

Local Child Poverty Action Report for East Ayrshire 2018/19

Foreword

Growing up in poverty affects life chances – in health, wellbeing, education and employment – it can mean feeling **cold, hungry** and **unable to take part** in the things that friend and neighbours do. Child poverty **affects everyone**, not just individuals experiencing it directly – it acts as a barrier to our aim of a 'Fairer, Kinder, Connected' East Ayrshire.

Within East Ayrshire we have long recognised the importance of a **partnership approach** to addressing these issues and consequently work to address poverty is already **embedded** throughout the work of our **community planning partnership** and is articulated in the East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-2030. Over the last year, however, we have taken stock of this existing activity and have worked with our communities and local stakeholders to **challenge ourselves to do more** to meet the growing challenge of child poverty.

It is not acceptable that almost 7,000 children in East Ayrshire are growing up in poverty.

Our plans are ambitious. We recognise that wide ranging **structural change** is essential to meet the challenges of child poverty in the years ahead and are committed to taking all of the action that is within our gift to achieve this.

We are excited by the potential of the **Ayrshire Growth Deal** and the emerging **regional economic strategy**, which we believe will bring significant economic growth and opportunity to East Ayrshire. Ensuring that we are well placed to capitalise on these opportunities is central to our work on child poverty. As **key local employers** we also recognise the role of our partnership in leading on **fair working** practices and mobilising our wider staff group to **challenge** the **stigma** which can still be attached to modern day poverty

Mitigating, preventing and **undoing** the causes and consequences of child poverty will remain a key focus for our partnership in the years ahead and we remain committed to working effectively with the full range of local and national partners to ensure that all children growing up in East Ayrshire have the **best possible start in life**.

Councillor Douglas Reid
Chair of East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board

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Introduction

Under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 ('the Act') Local Authorities and NHS Boards must jointly develop and publish annual **Local Child Poverty Action Reports** (LCPARs). Although this reporting duty is placed solely on local authorities and health boards, development of this East Ayrshire report has been undertaken across our wider community planning partnership, to reflect our existing partnership approach to child poverty.

In line with this approach, this Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) is presented as part of our partnership's wider suite of Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) reporting materials for 2018/19, within the context of the Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing Delivery Plan updates. Across this suite of reports, a fuller picture of our wider partnership activity is presented, the totality of which is directed towards the achievement of our shared partnership priorities.

Central to this work, and embedded right across our partnership activity, is our common will to **prevent, mitigate and undo the impact of child poverty**.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, this LCPAR seeks to highlight the key activity taken forward during the 2018/19 reporting year to reduce child poverty in East Ayrshire; and to outline the further activity which is planned for the year ahead, to meet the challenging **child poverty reduction targets**¹ which have been set within the Act. These are as follows:

By **2030**:

- Less than 10% of children living in relative poverty.
- Less than 5% of children living in absolute poverty.
- Less than 5% of children living in combined low income and material deprivation.
- Less than 5% of children living in persistent poverty.

Supporting these long-term targets are 'interim' **progress measures** to be met by **2023**. In summary these are:

- Less than 18% of children in relative poverty.
- Less than 14% of children in absolute poverty.
- Less than 8% of children in combined low income and material deprivation.
- Less than 8% of children in persistent poverty.

There are currently almost 7,000 children (26%) living in poverty in East Ayrshire ([End Child Poverty - May 2019](#)).

To meet the ambitions of the Act, the aim across partners must be to take 1,900 children out of poverty by 2023 and a further 2,000 by 2030.

¹ Further detail on the targets is available at <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/IncomePoverty/ChildPovertyStrategy>

Strategic Context

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Tackling child poverty is one of the biggest challenges facing our CPP and one which demands a concerted and strategic partnership response.

The significant levels of **child poverty** which currently exist **prevent our young people from reaching their true potential**. Childhood poverty is associated with poorer social, emotional and educational development and with long-term adverse consequences for children as they reach adulthood².

The main **national policy** related to child poverty is '*Every Child, Every Chance: The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22*'. This sets out to address **the three main drivers** of child poverty, which are identified as 'income from employment', 'costs of living, and 'income from social security and benefits in kind'. It also aims to prevent poverty being transmitted to future generations, encouraging partnership working to deliver the radical change required to achieve the identified targets.

Six new national Public Health priorities have been identified by Scottish Government following extensive engagement. Priority 5 is 'A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all'. This priority is being taken forward by the wider public health workforce and will include actions to prevent and mitigate Child Poverty.

In East Ayrshire there is a track record of strong performance based on effective community planning and partnership working, underlined by a genuine commitment by partners to work with and empower local communities³.

Child poverty is already embedded as a cross cutting theme of community planning in East Ayrshire and the development of this new child poverty action report must necessarily be set within the context of this existing activity – complementing and not duplicating what is already in place.

The **East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-30** is recognised as the sovereign planning document for the East Ayrshire area, providing the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all Partners. The Community Plan commits all partners to "tackling deprivation and disadvantage wherever they exist, with a particular focus on working together to address the impact of the Welfare Reform programme on individuals, families and communities across East Ayrshire".

² http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1256/inequality-briefing-2-good-work-for-all_sept2016_english.pdf

³ https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2018/bv_180529_east_ayrshire.pdf

Three Delivery Plans sit beneath the Community Plan, each with a three year life span, currently 2018-2021. The Delivery Plans set out the key activity to be taken forward by partners, to achieve the best possible outcomes for our local communities under each of the identified community planning themes, Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing.

Action to address child poverty across our communities is reflected across each of the three Delivery Plans, as follows:

- Our existing partnership activity in relation to **economic development, community led regeneration, skills development and employability and raising attainment** is set out under **Economy and Skills**.
- Our **Safer Communities Delivery Plan** reflects partnership activity to make East Ayrshire a **safe, secure and attractive place to live** and to **protect and support our most vulnerable individuals and families**.
- Our activity to ensure that East Ayrshire **children have the best start in life** is set out in our **Wellbeing Delivery Plan**.

Three thematic Delivery Plan Working Groups are in place to drive forward the Delivery Plan actions and performance is routinely monitored by the **Community Planning Executive Officers' Group**.

In addition to our core activity, the Community Planning Partnership Board identifies its own **Strategic Priorities** for each three year period, against which Members are looking for partners to achieve demonstrable progress. For 2018-2021 these are:

- Improving outcomes for **vulnerable children** and **young people**, with a particular focus on looked after children/young people and young carers.
- Older people: **adding life to years**, with a particular focus on tackling social isolation.
- **Community led regeneration**: empowering communities and building community resilience.

Activity being taken forward in relation to these strategic priorities will impact positively on our work to address child poverty.

Our **Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2018-21** is the performance management framework through which our partnership activity, including progress against the identified Strategic Priorities, is reported to our communities and other key stakeholders. **The LOIP contains a range of performance measures and indicators which will allow us to demonstrate our progress in relation to addressing child poverty, and will be updated to reflect any emerging measures as these are identified by our partnership.**

CHILDREN'S SERVICE PLANNING

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a requirement on local authorities and health boards to prepare a children's services plan for each local authority area. Locally, in line with our partnership based approach, East Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran agreed to delegate responsibility for the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Service Plan to the CPP Board.

Our Children and Young People's Service Plan complements and supports the East Ayrshire Community Plan and is in full alignment with the Community Plan delivery plans. Delivery of the Children and Young People's Service Plan, on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership and within the context of our broader Wellbeing agenda, is led by the [Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership](#).

The current [Children and Young People's Service Plan-2017-2020](#) will be reviewed over the year ahead, in line with the requirements of the 2014 Act, and the new Plan for 2020-23 will continue to reflect the emerging child poverty agenda.

