits to individuals who recently experienced an NFO;
- **Protocol & Roles:** Officers attend in uniform with full PPE. RADAR leads introductions, engagement, and support, allowing natural conversation; and
- **Dual Objectives:** Improved speed of health interventions while gathering real-time intelligence on circulating substances and trends.

Key Impacts & Outcomes achieved through the ADP Joint Overdose Outreach Initiative include:

- **Drastic Reduction in Fatalities:** Prior to the initiative, East Ayrshire recorded 27 suspected DRDs in 2026; since its launch, only 1 suspected DRD has been recorded;
- **Faster Interventions:** Police localized intelligence allows RADAR outreach workers to find vulnerable individuals much faster, shifting focus from searching to direct care;
- **Improved Trust & Engagement:** Joint visits reduced barriers, easing anxiety for individuals historically hostile to law enforcement and fostering sustained engagement with recovery services;
- **Crisis Intervention:** Successfully facilitated immediate mental health referrals during welfare checks for individuals in acute distress; and
- **Targeted Enforcement:** Intelligence gathered directly supported a search warrant execution, resulting in significant drug seizures and disrupted local supply chains.



East Ayrshire Carers Centre

A young adult carer who cares for both his mum and gran due to mental health and COPD had a particularly rough time due to experiencing bullying. His caring responsibilities are intensive. He regularly attended the Carers Centre's weekly groups, however he had suddenly stopped attending before the Summer. Support workers were concerned by this and made contact.

From this, they identified the issues he had been experiencing and provided support and advice, in addition to extending an invitation to attend an overnight respite trip which he was not sure if he wanted to go on due to recent incidents. After reassurance and encouragement, he decided to attend the Young Carers Festival respite.



At first, he was shy and did not want to participate in the activities that were available. Eventually, with support from Young Carers Support Workers, he came out of his shell and made new friends from other Carers Centres. He thoroughly enjoyed a host of activities including live bands, disco, bouncy castles and a bonfire. On his return, he expressed that he had a great time, had a chance to switch off and forget about the events leading up to the respite break and was thankful that he did not miss out. The experience helped him to feel included, involved, respected and valued, everything that he did not feel prior to attending the respite.



Smart Supports

Smart Supports had great success supporting a client to remain at home with the use of a communication device. The client lives with their partner who provides a high level of support and supervision out with two weekly visits for showering from Care at Home. The client had experienced multiple strokes which left them with limited speech, a right sided weakness, issues with swallowing and occasionally erratic behaviour towards their partner. The client's partner had an emergency admission to hospital and initially the Social Work Locality team were seeking for the client to be supported within a permanent care setting on an emergency basis. However, due to presenting behaviours, care homes were unable to meet the client's needs.



Smart Supports involvement was requested urgently to prevent admission to care and after discussion it was agreed a Komp communication device could be used to mitigate risk and enable the client to stay at home whilst their partner was in hospital. The large screen device is linked to an app that family members can use to send messages, pictures and host video calls. The device is unique in that no interaction from the end user is required, messages and pictures are auto displayed and calls automatically answered.

The Peer Mentor was able to source and install the device to the family home on the same day it was requested on a 12 week trial basis. Liaising with the Peer Mentor allowed the Locality Team to identify that a Komp device would be beneficial to allow the client's daughter to supervise when their family couldn't be in attendance. This was effective in supporting the client to remain within their own home and prevented an admission to care. £9,904 in cost avoidance was achieved over the 12 weeks and the individual remained connected with their family during this period.

