



## IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG CARERS



**Children in poverty**  
Decreased from 28% to 26%



### Young Carers

903 young carers registered with East Ayrshire Carers Centre at March 2019



**Children Looked After**  
381 children and young people at March 2019



**Unemployment (16-24 age group)**  
Decreased from 23.2% to 16.5%



**Looked After Young People in Positive Destinations**  
Increased from 61.8% to 88.9%



**Home Link Worker Support**  
500 vulnerable families supported, 90% cases with a positive outcome

## Practice Examples

Supported by a Parental Engagement Officer, **Home Link Workers** are funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with priority given to primary and secondary school pupils in our most disadvantaged areas and a focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. Home Link Workers provide support for **vulnerable children and young people** through key stages/transitioning, whether that is early years to primary, primary to secondary, or post-secondary into positive destinations. There is a **flexible approach** to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and their families, within schools as well as in community settings, including one-to-one work with individual pupils, small group work programmes, project work, extra-curricular activities, supporting attendance and family support. This support continues throughout the school holiday periods, providing an element of continuity to connect vulnerable children and families into community

activities. To date, over **500 families have been supported** by our Home Link Worker team with over 90% of cases closed after a positive outcome.

**Shannon's Box** was created to make **entering care a little easier** for children and young people. The box contains items carefully selected by Shannon, a member of our **Connected Voices Group**, alongside a personal letter from her, to help **comfort children and young people** going into care and manage their emotions. The box was influenced by Shannon's **own experience** of entering care, with input from other young people with care experience. The box has gained significant attention nationally and has now been launched in East Ayrshire.

# COMMENTARY

**Improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, including those who are care experienced or have caring responsibilities, is embedded in the work of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). A sample of activity, which was progressed in 2018/19, to support our vulnerable children and young people is provided below.**

- East Ayrshire was allocated £3.465m of **Pupil Equity Funding** for 2018/19 from the Scottish Government to address the poverty related attainment gap. A significant range of activity has been progressed to support improved and consistent teaching in literacy and numeracy, increased parental engagement and empowerment, and the extension of the curriculum to include third sector organisations, which offer individualised approaches for targeted young people.
- The priority given to tackling child poverty in East Ayrshire was demonstrated through alternative models of provision to tackle **'holiday hunger'**, with **14,000** free meals provided during the school holidays in 2018. A range of sporting and physical activity, with provision of a free lunch, was provided at the **Activity Holiday Programme in 2018**; and the **iLunch Programme**, also seeks to address holiday hunger through family and community based programmes, but with a more intense focus on learning and skills development for children and their families.
- The Council and the CPP Board endorsed the **Corporate Parenting Promise 2018**, which was developed in partnership with **'Connected Voices'**, a group of local care experienced young people, which represents our shared commitment to ensure that children looked after have the best opportunities to develop to their full potential.
- Close partnership working has been developed with **East Ayrshire Carers Centre** to provide a framework that ensures carers and young carers receive the right support at the right time.
- **Play in Prison** allows fathers currently imprisoned within HMP Kilmarnock to have the opportunity to foster or **maintain bonding and attachments** with the child/children in their lives through using the medium of play, offering opportunities to maintain contact with their loved ones and helping to improve the health and wellbeing of the family as a whole.
- Police officers have been receiving training in adverse childhood experiences (**ACEs**) and how they could limit the trauma received by a child during policing activities. In addition, all **police campus officers** are trained in **Early and Effective Intervention** and continue to engage with high tariff young people across the local authority.
- Partners in East Ayrshire have been working to support and maximise the impact of the national **'Every Child, Every Chance'** Delivery Plan, including the introduction of automated systems to facilitate **school clothing grant** and **free school meal** applications, maximising uptake; and **expanding early education and child care** provision across the local authority area.
- **What Matters to You** is an innovative new programme, developed during 2018/19 by East Ayrshire Council, in partnership with **The Hunter Foundation** and **BBC Children in Need**, and will be implemented over the next 3 years, initially in the Cumnock and Auchinleck areas, linked to the new Barony Campus. The success of the initiative will be demonstrated through an increase in **positive destinations** for those most impacted by negative underlying circumstances, with a particular **focus on families with children at the edges of care**.