The Infant, Children and Young People's (ICYP) Transformational Change Programme Board has a Pan-Ayrshire Role in improving the health and social outcomes for infants, children and young people in Ayrshire and Arran, and provides a strategic view across children's health and social outcomes and health inequalities. The Programme Board is chaired by the Interim Director of Public Health, who is also the Child Health Commissioner for Ayrshire and Arran. The ICYPTC Programme Board's Work Programme has a number of priority areas, including child poverty.

TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Across our partnership, staff are working closely with communities to design and deliver services to meet local needs. This **place-based approach** is fundamentally about **improving outcomes for communities** by empowering them to have more of a say in local affairs and promoting a shared sense of ownership and responsibility. This is an essential element of our work to address poverty – **supporting our communities to build resilience** and to **identify and develop solutions** which fit their local area.

Our approach places **individuals, families and communities at the heart of our services**. We have developed a range of work with individuals, families and communities to build on strengths and assets and reduce dependency on professionally-led services. The Council's Vibrant Communities team play a key role in this, working with all sectors of the community to **reduce inequalities** and **develop sustainable communities** through a wide range of **early intervention** services and programmes.

LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT

This **Local Child Poverty Action Report** is presented to **complement the information provided within the LOIP annual performance report** with the specific aims of:

i) highlighting the **additional** activity which has been progressed by our partnership over the course of 2018/19, with the specific aim of reducing child poverty in East Ayrshire and meeting the child poverty targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017; and

ii) outlining the **additional** planned partnership activity for 2019/20 and beyond, which has been identified by our partnership, with the aim of meeting the child poverty targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.

In line with the requirements of the Act, this LCPAR will also highlight the particular activity which is being directed towards the priority groups identified within the legislation, namely

- Income maximisation activity for pregnant women and families with children.
- Children living in households affected by one or more protected characteristic.
- Priority groups (lone parents, 3 or more children, child under 1, mother under 25, minority ethnic or families affected by disability).
- Areas of high material deprivation.
- Children and families impacted by ACEs.

In addition, reflecting the particular makeup of East Ayrshire, there will be a focus on activity to address the extent to which child poverty is exacerbated in **our more rural communities**.

Who are the partners involved in tackling child poverty in East Ayrshire?

Our core community planning partners – **East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Enterprise** – have been closely involved in the development of this report. We also recognised at an early stage that the involvement of our wider partnership would be essential to the development of an effective approach to addressing child poverty, particularly to ensure that **local people with experience of poverty** were, and continue to be, involved in the development of this work. The pre-existing Financial Inclusion Group – now renamed the Poverty Action Group – has played a key role in this, leading on the wider engagement activity which informs this LCPAR.

Some of the key stakeholders who are working in partnership with us in action related to tackling poverty in East Ayrshire are:

The Poverty Action Group – East Ayrshire <ul style="list-style-type: none">• East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (EAHSCP)• East Ayrshire Council• NHS Ayrshire and Arran• East Ayrshire Citizen's Advice Bureau• Council for Voluntary Organisations – East Ayrshire• Ayrshire Credit Union• Sovereign Credit Union• East Ayrshire Carers Centre• East Ayrshire Advocacy Service• Atrium Homes• Cunninghame Homes• Shire Housing Association• MacMillan Cancer Support• East Ayrshire Works• Citrus Energy• Home Energy Scotland• Menu for Change<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Oxfam Scotland, Nourish Scotland, the Poverty Alliance, Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland• Department of Work and Pensions	Our Wider Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our Communities• Social Security Scotland• Centrestage• The Hunter Foundation• BBC Children In Need• Skills Development Scotland• Ayrshire Roads Alliance• Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)• Coalfield Community Transport• Barclays• EA Womens Aid• Barnados• YIPworld• The Zone
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Consultation and Engagement Activity

In preparing this LCPAR during 2018/19, partners took forward a range of research, consultation and engagement activity which is summarised below.

- A **mapping exercise** was undertaken, to identify existing activity aimed at addressing child poverty and any potential gaps in provision across East Ayrshire. The outcome of this **mapping work** is reflected throughout this LCPAR.
- An **Elected Members'** seminar was held, in October 2018, to allow Members the opportunity to consider the extent of child poverty in East Ayrshire and to identify potential actions to mitigate the impact of this, taking account of their individual knowledge of and experiences within their own Wards. Members were keen to ensure that the targeted work to address child poverty in our most deprived SIMD areas should be widened out as appropriate, to ensure that individual families within less deprived areas who are experiencing child poverty should not be overlooked.
- The **Community Planning Partnership Board** considered an appraisal of current activity to mitigate the impact of child poverty at its meeting of 6 December 2018, and requested particular activity to ensure sustainability of holiday hunger provision and further action in relation to transport, particularly lobbying for concessionary travel for young people.
- A challenge session with the CPP **Executive Officers' Group**⁴ took place in January 2019, to test whether the existing/identified activity would deliver on our ambitions to address child poverty. As a consequence of these discussions, further opportunities to tackle in-work poverty, support priority groups and strengthen partnership relationships at community level were identified.
- A **'Turning the Curve'** workshop on tackling child poverty involving key partners was held in April 2019. This workshop reviewed existing and planned action on child poverty against the key drivers set out in 'Every Child, Every Chance'.

Four **public facing engagement** workshops took place in May 2019 in Bellsbank, Shortlees, Newmilns, and Netherthird. The themes emerging from this engagement are threaded through this report. **Across all of this engagement activity, stakeholders agreed that the aim of our child poverty activity should be for all children in East Ayrshire to be happy and fulfilled, free to enjoy their childhood and to fulfil their potential. Our role as partners, and the overarching aim of the activity set out within in this report, is to address the barriers which are preventing this aim from becoming a reality.**

⁴ The CPP Executive Officers' Group comprises representation at chief officer level from the core community planning partner organisations, namely East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

What is the extent of child poverty in East Ayrshire?

6,900

Number of children living
in relative poverty in 2018

6 in 10

Children living in
poverty in households
where someone is in
paid employment

Hourly pay in East
Ayrshire
£14.85

(Scotland = £14.30)

Percentage of children living in poverty by Multi Member Ward

Irvine Valley	27%
Kilmarnock North	31%
Cumnock & New Cumnock	32%
Kilmarnock East & Hurlford	27%
Kilmarnock West & Crosshouse	17%
Ballochmyle	29%
Doon Valley	31%
Annick	19%
Kilmarnock South	33%

Amount of income
maximised or debt managed
per year by partners

**£10.75
million**

By Financial Inclusion Team,
Citizens' Advice Bureau, Carers
Centre and Community
Connectors

26%

Percentage of
children living in
relative poverty

Children fed through
emergency food provision

**1,697 (2016)
2,064 (2018)**

8,900

Number of children
living in poverty in 2030
if we take no action

East Ayrshire has a level of relative child poverty of **26 per cent** in 2019. Just over **one in every four** children lives in relative poverty as measured at 60 per cent of the national median income. The extent of child poverty in our communities underlines the challenge which this presents.

There has already been some progress, with a reported **reduction in child poverty of two percentage points since 2016** and East Ayrshire has moved from having the **third** highest level of relative child poverty to the **eighth** highest in Scotland.

This still means that almost **7,000** of our children and young people were living in households **with an income of less than £304** per week in 2017/18.

There is **variation** in the level of child poverty **across our communities**.

- In Kilmarnock South, **33 per cent** of children and young people are living in relative poverty; in Cumnock and New Cumnock the figure is **32 per cent**; and for Doon Valley, **31 per cent** of children live in relative poverty.
- In contrast to this, in Kilmarnock West and Crosshouse and also in the Annick Ward, relative child poverty currently stands at **17 per cent**.

This demonstrates that, even in what are considered more affluent areas, a significant number of our children and young people experience the impact of child poverty.

There has been a significant **increase** in the number of households experiencing **in-work poverty nationally**, particularly since 2010 with almost **two-thirds** of children in poverty being in households where someone is in paid work.

The **employment rate** in East Ayrshire, at 68.8, remains **below** that of Scotland as a whole, which stands at 74.1. Hourly pay rates for full-time employees are slightly higher than the national average at £14.85 compared with £14.30. The **claimant count** rate for East Ayrshire is **5.0 per cent** compared with **3.1 per cent** for Scotland (source: www.nomisweb.co.uk).

Children fed through **emergency food provision** by East Ayrshire Foodbanks **increased by 26 per cent** between 2016 and 2018, rising from 1,696 to **2,064**.

At a national level, **child poverty levels are forecast** to continue **to rise** over the next few years. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government on forecasting child poverty suggests that relative child poverty, after housing costs, will increase from the current level to between **35-38 per cent** by **2030** depending on the extent of policy implementation. Applying these estimates **locally** suggest that as many as **8,848** children and young people could be living in relative poverty by **2030** unless action is taken now to address this.

What are our communities telling us about child poverty in East Ayrshire?

The Locality⁵ engagement events held in 2018/19 focused on the impact of child poverty across the three drivers contained in the national 'Every Child, Every Chance' delivery plan, namely income from employment, costs of living and income from social security and benefits in kind.

INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

Transport and rurality were noted as presenting significant barriers to employment. In the Southern and Northern Localities in particular, people noted the cost and infrequency of transport. This was linked to quality of employment and the reduced potential for earning where the statutory **minimum wage** or **zero hours** contracts applied.

The Northern Locality engagement event noted **limited employment opportunities** in the Irvine Valley.

In some communities in the Southern Locality there was limited availability of **childcare** that was seen as a barrier affecting the ability to work or seek work.

"It can cost £20 for a family to travel from Newmilns to Kilmarnock" (7.4 miles).

⁵ Information on locality planning can be accessed here <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/SocialCareAndHealth/Working-in-Localities/Working-in-localities.aspx> Locality profiles can be found at the following link <https://www.eastayrshirecommunityplan.org/Performance/Locality-Profiles.aspx>

COSTS OF LIVING

A key concern emerging from locality engagement is **food poverty**. This in particular relates to the cost of accessing groceries at supermarket prices. **Transport costs** contribute to access issues and often **more expensive** local convenience stores offer **high calorie, high sugar foods** rather than healthier alternatives.

“The same loaf of bread costs £1 in Kilmarnock but £1.80 in the local shop in Bellsbank”

Food poverty is also highlighted by Foodbank representatives, who report an increase in the severity of hunger and **food insecurity** among people presenting to East Ayrshire Foodbank in the last year.

“We have noticed a great increase at the St Matthews Foodbank and a growing despair among a whole range of people, many attending Foodbanks for the first time”

Fuel poverty is a significant issue impacting on the costs of living.

“Pre-payment meters mean a choice of food versus fuel when emergencies arise”

Changes to **banking services** were flagged up as a contributory factor with branch **closures**, limited **mobile services** and limited access to free **ATMs** all mentioned in locality engagement events.

The challenges of the ‘**cost of the school day**’ were also raised, including **school uniform** as a significant cost for families; required **resources** for certain subjects, including textbooks or ingredients for health and food technology, putting **pressure on family budgets**; and the cost of **school trips** – even **small costs can mount up**.

Cashless payment systems have been key to inclusion and anonymity in relation to eligibility for free school meals, however some concerns were highlighted in relation to digital skills and the **operation** of cashless systems which can lead to **confusion**. Parents/Carers pointed out that additional costs for children’s participation in activities can affect **relationships** with peers and lead to **stigma**.

“Stigma brings poverty to the child”

Participation in community **leisure activities**, clubs and sports can be **difficult** for families on **low incomes** even where costs are reduced – the effect can be cumulative.

INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND BENEFITS IN KIND

People involved in locality engagement events said that there was **a lack of awareness of advice and support** on benefit issues available in communities, although health services, GPs in particular, were seen as a key source of information, advice and support.

Transport and rurality was again identified as an issue - making and maintaining claims may require travel to towns and, for example, DWP **travel warrants** are limited to **adult only** travel and do not cover dependent children.

Issues with **operation of the benefit system** were commonly cited in engagement.

“The cap on benefits impacts on the whole family – all children”

The transfer to **Universal Credit** has been noted as having a significant impact on families, both in terms of delays to payment, rent arrears, increasing debt and also family stress.

“Without a doubt Universal Credit causes financial hardship for claimants, including increased debt and rent arrears, inflicting great misery on our most vulnerable and forcing people to use foodbanks”

This is also linked to another theme around **digital exclusion**, with people stating that digital challenges were continuous in terms of **making and maintaining benefit claims**. This relates to digital **skills** and literacy, **coverage** and also to the **costs of broadband** for people with a low household income. For the same reasons digital exclusion was also an issue for **access to other supports** and services where information is primarily digital, and an issue for families with children in relation to homework.

What do we do just now to mitigate the impact of child poverty in East Ayrshire?

A wide range of activity is being undertaken, across our partnership, which will mitigate the impact of child poverty in East Ayrshire. The full scope of this work is articulated within our thematic Delivery Plans and Children and Young People's Service Plan; and progress during 2018/19 is set out in detail elsewhere, under the relevant reporting theme of our annual LOIP performance report. While much of this activity will contribute to the achievement of the prescribed child poverty targets in the short-medium term, the wider performance report also includes longer term strategic activity which seeks to reduce the chances of poverty for future generations.

Some of the key activity which has progressed over the last year, which we believe to be of particular significance in our journey towards achievement of the identified child poverty targets, is highlighted below.

For ease of reference, this activity is presented under the identified drivers of child poverty: Income from Employment; Costs of Living and Income from Social Security and Benefits in Kind.

INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

Inclusive Economic Growth

The recent confirmation of the **Ayrshire Growth Deal**, involving the three Ayrshire Councils and both the UK and Scottish Governments, represented the culmination of a number of years of planning and negotiation by local, regional and national partners.

The Deal is the first non-City Deal in Scotland and, with a financial commitment of £251.5m, represents the largest ever public sector investment into Ayrshire. This **investment** will help drive economic development across the region, **boosting jobs, creating opportunity and encouraging further inward investment**.

For East Ayrshire, it has been confirmed that four major projects will be supported by **Ayrshire Growth Deal** funding, namely The Halo, Kilmarnock; the National Energy Research and Demonstration Centre in Cumnock; a Food and Drink Innovation Centre and start up units at Bellfield, Kilmarnock; and phase 3 of Moorfield Business Park. In addition, local residents will benefit from the broader investment across Ayrshire which will, it is anticipated, bring **a wide range of employment opportunities and infrastructure improvements**.

While the direct impact of the **Ayrshire Growth Deal** will not be seen immediately, it has the potential to have a real and lasting positive effect on the prospects of children and families across East Ayrshire. The Deal features prominently within the new Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy which is currently being developed by the Regional Economic Development Partnership. This strategy will shape how the three Ayrshire authorities and partners from the public and private sector work together to achieve the economic growth which will create new high quality jobs and opportunities across Ayrshire. The challenge going forward will be to ensure that the resultant economic growth is **truly inclusive**, to the benefit of all of our residents. Work in this regard, particularly in relation to the **identified priority groups** and our **more rural communities**, will be reported in future LCPARs.

What Matters to You

This innovative new programme has been 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 area, linked to the new Barony campus.

The overall aim of 'What Matters to You' is to deliver **systemic change** through investment in strategies that are tailored to the needs of children and families, who require significant support to enable **positive outcomes**. Work will combine a focused approach to an agreed number of **young people and families on the 'edges of care'**, alongside a more general support network for the entire community of young people and their families. 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**.

The Council has also sought the support of **Sir Harry Burns**, who has been working with the University of Strathclyde to trial **a complex data approach** to measuring outcomes, using predictive analytics and bringing together a wide range of data from across a range of service areas.

Raising Attainment

East Ayrshire was allocated £3.465m of **Pupil Equity Funding** for 2018/19 from the Scottish Government to address the poverty related attainment gap. PEF funding is under the direct control of individual head teachers and has been directed to the children and communities in greatest need. In tandem with this, **Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding** of £3.763m was also secured for the same period.

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 who offer individualised approaches for targeted young people. Sustainability has been a key consideration in the design and implementation of this work, with proven interventions being embedded into practice across the local authority area. This has the advantage of ensuring that children living in poverty outwith the targeted SIMD areas are also able to benefit from SAC/PEF activity and that there will be a longer term legacy for this work.

By September 2019, 54 out of 54 (100%) of educational establishments will be trained and supported in either the Literacy or Numeracy pedagogies, with 49 out of 54 (88%) establishments trained and supported in both.

Home Link Workers, supported by a **Parental Engagement Officer** are also funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with priority given to primary and secondary school pupils in SIMD 1 and 2 areas and a focus on **closing the poverty related attainment gap**. Home Link Workers provide support for vulnerable pupils through key transitioning, whether that be early years to primary, primary to secondary, or post-secondary into positive destination. This support is continued 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 due to a positive outcome.**

East Ayrshire is actively involved in the **South West Educational Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC)** with colleagues from Dumfries and Galloway and North and South Ayrshire. A key SWEIC workstream focuses on 'Closing the Gap', which includes the identification and sharing of effective planning, delivery and evaluation of Pupil Equity Fund spend, and this work will be further progressed during 2019/20. At a local, East Ayrshire level, a new joint programme board is also being established, to take shared strategic oversight of **Pupil Equity Fund, Scottish Attainment Challenge and Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund**. This holistic approach aims to maximise the impact of these funding streams, in relation to addressing the poverty related attainment gap across the authority area, and to ensure that proven approaches are embedded across our educational establishments.

Employability Pipeline and Poverty and Social Inclusion Programme

The **Employability Pipeline** is an example of strong partnership working between the Economic Development Employability and Health and Social Care Financial Inclusion teams. The Employability Pipeline provides **universal and targeted support** to working and workless individuals who experience increased levels of poverty due to the rising costs of living, fuel, food and housing and low income.

In relation to employability, in 2018/19, **973 residents were supported to find employment**. This support included employability skills development, access to training and support via local Job Clubs. In relation to the priority groups identified within the child poverty legislation, those supported included 557 residents from areas of high material deprivation and remote rural areas; 91 lone parent families; 118 families which include a disabled adult or child; 10 Minority ethnic families; and 62 families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Local European Social Fund (ESF) **In-Work Progression support** also recognises the issue of **rising in-work poverty** and evidence that those in low pay are often unable to sustainably progress into better paid work. The programme has been developed with the aim of supporting low paid workers to progress into better paid, more stable work through the provision of a tailored package of support including personalised advice, coaching and skills

support. There are a range of referral pathways onto the programme, including person-led pathways through outreach, self-referrals and partnerships with other support services and organisations. Employers are also encouraged to play a major role in the recruitment of low paid workers onto the programme.

The Financial Inclusion function within the Employability Pipeline provides **dedicated 1-2-1 support** and advice to assist individuals to maximise income, manage debts, improve money management skills and consider **gaining or improving employment** as a mechanism to **address poverty**, including **in-work poverty**.

Financial Inclusion activity recognises the adverse impact of **worklessness** and **in-work poverty** on the current and future **life chances** of **children and young people** in families affected. The focus is on **supporting people with multiple disadvantages** and **overcoming barriers to work**. The anticipated outcomes for this activity are participants entering employment, including self-employment, or entering education and training and gaining a formal qualification.

Households and individuals in these circumstances are supported to access training which can assist in securing sustainable employment or improving existing employment and living standards. The Financial Inclusion element of the Pipeline also contributes to wider health and wellbeing through supporting volunteering and peer support to develop skills and opportunities.

In the first phase of the Social Inclusion Programme (2016-19), income maximisation activity arising from current supports has achieved **£269,939.08** in **financial gains** for East Ayrshire residents. In the same period, **200** workless, lone parent or low income households have had their income maximised; **117** supported in managing debt; and **87** with budgeting. East Ayrshire Council is match funding the Programme to the end of December 2022.

COSTS OF LIVING

Housing Services

Housing Services play a key role in supporting families on low incomes to sustain their tenancies and to manage the costs and challenges of everyday living. Providing access to affordable social housing is an important element of our response to child poverty, recognising the significant impact of housing costs on families' disposable incomes.

1,162 general needs council homes were made available for let during 2018/19, providing good quality, warm, energy efficient and affordable homes for families across East Ayrshire and the Council's rents continue to be below the Scottish average.

A **Neighbourhood Coaching** model has been adopted, which has transformed the traditional Housing Officer Role. The Coaching approach seeks to shift the emphasis to the customer's strengths and potential, and focusses on connecting customers to local services and building community. There is also a clear emphasis on prevention measures, accessible housing options advice, robust partnership working and resourced, wrap-around housing support.

A range of support services are available for tenants that require some **support to maintain their tenancy** and people can be referred or self-refer to the **Housing Support Service**, delivered by the Council's **Vibrant Communities** department, in order to maximise tenancy sustainment and minimise the chances of homelessness occurring in the future.

If people find themselves at risk of becoming homeless, they are provided with support from a dedicated Housing Options Officer, with households affected by homelessness supported to move to suitable settled homes as quickly as possible. This support equips people with the **basic life and social skills and coping mechanisms** they will need to sustain their tenancy, engage with other services and move towards living independently.

The new **East Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy (2019-24)** will continue to ensure that East Ayrshire has a supply of **good quality, affordable housing** across all tenures based within **vibrant, empowered communities**, which is an essential part of our work to address child poverty. This strategy is informed by the **Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019 – 2024**. The SHIP is the key document for identifying strategic housing priorities and seeks to deliver up to 836 new, rehabilitated and acquired affordable homes in East Ayrshire over the 5 year period to March 2024.

Universal Holiday Food Provision

East Ayrshire Council introduced the **Activity Holiday Programme** in 2017, as part of a wider programme involving staff across **Vibrant Communities, Facilities and Property Management and Education**. In the first year, **5,000** lunches were provided over 4 weeks to children during the **2017** summer holidays. This provision was increased in **2018** to **14,000** lunches over the Easter, summer and October holidays, running in conjunction with **215 sessions of sporting and physical activity** delivered to the children. Sessions were delivered by a range of partners including **Barnardo's, Yipworld** and **School Establishments**.

The activities were **free and inclusive** of a free lunch provided by the council's catering service. The focus of the programme is for children to attend the holiday activities, with the secondary benefit of receiving a free packed lunch. This approach remains the most effective: **promoting positive activity as the basis of our approach** and **inclusive positive engagement** to support all families over the holiday period, not just those affected by hunger and food insecurity.

In addition, **the I-Lunch Programme**, supported by Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding, has been developed to provide a more intensive support programme for identified SIMD target communities. This programme also addresses holiday hunger through a programme of family and community based programmes, but with a more intense focus on learning and skills development for children and their families. Daily activities include book bug sessions, fun maths and cooking meals on a budget. This programme was piloted in North West Kilmarnock during the 2018/19 academic year and, following a positive evaluation which demonstrated significant improvements in parental involvement in supporting their children's learning at home, was adapted and expended to primary schools in the 9 most highly deprived areas within the authority area in 2019/20. Further evaluation of this approach and consideration its longer term sustainability will now be taken forward as part of the wider review and evaluation of our work to close the poverty related attainment gap in East Ayrshire.

The priority given to tackling child poverty in East Ayrshire was demonstrated in the Council's 2019/20 budget-setting process, where the sum of **£0.250m** was set aside to fund alternative models of provision to tackle **food insecurity** and make provision sustainable for the future⁶. It is anticipated that **20,000** meals will be provided during the school holidays in 2019.

⁶ <https://docs.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/r/?f=https://docs.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CRPADMMIN/2012%20AGENDAS/COUNCIL/28%20FEBRUARY%202019/transformation%20strategy%202017-22%20-%20revenue%20budget%202019-2022.pdf>

Dignified Food Provision

During 2018/19 a ‘**food in communities**’ group was established in East Ayrshire, involving a range of partners including **Fareshare, Scottish Government, CVO East Ayrshire, Centrestage, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and East Ayrshire Council** (Vibrant Communities and Communications). The group was initially established as part of our preparations for Brexit, to mitigate the impact of potential food shortages and price increases on our most vulnerable families; however a wider opportunity to develop an integrated approach to dignified food provision was soon identified: **linking a range of existing provision, including holiday hunger programmes, to better meet our communities’ needs, and maximising the potential to connect with those struggling with food insecurity.**

An interactive mapping resource, [we hae food](#) , was developed and is hosted on the Council’s website, **to publicise available community food provision** across East Ayrshire. Wider engagement activity is also taking place, to bring together all of the good work which is taking place across our communities and to make sure that it is reaching those in need.

Ongoing work is being taken forward between Fareshare, Centrestage and East Ayrshire Council to **maximise the use of surplus food** to meet the continuing challenges of food insecurity and to develop innovative approaches based on a ‘**take what you need, pay what you can**’ dignified food provision model. This work has included the Council supporting Centrestage with the production of an additional 500 meals per week using surplus food, which were made available for families attending the 2019 summer holiday activity programmes to take home. This is in addition to the 20,000 packed lunch meals previously referenced.

Cost of the School Day

Awareness raising activity has taken place to ensure that staff across our educational establishments are well placed to address the particular challenges which the everyday costs of the school day can present to children and families in poverty. Head teachers have been empowered to develop their own response to these challenges, supported by central Education staff, and practical steps to address these issues have been taken in schools across the authority area, through informal initiatives such as **school uniform swaps**. **A dignified approach to food waste in schools** has also been introduced, where surplus food is packaged and young people can take free meals home. Several schools, in areas such as Kilmarnock, Muirkirk and New Cumnock, have also adopted a more formal ‘**poverty proofing**’ approach and the learning and good practice from these schools will be shared to allow proven approaches to be embedded across the wider establishment.

Automated systems to facilitate **school clothing grant** and **free school meal applications** have also been developed and introduced, and school clothing grants in East Ayrshire have been increased to **£110 per child**. Analysis of Council records to assess eligibility to Clothing Grants and Free School Meals was undertaken during summer 2018. This review highlighted a number of families who had an underlying entitlement to one or both

of these services, but had not submitted an application for either. Based on this work, an additional 246 Clothing Grants were awarded and 151 Free School Meals entitlements.

INCOME FROM SOCIAL SECURITY AND BENEFITS IN KIND

Financial Inclusion

The **Financial Inclusion Team (FIT)**, within the Health and Social Care Partnership, works to assist the most vulnerable individuals against the impact of the UK Government's Welfare Reform programme. Referrals to FIT are made primarily from **social work teams, housing officers and health staff**, with **financial advice/support** relating to **welfare benefits** and **income maximisation** provided. In 2018/19, within the challenging context of welfare reform, the FIT achieved financial gains totalling £4.6 million on behalf of service users in East Ayrshire. **Since the establishment of the FIT in 2013, the Team has generated income in excess of £24 million for East Ayrshire residents.**

In 2018/19 a **dedicated Financial Inclusion Officer** was appointed to undertake a lead role working with **Children and Families** Social Work teams; linking to third sector organisations who work with children; and working with Education colleagues in the development of their 'Poverty Proofing Our Establishments' approach. Investment in this additional resource will assist the FIT team to increase its proactive work to ensure that families with children, including **the target groups** identified within the Act, receive all of the information and help they need to claim their **benefit entitlements**. This will in turn support our contribution to the new child poverty targets.

Financial Inclusion officers are embedded in the Council's **Employability** and **Housing** teams and also a key part of the **In Court Advice Service** at **Kilmarnock Sheriff Court**, supporting **council, social and private tenants** who are facing eviction. Strong Financial Inclusion links also exist with local **Mental Health** staff and **McMillan Cancer Support**.

Local Area Coordinators, within the Vibrant Communities team, are also in place to support people who have disabilities and/or complex needs live a full life in their community by promoting inclusion and helping to develop their skills and abilities in relation to work, family, community and personal life. This includes support to fill in forms and to access benefit entitlements.

The Financial Inclusion Team also leads and co-ordinates the partnership wide '**Poverty Action Group – East Ayrshire**', which has played a key role in the development of this LCPAR. (Formerly the 'Financial Inclusion Group', this group of statutory and third sector partners took the decision, during 2018/19, to rebrand as **Poverty Action Group - East Ayrshire**).

Universal Credit

The local authority has established a **Universal Credit Support Team** within the **Housing and Communities** service area of **Safer Communities**, to assist people to claim and maintain their Universal Credit entitlement, ensuring that they are supported throughout the process and that they continue **to pay their rent** to keep a roof over their heads. While the Financial Inclusion Team routinely deals with the more complex claims, including **vulnerable individuals** and those with **disabilities**, close partnership working with other services and providers is moving us to a more streamlined approach and a genuine 'one stop' approach to supporting local people to claim the benefits to which they are entitled.

With the introduction of Universal Credit, there has been a significant increase in the referral rates to local **Foodbanks**, particularly where there are children in the household. To support individuals and families who are received **multiple foodbank referrals**, the Financial Inclusion Team have also placed a part time **Financial Inclusion Officer** within the **Council of Voluntary Organisations East Ayrshire**, the organisation which operates the local foodbanks.

East Ayrshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

East Ayrshire CAB provides citizens of East Ayrshire with **free impartial, independent advice and support** in a variety of areas, including benefits, budgeting and debt advice and representation in challenging decisions. The core funding for CAB is from local authority grant of around £0.400 million per annum. In recent years CAB has secured client financial gains from benefits totalling of around £3.7 million and debt reduction of around £1,9 million.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran Financial Inclusion Referral Pathways

A referral tool has been developed to enable NHS staff to refer families in need directly to appropriate specialist advice, including income maximisation services, rather than just sign-posting people to specialist services. Direct referral has been shown to be much more effective in maximising income for families. Broader awareness-raising, in relation to social determinants of health (such as child poverty) and the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), has also been taking place with NHS staff and more widely across the partnership.

Midwives and **Health Visitors** play a key role in supporting pregnant women and mothers/families with young children. Maternity Services are currently working with financial inclusion specialists across the three Ayrshires to develop a joined up approach to improving access to income maximisation services for pregnant women. Scottish Government funding is being used to support the development of capacity in Maternity Services electronic systems that will enable midwives to make direct referrals to specialist financial inclusion services. The new universal health visiting pathway also presents an opportunity to involve Health Visitors in the income maximisation referral pathways. These approaches build on the existing relationships which are in place between midwives, health visitors and pregnant women/women with young children, ensuring the most universal possible access to financial inclusion services for this target group.

Every Child, Every Chance

In addition to the activity highlighted under the individual 'drivers' of child poverty, partners in East Ayrshire have been working to support and to maximise the impact of the national 'Every Child, Every Chance' Delivery Plan. This has included:

- Expanding **early education and child care** provision across the local authority area. This makes a practical difference to families, both in terms of saving them money and giving parents and carers greater opportunities to consider work, training or study.
- Raising awareness of the new **Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment** and **supporting families to access their entitlements**: staff across **health services, early years establishments and schools** have played a key role in this;
- Development and implementation of the **East Ayrshire Housing Asset Management Framework** (HAMF) to ensure that East Ayrshire's housing stock meets current and future needs of tenants; the sustainability of tenancies is improved; and the best use of resources is made. Currently 97.9% of the Council houses meet the **Energy Efficiency** Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) and work is ongoing to identify properties that do not meet the ESSH and to ensure full compliance.
- Continuing to **map local assets, activities and services** across East Ayrshire, to understand where **opportunities and gaps** exist that can directly or indirectly impact on child poverty.

What more can partners in East Ayrshire do to address child poverty?

Work to address child poverty is **already embedded** across each the three thematic Delivery Plans which have been developed by community planning partners in East Ayrshire for the period 2018-2021. This '**routine business**' **will continue** to be progressed over the year ahead and will contribute significantly to both our interim and longer term child poverty reduction targets. We also recognise that, supported by the national 'Every Child Every Chance' agenda, we have **a genuine opportunity** to achieve **a step-change** in relation to child poverty. To this end we have identified **additional, targeted action** to be progressed during 2019/20 and beyond.

In developing this focused child poverty agenda, we have **listened** and **learned** from the feedback which has come from our consultation and **engagement** activity over the last year. Our stakeholders have helped us to **identify** some of the **barriers** which still need to be addressed to allow us **to reduce child poverty** levels in East Ayrshire; and they have **challenged** us to do everything within our power **to ensure that all children growing up in East Ayrshire are 'happy, fulfilled and free to be a child'**.

In response to our stakeholder feedback, the following themes have been identified and corresponding action developed.

Transport

Employment

Financial Inclusion

Every Day Living Costs

Communication

TRANSPORT: In each and every engagement session which we held, **access to affordable transport** was raised as an issue, particularly in relation to:

- The **cost, timetabling and provision of transport services** to allow financially challenged **parents, carers, young people and other vulnerable residents in rural communities** to **access employment, benefits, support services and other amenities** which more affluent residents take for granted.

What we will do:

- **An enhanced strategic focus on transport as a key local driver of child poverty, commencing with a ‘spotlight’ session on transport** to take place in August 2019 with members of the CPP **Executive Officers’ Group** (EAC, HSCP, NHS A&A, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise, Police Scotland and SFRS) and colleagues from **SPT, Ayrshire Roads Alliance** and **EAC Planning team**. This session will focus particularly on transport challenges and opportunities related to the Ayrshire Growth Deal; Strategic Health Developments; and the Local Development Plan 2.
- An **options appraisal in relation to the development of a municipal bus service** will be implemented during 2019/20, involving **Ayrshire Roads Alliance, EAC, SPT and Coalfield Community Transport**, and opportunities for joint working with neighbouring authorities will also be explored.
- **A consistent lobbying position** in relation to transport for East Ayrshire will be developed to maximise the leverage of our CPP in relation to those **transport issues which are out with the direct gift of our partnership**. There will be a particular focus on **concessionary travel for young people; support for parents/carers/families to access benefits and advice services**; and supporting the recommendations identified within the Poverty and Inequality Commission’s recently published ‘**Transport and Poverty in Scotland Report**’.⁷
- We will act on the findings of the **planned comprehensive review** of an **extension of discounts on public transport** currently available to those aged 16-18 and extending it to those under the age of 26.

⁷ <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Transport-and-Poverty-in-Scotland-Report-of-the-Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT: Access to **good quality employment opportunities** remains key to assisting people to move out of poverty.

- **‘In work’ poverty** has increased with stakeholders sharing concerns about **low paid employment** and **‘zero hours contracts’**.
- We also need to continue to **provide effective pathways for people to move into employment**, linking this into the emerging growth sectors identified within the Ayrshire Growth Deal and making sure that our young people have the skills to allow them to benefit from the new opportunities which will be created.

What we will do:

- Continue to work with partners in the **Ayrshire Growth Deal** to ensure that the economic benefits are genuinely ‘inclusive’, combining increased prosperity with greater equality and **ensuring that the benefits of increased prosperity are distributed fairly across our communities**.
- **East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise** and **local businesses** will work with **Barclays** to deliver a three-year economic growth initiative in Kilmarnock, as part of its **‘Thriving Local Economies’** scheme. This will support local residents to be ready for the future world of work, developing skills to match the needs of the local and national economy.
- **Role model good employer practices** across our CPP and work with colleagues in the third and private sectors to promote **fair working** practices.
- **Mitigate** the effects of child poverty through our **employment, commissioning and procurement** practices, through for example commitments to and building on existing commitments to the **Scottish Living Wage**.
- **Link tackling child poverty** with the national commitment to halve the **‘disability employment gap’**.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION: Financial inclusion is about ensuring that our **residents are aware of their rights** to benefits, that they **receive their full entitlement** to those benefits. It is also about **fairness** and **equal treatment** and this involves **advocating** on behalf of citizens, **challenging decisions** and **representing** people in Appeals and Tribunals related to those decisions. **Digital exclusion** is an issue, as financial and technological change has seen a move towards digital in the financial sector which has **reduced physical service provision, particularly in rural communities**.

What we will do:

- Review and streamline **our financial inclusion services** to ensure **maximum reach** to excluded groups and communities.
- Formalise and implement joint working arrangements with **Social Security Scotland**, which will see SSS staff work alongside the Financial Inclusion Team in East Ayrshire.
- Promote **take-up** of new Social Security Scotland benefits including the recent **Best Start Grant** for low income families in infancy and early years, and the **Scottish Child Payment** for under 6s by 2021 and remaining under 16s by 2022.
- Promote **outreach** support from **Citizens' Advice Bureau** in communities that are in the 0-5% most deprived areas in East Ayrshire identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2016.
- **Maternity services** will work jointly with financial inclusion specialist services using Scottish Government funding to develop e-systems to enable Midwives to refer women directly to services to maximise household income.
- Work in **partnership with Registered Social Landlords** through the Poverty Action Group to better support tenants in relation to financial inclusion.
- Work across partners in registration, midwifery, health visiting, early years, school nursing and others to provide **up-stream, early advice** and **support** to tackle child poverty.
- Appraise the **options** available around **alternative local currencies** (a local currency that can be spent in a definite geographic area) and **access to affordable credit** through the Poverty Action Group.
- Promote **Post Office financial services** in communities poorly served by ATMs or affected by bank closures.
- Deliver a **tiered** anti-poverty **training programme** across the workforce modelled on the Protecting People Framework.

EVERY DAY LIVING COSTS: Vulnerable families, particularly **lone parents, young parents, large families** and those living in **rural areas**, are struggling to meet the costs of day to day living - **demands on local foodbanks and other support services are increasing**.

- This impacts most on those **families with multiple characteristics which make them more likely to be in poverty** – for example those children living in families affected by disability, not in paid employment and in circumstances that may be further compounded by living in rural areas, where costs of living can be higher and access to transport more costly.

What we will do:

- **Continue to roll out national initiatives in relation to free P1-P3 meals and Early Years expansion.** A total of 779,799 free meals were provided in primary and secondary schools in 2018/19, which equates to 4,100 each day. However there remains a significant number of children not taking free meals and increasing uptake continues to be a key action. Early Years expansion offers a further opportunity to address food poverty and through our early implementation programme approximately 800 meals per day are already being provided. It is anticipated that this number will increase significantly in the year ahead and, by the end of 2020, a free meal will be offered to all children between the age of 3 and 7.
- **Continue to deliver good quality, affordable housing for families across East Ayrshire**, investing in new affordable homes with higher energy efficiency standards and digital connectivity; and delivering a range of regeneration projects to improve housing and the built environment in priority areas. We will continue to prioritise allocation of available housing for those in greatest need, including homeless households, those with urgent medical needs, disabled people, and will continue to implement joint-working through care protocol to prevent and reduce homelessness for care experienced young people.
- **Continue to support vulnerable individuals and families who are at risk of, or are experiencing, homelessness through the implementation of the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.** This plan sets out the key actions and timescales which partners have identified to achieve the 5-year vision for rapid rehousing with an aim to increase focus on early intervention and prevention and reduce homeless presentations and applications.
- Work proactively with **Citrus Energy** (the energy advice arm of Cunninghame Housing Association) to address local issues surrounding fuel poverty.

- **Further align free sanitary provision and dignified food provision** and continue to work across partners to **reduce the reliance on foodbanks**.
- **Participate in a Health Scotland funded Cost of Pregnancy** research project to explore the experiences of pregnant women and women with infants of services provided by Midwives and Health Visitors working in Ayrshire and Arran . This project will explore the lived experiences of women from low-income families who are also living in rural communities. This will be compared with women from low income urban communities in Glasgow. A research company has been recruited to undertake the project, with field work taking place from June to August 2019, and reporting in October 2019.

COMMUNICATION: We need to get better at **sharing information** and **promoting a consistent anti-poverty message** - both across our communities and also within CPP agency staff groups.

- A wide range of support services are available for families across East Ayrshire but this message is **not consistently reaching people in need before they reach crisis point**.
- We know that there continues to be **stigma attached to being in poverty**, which can be particularly difficult for children and young people to cope with – children and young people who deserve the same chances in life and opportunities as their more affluent peers.
- We recognise that **strategic decisions** which are taken with the best of intentions can have **unintentional negative impacts on vulnerable families and children**. **A socio-economic impact assessment has already been incorporated within the East Ayrshire Council's Equality Impact Assessment tool, to inform in future policy development, and more work will be done across our partnership to increase awareness of the poverty related challenges facing our local communities.**

What we will do:

- The **Poverty Action Group – East Ayrshire** will review eamoney.co.uk⁸ with a view to relaunching the digital platform and ensuring that all practitioners across our partnership are aware of this resource as a 'one stop shop' which allows East Ayrshire residents to access a wide range of partner financial inclusion services, offering free and impartial financial and benefits advice and signposting to the appropriate supports. The focus will be on **maximising its reach to our most vulnerable families and target groups**.

⁸ East Ayrshire Money is a partnership of agencies who provide information and advice and/or services relating to a wide range of issues to residents of East Ayrshire.

- Colleagues in NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health will **encourage use of locally developed referral tool to enable NHS staff to directly refer families in need to appropriate specialist services**, and incorporate this into routine practice. This includes developing the new maternity information system (Badgernet) to better record routine conversations related to money worries and refer women directly to income maximisation support.
- Colleagues in NHS Ayrshire & Arran will develop a **child poverty impact assessment tool** for strategies, policies and service improvement across **NHS Ayrshire and Arran**.
- A **shared approach** will be developed to **increasing awareness across CPP staff** of the **impact** that **child poverty** has on access to services.
- Colleagues from NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health and Communications departments are part of a **National Child Poverty Communications Group**, taking a '**Once for Scotland**' approach that is reframing information about child poverty to ensure **clear, consistent and effective messages** are being deployed with various stakeholders to increase understanding of the causes and consequences of child poverty.
- Promote **Challenge Poverty Week** across East Ayrshire in October 2019, with a view to raising awareness of child poverty in East Ayrshire and tackling stigma.
- **Lobby, advocate** and seek to **influence** wider **change** across all systems, including focus on new National Public Health Priorities: Priority 5 – An Ayrshire where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all, which will include Child Poverty.

Future Development

This LCPAR represents the first stage of our journey towards achieving the Scottish Government's ambitious child poverty targets by 2030. It seeks to build on the strong track record of partnership working in East Ayrshire in relation to this complex agenda and to provide a guide to action.

During 2019/20 our strategic approach to addressing child poverty will continue to be developed and, in particular, further consideration will be given to measuring and demonstrating the impact of this activity in the years ahead.

This will include the following:

- **Poverty Action Group – East Ayrshire:** There currently exists a strong partnership between statutory and third sector agencies in East Ayrshire. Over the year ahead, the Poverty Action Group East Ayrshire will work to further enhance that partnership ethos, to maximise the impact of our joint working to more effectively address issues surrounding child poverty. This will include examining how existing partners currently operate and identifying whether they have scope to apply a more holistic approach when assisting service users with financial inclusion matters. The Group will also seek to develop targeted approaches to addressing the poverty related issues raised in the recent engagement sessions, such as fuel poverty, and to ensure that we are reaching the identified priority groups. Our communities, in particular people with experience of poverty, will continue to play a key role in shaping this work
- **Children and Young People's Service Plan:** During 2019/20 the development of our new Children and Young People's Service Plan 2020-2023 will commence and relevant action areas will dovetail with the new plan.
- **The Poverty Related Attainment Gap:** Activity will be progressed, through the **South West Educational Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC)** and the new **Attainment Scotland Fund Programme Board**, to evaluate and to maximise the impact of Attainment Scotland funding in relation to addressing the poverty related attainment gap across the authority area, and to ensure that proven approaches are embedded across our educational establishments.
- **Multi-Agency Challenge Event:** Early in 2020, we will bring together representatives from each of the three strategic delivery plan working groups in East Ayrshire (Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing) for a focused review session to take stock of partnership activity to address our cross cutting themes and our current strategic priorities, including **Child Poverty**. National Partners will be invited to join this session, to provide valuable external challenge.

Governance and Reporting

East Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran have devolved strategic oversight of this Child Poverty Action Plan to East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board.

This Plan is presented as part of a wider suite of Community Planning Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) reporting materials, to allow it to be considered within the context of the wider partnership activity which will contribute to achievement of the child poverty targets in East Ayrshire.

The governance arrangements are set out in the diagram below.



Note: The Pan Ayrshire Infant, Children and Young People's (ICYP) Transformational Change Programme Board has also taken an advisory role in the development of the three Ayrshire LCPARs.

Targets relating to child poverty have been incorporated within our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, as the performance management framework which underpins all community planning activity in East Ayrshire. Routine monitoring of progress towards the achievement of this Plan will be undertaken by the Community Planning Executive Officers' Group and the formal annual performance report will be presented to Members of East Ayrshire Council and CPP Board as part of the existing Local Outcomes Improvement Plan reporting Framework, in September each year.

Summary Action Plan 2019/20

ACTION	TIMESCALE	PARTNERS	POVERTY DRIVER	HOW IMPACT WILL BE ASSESSED	TARGET GROUPS
TRANSPORT					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An enhanced strategic focus on transport as a key local driver of child poverty, commencing with a CPP Executive Officers' Group 'Spotlight Session' on Transport, August 2019. 	Spotlight session: August 2019 Follow up actions developed and Implemented: 2019/20 onwards	Core Community Planning Partners plus Ayrshire Roads Alliance and SPT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment (access) Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions identified Longer term consideration of impact, dependent on actions identified. 	Universal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An options appraisal will be undertaken in relation to the establishment of a municipal bus service. 	2019/20	EAC, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, SPT, Stagecoach, Coalfield Community Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment (access) Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of appraisal. Longer term consideration of impact, dependent on outcome of appraisal exercise. 	Residents on low incomes, particularly in rural communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consistent lobbying position in relation to transport for East Ayrshire developed to maximise the leverage of our CPP in relation to those transport issues which are out with the direct gift of our partnership. 	2019/20	All community planning partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment (access) Costs of living Income from Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and implementation of lobbying strategy. Longer term consideration of impact, dependent on strategy adopted. 	Residents on low incomes, particularly in rural communities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act on the findings of the planned comprehensive review of an extension of discounts on public transport currently available to those aged 16-18 and extending it to those under the age of 26. 	To national review timescales	All community planning partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment (access) Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local action against recommendations of national review. 	Residents on low incomes, particularly in rural communities.
EMPLOYMENT					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners in the Ayrshire Growth Deal to ensure that the economic benefits are genuinely 'inclusive'. 	2019-2030	All community planning partners AGD partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AGD impact measurement framework. LOIP 'Economy and Skills' indicators. 	Universal – including in particular residents on low incomes, in rural communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Barclays to deliver a three-year economic growth initiative in Kilmarnock, as part of the 'Thriving Local Economies' scheme 	2019-2022	Barclays, East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise, Local Businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project impact measurement framework being developed. LOIP 'Economy and Skills' indicators. 	Universal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role model good employer practices across our CPP and work with colleagues in the third and private sectors to promote fair working practices 	2019/20 and ongoing	All community planning partners, Scottish Government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOIP 'Economy and Skills' indicators. 	Universal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate the impact of child poverty through our employment, commissioning and procurement practices. 	2019/20 and ongoing	All community planning partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOIP 'Economy and Skills' indicators. 	Universal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link tackling child poverty with the national commitment to halve the 'disability employment gap'. 	2019/20	All community planning partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability related employment gap indicator 	Children living in households affected by one or more protected characteristic
FINANCIAL INCLUSION					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and streamline our financial inclusion services to ensure maximum reach to excluded groups and communities. 	2019/20	EAHSCP, Child Poverty Action Group - EA, Social Security Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Benefits Costs of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from ongoing engagement with locality groups and practitioners. LOIP Wellbeing Indicators (income maximisation) Benefits uptake data 	Vulnerable residents and identified priority groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise and implement joint working arrangements with Social Security Scotland. 	2019/20 and ongoing	EAHSCP/Social Security Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from ongoing engagement with locality groups and practitioners. LOIP Wellbeing Indicators (income maximisation). SSS data on benefits uptake 	Residents on low incomes and identified priority groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote take-up of new Social Security Scotland benefits including the recent Best Start Grant for low income families in infancy and early years, and the Scottish Child Payment for under 6s by 	Best Start 2019/20 Scottish Child Payment 2020/21	Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Security Scotland management information 	Residents on low incomes and identified priority groups

2021 and remaining under 16s by 2022.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote outreach support from Citizens' Advice Bureau in communities that are in the 0-5% most deprived areas in East Ayrshire identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2016. 	2019/20	Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens' Advice Bureau management information 	Residents on low incomes, particularly in rural communities. Areas of high material deprivation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternity Services and Income Maximisation joint working to integrate direct referral into new e-system, BadgerNet. 	2019/20 and ongoing	NHS Maternity Services NHS Public Health EAHSCP ICYP transformational Change Programme Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from ongoing engagement with locality groups and practitioners LOIP Wellbeing Indicators (income maximisation) Benefits uptake data 	All pregnant women with a focus on those on low incomes and identified priority groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with RSLs through the Poverty Action Group to better support tenants in relation to financial inclusion supports 	2019/20 and ongoing	Poverty Action Group – EA, Local RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income maximisation numbers for families in RSL properties 	Residents on low incomes and identified priority groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work across partners in registration, midwifery, health visiting, early years, school nursing and others to provide up-stream, early advice and support to tackle child poverty. 	2019/20	Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from benefits Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Inclusion Team management information 	Income maximisation for pregnant women and families with children Priority groups

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appraise the options available around alternative local currencies and access to affordable credit through the Poverty Action Group. 	March 2020	Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option appraisal report and recommendations produced 	Children living in households affected by one or more protected characteristics. Priority groups. Areas of high material deprivation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Post Office financial services in communities poorly served by ATMs or affected by bank closures. 	2019/20	Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion materials produced Social media activity 	Priority groups Areas of high material deprivation Rural communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a tiered anti-poverty training programme across the workforce modelled on the Protecting People Framework. 	March 2020	Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from employment Income from benefits Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training materials developed. Number of attendees by tier Training evaluation 	Universal
EVERY DAY LIVING COSTS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to roll out national initiatives in relation to free P1-P3 meals and Early Years expansion. 	2019/20 and ongoing	East Ayrshire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of living Income from Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake data. 	Families across the local authority area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver good quality, affordable housing for families across East Ayrshire 	2019/20 and ongoing	East Ayrshire Council and key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local housing data 	Families across the local authority area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support vulnerable individuals and families who are at risk of 	2019/20 and ongoing	East Ayrshire Council and key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local housing data 	Vulnerable residents across the authority area.

homelessness through the implementation of the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work proactively with Citrus Energy to address local issues surrounding fuel poverty. 	2019/20	Poverty Action Group - EA Citrus Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of families assisted with fuel poverty 	Residents struggling with fuel bills, particularly in rural communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further align free sanitary provision and dignified food provision and continue to work across partners to reduce the reliance on foodbanks. 	2019/20	EAC, HSCP, CVO East Ayrshire, Centrestage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local food bank usage data. Feedback from ongoing engagement with locality groups and practitioners. 	Residents on low incomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Cost of Pregnancy research project to identify barriers pregnant women and women with infants face when accessing midwifery and Health Visitor services 	June-October 2019	NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health and Maternity services. East HSCP – Health Visitors and Early Years Services NHS GGC Health Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research findings will be used to develop Cost of Pregnancy guidance and/or tool kit to enable services remove barriers and increase access of women to services. 	All pregnant women with a focus on those on low incomes and identified priority groups
COMMUNICATION					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and relaunch the eamoney digital platform as central 'one stop shop' for financial support across East Ayrshire. 	2019/20	Child Poverty Action Group - EA, led by EAHSCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from Benefits Costs of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from ongoing engagement with locality groups and practitioners. 	Residents on low incomes across the authority area

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOIP Wellbeing Indicators (income maximisation) Benefits uptake data 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage use of locally developed referral tool to enable NHS staff to directly refer families in need to appropriate specialist services, and incorporate this into routine practice. 	2019/20	NHS Public Health, Communications and other services, and EAHSCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income from Benefits • Costs of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist financial inclusion services to track referral rates and income maximisation levels 	Universal with a focus on vulnerable families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a child poverty impact assessment tool for NHS strategies, policies and service improvement, as part of Fairer Scotland Duty work 	2020	NHS A&A Public Health West of Scotland Public Health Child Poverty Leads (GGC, D&G and Lanarkshire)	Potentially all 3 Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic decisions in NHS A&A considered through lens of Fairer Scotland Duty 	Universal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared approach to increasing awareness amongst CPP staff about the impact that child poverty has on access to services 		All Community Planning Partner Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially all 3 Drivers 		Residents on low incomes and identified priority groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national “once for Scotland” Child Poverty Communications Plan 	2019/20	NHS A&A Public Health and Communications Department CPAG Poverty Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially all 3 Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the national Child Poverty Communications Plan 	Universal

		Health Scotland NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Lanarkshire			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Challenge Poverty Week across East Ayrshire in October 2019. 	October 2019	All Community Planning Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially all 3 Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories demonstrating the reality of poverty in East Ayrshire Local stories that challenge stereotypes Publicise solutions to poverty Measures of public support for action to tackle poverty 	Universal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby, advocate and seek to influence wider change across all systems, including focus on new National Public Health Priorities: Priority 5 – An Ayrshire where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all, which will include Child Poverty. 	2019/20 and ongoing	NHS A&A Public Health NHS A&A CPP HSCP 3 rd Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three priorities, but especially income from employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing Note for partners in Ayrshire on Public Health Priority 5 developed awareness-raising and engagement in partnership 	Universal